

Seek First

A NEW BELIEVER JOURNAL

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“

***BUT SEEK FIRST HIS
KINGDOM AND HIS
RIGHTEOUSNESS AND
ALL THESE THINGS
WILL BE GIVEN TO
YOU AS WELL.***

”

- MATTHEW 6:33

INTRODUCTION

LIFE-CHANGING RELATIONSHIP

The decision to grow closer to Jesus Christ begins with an initial commitment to follow Jesus. It is the most important commitment you will ever make. You may remember a specific time you asked Jesus Christ into your life. If so, proceed to the next page. If you are unsure about your commitment to Jesus, read through "Becoming a Follower of Christ" below. This commitment is much more than just praying a prayer - it's about entering into a life-changing personal relationship with Jesus.

BECOMING A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

The Bible says we have sinned.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." - Romans 3:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." - Romans 6:23

Thankfully, the Bible says Jesus makes us right with God.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."
- John 3:16*

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8

"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." - Romans 10:9-10

The Bible says we can invite Jesus into our life through prayer.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." - Revelation 3:20

Here is an example of what you might pray:

“Jesus, I know that I’m a sinner. I ask you to forgive my sins. I believe that you died on the cross for my sins and the sins of the world. Help me turn from sin. Lord Jesus, come into my heart, control my life now and forever. In your name I pray, Amen.”

The Bible says we can know that we have abundant and eternal life.

“He who has God’s son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” - 1 John 5:12-13

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” - John 10:10

Take a few minutes today to share the decision you have made with someone who cares about you, like a friend, family member or pastor.

Write where and when you accepted Christ below:

PRAYING

The Bible says we can talk to God about anything. That is the essence of prayer. We get to talk to God. We get to talk to the creator of the universe. We cannot underestimate this privilege. Prayer is not something we have to do; it's something we get to do.

If you have questions about prayer, read the following for a short lesson in understanding prayer.


UNDERSTANDING HOW TO PRAY

A key part of our relationship with Jesus is prayer. How do we get started? Jesus' disciples asked the same question. Jesus didn't offer a magic formula for prayer, nor did He give us a special combination of words to recite. What He did was show us what it means to connect with Him through prayer. Below is a simple way to begin your conversations with Jesus.

Refocus – Start by finding a quiet place without distractions. The Bible says that early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus went to a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35). Find a place where you can be still and refocus.

Recognize – Next, take time to recognize what Jesus has done in your life. Take time to thank Jesus for your salvation, your family, job, friends, health, finances, church... there is no limit to what he has done. This recognition changes our focus from ourselves and our needs, to Jesus and his power. Psalms 146-150 are examples of how to recognize God for all he's done.

Repent – What is repentance? Acts 3:19 says, "*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*" Repentance, then, is turning away from sin and turning toward Jesus. Ask Jesus to reveal anything in your life that displeases him. Ask Jesus to forgive you and help you to turn away from those things. 1 John 1:9 says, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*"



Request – Tell Jesus the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 says “*Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.*” Pray for others and for you. If it matters to you, it matters to Jesus. Remember that Jesus knows what you need before you ask, so pray with childlike faith, not childish wants. Pray for Jesus to do big things! 1 John 5:14 says, “*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*”

Reflect – John 10:27 says, “*My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow me.*” Allow time to read God’s word and listen to what He’s saying through it. In your journal, write down what you’ve asked Jesus for and how He’s answering your prayers. During the 28-day challenge, you are encouraged to use this book as your journal. When Jesus speaks to your heart through His Word or during prayer, take a moment to record it in your journal. Use this journal to enhance your quiet times. In a few weeks you’ll look back over the journal entries and be amazed at the way God is moving in your life.

