



20 CONVERSATIONS
on Following
JESUS

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20 CONVERSATIONS on Following JESUS

Introduction

We are so glad you've decided to trust Jesus and follow Him! This booklet will help you get started in learning what it looks like to grow in your relationship with Him and other people.

As we walk with Jesus, it's important for us to read His words in the Bible (also known as the Scriptures), talk to Him through prayer, and learn and grow with other Christians. This booklet isn't a substitute for any of those things -- instead it is a companion piece that you can use as you grow in your faith. Hopefully some of these topics will help you to not only learn more about your faith, but to grow as a disciple (follower) of Jesus.

This booklet provides you with 20 topics that will help you grow closer to Jesus. Take a few minutes (10-15) to focus on a new topic and see what God might have for you.

We've divided the booklet into four sections: Living Godly Lives; Loving One Another Deeply; Giving Priority to the Last, Lost, Least, Little and Nearly Dead; and Delighting Ourselves in the Lord Through Worship. These sections come from looking at the text of [Isaiah 58](#) in the Bible, and the things that God expresses in this chapter that are important to His heart. As you go through the booklet, you will find sub-topics related to each of these four priorities from [Isaiah 58](#).

A couple things to remember as you use this booklet:

- When we talk about God in this booklet, we are talking about one God who is three distinct persons — God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This is known as the Trinity. We talk about them interchangeably, knowing that they have different roles but are one God. Yes, this is part of the mystery of who God is — it can be hard to understand, but also shows us the complexity and amazing nature of our God!

- When we quote from the Bible in this booklet, we will use the New International Version (NIV) or New Living Translation (NLT) unless otherwise noted. You will want to get a Bible and we would suggest one of these two versions to get started.
- We encourage you to go through this booklet in a group or with a friend or mentor. It is important for us to learn and grow with community so that we can learn from and challenge one another!
- As you go through this booklet, you might have questions. Seek out answers from other Christians who have been walking with Jesus for a while. Also, always make sure to see what God’s Word says and to ask God to bring you understanding.
- You might find the 2017 sermon series, “Christianity: What It Is and Why It Matters” useful in your journey. It covers a lot of the basics of the Christian faith. You can find it at www.CrossRoadsChurch.ca/2017Sermons.

We hope this is a useful resource for you as you learn more about Jesus and what it looks like to follow Him!

~CrossRoads Leadership



LIVING GODLY LIVES

1) *Listening to God*

Let's spend some time discovering ways that we can practice living godly lives as we grow closer to Him.

Did you know that you were designed to hear God? To be a Christian is to have a personal relationship with God, and relationship implies conversation. What kind of relationship would you have with someone if you never talked to them?

The main place that God speaks to us is through the Bible, His Word. It is our most important resource for getting to know God and what He is like. In it, we see His character, His story, the things He has done, and the things He has called us to. If you want to be a follower of Jesus, it is crucial that you begin to read your Bible, hopefully daily. It is where you will get to know God and learn more about the life He wants you to lead. The Bible is the main way that God speaks to you.

Everywhere in the Bible, God is portrayed as a speaking God. In the first chapter of the Bible ([Genesis 1](#)), we read the phrase, "God said," eleven times! He created everything by His voice. All through the Bible, God speaks to people by name — to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, Solomon, and on and on it goes.

But here's the really exciting news — God wants to speak to you by name! The challenge for a lot of Christians is to learn to recognize His voice.

It is important to remember that the Bible is a "living book." By that, we mean that God is always speaking in the present tense. Although the events of the Bible happened a long time ago, God uses His Word to speak into our lives today.

Sometimes when reading the Bible, one can get the feeling you are being personally addressed by God — that's His voice! Other times something just "stands out" in the passage — that too is often a way God speaks through His Word.

God speaks to instruct us, counsel us, warn us, and guide us. But most of all, God speaks to be in relationship with us.

Reading the Bible is one of the very best ways one can get to know God and His character. He has revealed Himself through His Word. It tells His story and invites us into it. As you grow as a follower of Jesus it is important to regularly read the Bible so that you get to know Him better!

TIPS TO GET STARTED:



- If you want to hear, be willing to listen.
- This means you need to clear some space every day to listen to God.
- If you want to hear, be willing to respond with obedience.
- Make it a habit to put into practice everything God says to you.
- Keep a journal.
- Record what God says to you so you don't lose it!



SCRIPTURE READING: John 10:1-20



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What is it about the relationship between a shepherd and sheep that is important for us to grasp?