Take a few minutes to write down what you are asking God to do in your life:

BAPTISM

A NEW BELIEVER'S FIRST ACT OF OBEDIENCE

The Bible clearly teaches that a Christ-follower's first act of obedience is baptism.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Simply put, a Christ-follower is someone who follows Christ. Baptism is an opportunity for you to show everyone that you are now following Christ. Baptism doesn't make you a Christ-follower but it is an acknowledgement that Jesus has changed your life. When you are baptized you are dunked under water as a symbol of what Christ has done. It illustrates the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It shows that you have trusted Jesus and that He has given you a brand new life.

HOW AND WHEN SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?

The Bible is clear that we should be baptized after salvation by immersion. "Immersion" means completely dunked under water. There are many examples of baptism in the Bible and all of them were immediately after salvation. Immersion is the only method of baptism found in the Bible. As a matter of fact, Jesus was baptized by immersion as an example for us (Mark 1:9-10).

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

You should talk as soon as possible with someone from your church to schedule your baptism. Baptism is your first act of obedience to Jesus. You'll want to get baptized as soon as possible.

GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR YOU

Why are you on this planet? Why do you think Jesus is allowing you to breathe air? Think about it. Are you just going through the motions, or do you believe Jesus has a purpose for your life?

Jeremiah 29:11 says, *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

Jesus has big plans for you. You didn't show up by accident. It's amazing to think that the creator of the universe cares enough about you to be involved in every aspect of your life. Be assured that His plans are far more incredible than anything you could ever imagine on your own.

DISCOVERING GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE

Matthew 6:33 says, *“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

Discovering Jesus' plan for your life begins with a commitment to seek Jesus with all your heart, soul, mind and body through a relationship with Him. The Bible makes this promise: *“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”* (Jeremiah 29:12- 13)

A daily quiet time with Jesus helps to build a strong relationship with Him. As you meet with Him daily, Jesus will reveal the next step for you in His plan.

QUIET TIME

HOW TO START A DAILY QUIET TIME

Make a commitment to wake up early each morning for Bible reading, prayer and journal writing. Use this journal to guide your quiet time with Jesus. The discipline of rising early to meet with Him will change your life forever.

Go some place quiet. Turn off your phone and remove anything that might be a distraction.

Find the day's verse in the Bible and read it several times.

Rewrite the scripture in your own words on the journal page. During the day, try to recall what the verses were all about.

As you're thinking about those verses, focus on the action you need to take as a result of what you've read. Life-change happens when we apply what we read to our lives. Write down in your journal any thoughts or actions related to that day's verse. We've included some questions to get you started.

Where are you planning on having your quiet time?

When are you planning on having your quiet time?

START CONNECTING

This challenge is designed to help you develop the discipline of spending time with Jesus every day. If you miss a day, or even a few days, along this journey do not feel guilty or give up. While connecting with God shouldn't feel like homework, consistency is important. You will find that your desire to spend time with Jesus will increase as you are consistent. We hope this challenge will start you on the path to enjoying daily time with God.

DAY ONE

JESUS IS ETERNAL LIFE

The Bible tells us all about the love of Jesus Christ. As you read today's verses from the Gospel of John, substitute your name for "the world" and for "whoever."

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved _____ that He gave His one and only Son, that _____ believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Take a few minutes to write down why you are thankful for Jesus. What has He done in your life?

DAY TWO

JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

Some believe there are many roads to God, but the Bible is very clear that there is only one way. What does Jesus say about Himself? Turn in your Bible to John 14:6 for the answer and write down your thoughts.

Read John 14:6

DAY THREE

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

The Bible says memorizing scripture is like hiding God's word in your heart. Why is it important to hide God's word in your heart?

Read Psalm 119: 9-11

DAY FOUR

TIME WITH JESUS IS IMPORTANT

Spending time with Jesus before your busy day starts can lead to days filled with his purpose and incredible plans. In this verse, see how Jesus sets the example for us. How can you follow Jesus' example? Why should you?

Read Mark 1:35

DAY FIVE

JESUS SAID TO LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

“But I just can’t forgive that person. You don’t know what they did to me.”

We’ve all said it or thought it. Forgiveness is tough. Remember that Jesus asked His Father to forgive the people who killed him. God can soften your heart so that you can forgive. Ask Jesus to reveal anyone in your life who needs your forgiveness. Write down your thoughts and what you plan to do.

Read Matthew 6:14-15

DAY SIX

EVERYTHING IS FOR JESUS

You might wonder if your life really makes a difference. Consider that everything you do is for Jesus. Wherever you are, whatever you do, whether in your home with your family or at your job, do it all as if you're serving Jesus. Practically speaking, how would your life change if you did everything as unto the Lord?

Read Colossians 3:23-24

DAY SEVEN

UNSPOKEN SERMONS

Your words and interactions influence the people around you, even when you don't know they're watching. Is there anything in your lifestyle that could cause someone to doubt Jesus' life-changing message? Jesus will reveal those things to you when you ask. What is Jesus asking you to change?

Read Romans 14:13

DAY EIGHT

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

The fact is, we have all sinned, and have chosen to go our own way rather than Jesus' perfect way. We fall short of Jesus' standard for our lives. Confession is acknowledging that you have sinned. Repentance is leaving your sin, never to return. Confession and repentance of sin will restore your close fellowship with Jesus. What does God promise to do when you confess sin? What do you need to repent of?

Read 1 John 1:8-9

DAY NINE

JESUS HAS POWER

You may think that miraculous things only happen in the lives of other people. Today, look around you to see evidence of Jesus' tremendous power. Where do you see His creativity? Where do you see his power? Remember that all things were created by Him. In what area of your life do you need Jesus' tremendous power?

Read Ephesians 3:20

DAY TEN

JESUS STRENGTHENS US

These verses are about the secret of contentment in good times and bad. How do these powerful words speak to your circumstances?

Read Philippians 4:12-13

DAY ELEVEN

NO WORRIES

Do you ever find yourself sweating the little stuff? Jesus' clear message is that He is in control. Apply these verses to a situation you are facing.

Read Matthew 6:31-34

DAY TWELVE

JESUS BRINGS PEACE

Can you imagine living without fear or anxiety? What does “transcends all understanding” mean? What does verse seven say about your heart and mind?

Read Philippians 4:6-7

DAY THIRTEEN

JESUS BRINGS HEALING

The Bible is filled with stories about Jesus and His passion to heal people. If He asked you today, "What do you want me to do?" how would you respond?

Read Matthew 20: 32-34

DAY FOURTEEN

WORTHY

The Bible says Jesus called to us and saved us even though we were unworthy. Now, because of His salvation, we can live lives worthy of His calling. Take a moment to examine your life. Does your humility and patience draw others to Jesus?

Read Ephesians 4:1-2

DAY FIFTEEN

GIFTS FROM GOD

Jesus' generosity has no end. What are some of the good and perfect gifts Jesus has placed in your life?

Read James 1:17

DAY SIXTEEN

TEST ME IN THIS

Matthew 4:7 says that we should not test God. However, the Bible gives one exception when it is OK to test God's faithfulness. Malachi 3:10 says, "*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,*" says the Lord Almighty, "*and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.*"

What is tithing?

Tithing is giving 10 percent of our gross income to His church.

Why should we tithe?

The Bible tells us we should. Tithing shows what we believe about the Bible. Tithing is an opportunity to acknowledge that all we have belongs to Jesus (Psalm 24:1). Tithing shows that we have placed our trust in Jesus to supply all of our needs. It teaches us to be childlike, not childish in our wants.

In addition to the daily discipline of waking early to spend time with Jesus, take up the challenge to bring 10 percent of your gross income to the church you attend. You may be concerned about losing 10 percent of your income. This is your opportunity to test God's faithfulness. As you involve Him in your finances, you will see that He can do more with your money than you can. Be obedient to what God tells you to do, and trust in His amazing promises for those who are faithful in the area of finances.