What are you learning about how to recognize Jesus' voice?

What do you think God could be saying to you through these verses?

** For further scriptures on this and other conversations please refer to the resource listing on page 85.*



PRAYER:

Take a few minutes to spend some time talking to God in prayer. Prayer is a conversation with God in which we thank Him, praise Him, and make our requests. Prayers often end with the word “amen,” which means “so be it” or “this is my desire.”

Consider praying the following prayer:

Father, open my ears to listen to You. Open my mind to understand what You are saying to me through Your word. Open my heart to trust You and move my will to obey. In Jesus’ name I ask this, amen.



2) Talking to God

Last time, we talked about what it means to listen to God as He speaks through His Word. God wants us to listen to Him and live our lives according to His way. But what is amazing is that the God of the universe also invites us to talk to Him—He wants to hear from us! When He created the first two people, Adam and Eve, He walked and talked with them in the Garden of Eden.

Prayer is simply the way we talk to God. Praying doesn't require any special skill or unique access. You don't need to be a pastor or a longtime Christ follower. God invites us to call on Him any time and He will hear us. In fact, the Bible says that God hears your voice when you pray ([Psalm 116:1-2](#))!

Prayer is an amazing way to get to know God and share your heart with Him. When we pray to Him, we come to God Himself to praise Him for who He is, to thank Him for what He's done, and to ask Him for what we need. It is amazing that He listens to us and wants to hear from us all of the time. Although we still look forward to the day when Jesus returns and we live fully in God's presence once again, we can still spend time in prayer and in His presence now. He wants us to get to know Him through talking with Him and focusing on being with Him on a daily basis.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Set aside time to talk to God.
- Create some space each day to humbly pray. Spend time praising God, thanking Him, confessing to Him, and asking Him for what you need.
- Notice what He is doing.
- God answers our prayers! Consider writing down your prayers in a journal. As God answers your prayers, note it in your journal so you can look back on His faithfulness.
- If you don't have words to pray, try reading prayers in the Psalms.
- The Bible is filled with prayers. Consider reading [Psalm 51](#), [63](#) or [145](#) or find other Scripture that are prayers to God. You may even want to begin memorizing a Psalm and use it when you pray.



SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 6:5-15



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What are Jesus' instructions for how not to pray?

What seems important to Jesus in His instructions on prayer?

Why do you think Jesus highlighted these things in His prayer?



PRAYER:

Father, I praise You for who You are and what You have done in my life. Thank You that You want me to talk to You. Thank You for listening to me and caring about my needs. I pray that You help me learn how to talk with You and come to You with all of my praise, thanks and needs. I pray that Your Holy Spirit guides me in truth as I listen and talk to You. Thank You for allowing me to be in right relationship with You through Jesus. Amen.



3) *Your Identity in Christ*

When you became a follower of Jesus, you became different. Your entire identity changes because you are now someone who has been covered by Christ's sacrifice for you. Although it can be hard to believe, you are not who you once were. The sins and hangups and mistakes that had become a part of you no longer need to define you. You have received adoption into God's family and are given an entirely new identity, a new label.

There are some basic truths about your new identity as a believer in Jesus:

- You are loved by God.
- You are completely forgiven of your sin by God through Jesus Christ.
- You are now fully pleasing to God because of the righteousness that Jesus gave you.
- You are accepted as His son/daughter through faith in Him!
- You are a new creation, complete and whole because the Holy Spirit now lives in you and you are no longer the same.

These are some beautiful truths about your identity in Jesus! Whatever your past is, Jesus has made you clean. Of course, this doesn't mean that you won't still struggle with temptation or sin or with reminders or consequences of your past. But it does mean that the truth about you has been changed. God wants you to be reminded of who you are in Him. What an amazing gift God gives us when we become followers of Jesus. We become His own, His child, His friend!

Whenever you come up against your past or the enemy tries to remind you of who you were, just remember that Christ has defeated all of these things. Galatians 5:1 tells us that Jesus set us free in order to live in freedom. There is no need for us to go back to the sin that enslaves us. Live each day in your new identity, and be grateful for God's great grace in your life!