What do you need to do to excel in giving?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:7

DAY SEVENTEEN

JESUS BRINGS REST

Are you tired? If it seems that the weight of the world is on your shoulders, take comfort in the words of our Savior, Jesus Christ. You will find rest in Him. In what areas of your life do you need Jesus to give you rest?

Read Matthew 11:28-30

DAY EIGHTEEN

DON'T GIVE UP

Discouraged? God's word encourages us to never give up. What do you think the word "harvest" in this verse means in your life?

Read Galatians 6:9

DAY NINETEEN

THE VOICE OF JESUS

The Bible describes us as sheep and Jesus as our shepherd. Sheep who follow the shepherd closely will be able to recognize the shepherd's voice. Jesus speaks to us primarily through His Word. What has Jesus said to you through His Word? What is Jesus saying to you in these verses about your security in Him?

Read John 10:27-28

DAY TWENTY

IMITATORS OF JESUS

Your life as a follower of Jesus is so much more than just praying that He would save you; truly following Jesus means imitating Him in everything. What are some ways you are not imitating Jesus right now? What needs to change? How can we imitate Jesus' life of love?

Read Ephesians 5:1-2

DAY TWENTY-ONE

WE CAN KNOW

The Bible says we can be confident of our salvation. We can know that we have eternal life. Our confidence is not based on what we have done but on what Christ has done for us. If you are not absolutely confident that you are a Christ-follower, confess Him as Lord today. If you have already made this life-changing decision, write about how and when you did.

Read 1 John 5:13

DAY TWENTY-TWO

WE CAN TRUST JESUS

While God may not give you an entire road map for your life, He will show you the next step to take when you ask in faith. What is the promise in these verses for those who trust Him?

Read Proverbs 3:5-6

DAY TWENTY-THREE

LOOK INSIDE

Finding fault in others is much easier than examining ourselves. Notice Jesus' strong words about judging others. How does this passage apply to your life today? Why must we continually examine ourselves?

Read Matthew 7:1-3

DAY TWENTY-FOUR

LOVING THE UNLOVABLE

People who show kindness and respect are easy to love. What about someone who is difficult, critical or clearly “unlovable”? Who comes to mind? What does Jesus say you can do?

Read Matthew 5: 43-44

DAY TWENTY-FIVE

REASONS FOR HOPE

When we begin to follow Christ, people notice. Be prepared to share the reason for your hope and to tell others how He has changed your life. Sharing your story is as simple as saying what life was like before Jesus, how Jesus came into your life, and how Jesus has changed you. What is the reason you have for hope? How is Jesus changing your life?

Read 1 Peter 3:15

DAY TWENTY-SIX

NO FEAR

Fear can immobilize you. Don't allow fear to hold you back from accomplishing Jesus' purpose for your life. Take a moment to write about the fears that may be holding you back. Your God is far greater than your fear.

Read 2 Timothy 1:7

DAY TWENTY-SEVEN

EQUIPMENT FOR THE JOURNEY

As a follower of Christ, Jesus may give you an assignment that seems impossible. Trust that God will equip you for any work that He ordains. Have you felt that Jesus has a special assignment for you? What do you think that is? How is He equipping you for the journey?

Read 1 Chronicles 28:20

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT

GIVING THANKS

Tell Jesus the desires of your heart and thank Him for saving you. List His amazing attributes and blessings.

Read Philippians 1:9

WHAT'S NEXT?

Our prayer for you is that your life has been blessed as you've practiced the discipline of rising early to read and pray. As you continue daily quiet times with Jesus and honor Him by tithing your income, you'll see the benefit as your life is changed by him. Staying in a close daily relationship with Jesus is the best way to know His perfect plans for your life. As you continue to spend time with Him, you can be confident that He will prepare you to do great things for Him.

Your next assignment is to read through the entire Gospel of John. Buy a blank journal and continue the daily discipline of writing your thoughts and prayers. After you read each day, simply respond to the question, "How can I be more like Jesus?"

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in the knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God." - Philippians 1:9-11

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