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Thank God for His salvation.
 - › Because of what Jesus did on the cross, you are saved from hell (eternal separation from God because of our sin) and invited into a personal relationship with Jesus. He completely changed your identity and now lives in you through His Spirit. Spend some time praising God for what He's done!
- Identify lies you believe.
 - › Sometimes we struggle with our new identity because we are weighed down by our past. In a journal write down some past behaviour or lies you believe about yourself. Ask Jesus to free you from these things and to help you believe Him. Start looking for verses that remind you of what is true about your identity.
- Ask God for help with your new identity.
 - › Who has God made you to be? What things about you does God delight in? Start to ask God to show you who you are in Him. Start to foster these things so that you can serve Him better.
- Consider more study.
 - › Check out the sermon series, "Label," from 2018 on the CrossRoads Church website for more about the truth of your identity in Jesus.
(www.CrossRoadsChurch.ca/2018Sermons)



SCRIPTURE READING: Colossians 1:21-23



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

How has Jesus changed your identity?

What does it mean to you to be free from accusation?

What is God doing in your life that others can see?



PRAYER:

Father, thank You for saving me! Help me to believe my true identity in You and to live it out each day. Help me never to go back to what I once was, but to embrace and believe the things You say about me. Thank You for Your grace—these things could never be true about me if it weren't for You and what You have done. I bless and praise You! Amen.



4) *The Role of the Holy Spirit in Your Life*

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. The Trinity consists of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.

We see the Holy Spirit at work all through the Bible. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is a source of life, a teacher, encourager, a manifestation of God's presence, and an ever-present guide to the Israelites, God's chosen people.

In the New Testament, we see that the Holy Spirit guides us in right living. Because we are sinful, we cannot walk in God's way by ourselves. Even after we receive salvation, we sometimes struggle with sin, but the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is given to us to empower us to follow Jesus. When we depend on Him, we can walk with Him and use His gifts to share Jesus with others.

You received the Holy Spirit in your life when you received salvation. He is promised to us as a mark of our salvation. He guides us toward truth the minute we put our trust in Jesus.

The Holy Spirit has many roles in the lives of believers. He helps us, He prays for us, He gives us wisdom, and the list goes on! The Spirit really is a gift that God has given you to help you live for Him and walk in His way.

The Holy Spirit is the Person of God Who actually lives within us, guiding us and prompting us toward obedience and love for God. Ultimately, a huge part of our ability to live godly lives is depending on the Holy Spirit to help us follow Jesus. Without Him, we won't be successful. We can't do it on our own because our desire for sin often trumps our desire to walk in God's way. But when we depend on the Spirit, He can grow His fruit in us so that we make the choices that honour the Lord.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Start learning more about the Holy Spirit.
 - › What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments? What does He do? How does He change people? Start to discover the role of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity. To help you learn more about the Holy Spirit, you can start by looking at the resources at the back of this booklet.
- Read [Romans 8:5-6](#).
 - › It might be hard to live as the Spirit asks us to, but the Bible says it's possible with His help! Start to trust and believe that the Holy Spirit is living within you to guide you in your walk with Jesus.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for help. We can talk directly to the Holy Spirit in prayer.
 - › Identify areas of your life where you would like guidance and ask Him for help.
 - › Invite the Holy Spirit to begin working on these areas in your life.
 - › Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas in your life that are not in alignment with Jesus' heart for you.
 - › Ask Him to remind you of the truth when you are tempted. Listen to His voice and obey Him.



SCRIPTURE READING: Galatians 5:16-25



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Which fruit of the Spirit do you want to see grow in your life? Why?

What are some things you can do to encourage this growth?

What do you think it means to live by the Spirit?



PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit. Thank You, Jesus, for sending the Spirit to counsel me, guide me and encourage me. Help me to depend on the Holy Spirit each day as I learn and grow and walk with You. In Jesus' name, amen.



5) Staying on Track (Temptation and Confession)

When a person becomes a follower of Jesus, they turned from their old life and began to walk in the way of Jesus. He gave them His Holy Spirit to help follow and obey Him. But this doesn't mean that one will never be tempted to sin or that they will never fail again. In fact, the Bible says to be aware of temptation because Satan is looking for ways to make you fall ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).

What is good to remember is that Jesus came to earth and lived as a real person. The Bible tells us that He can understand our weaknesses because He was tempted, although He never sinned ([Hebrews 4:15](#)). We will face temptation to sin and to fall back to our old ways. But when we are tempted, we can call out to God and He will rescue us ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

When we confess our sins to God it means that we're acknowledging what we've done and that we've sinned against Him. It restores honesty and closeness to our relationship with God and shows that we are serious about our sin, that we don't just brush it off as nothing.

It is easier to think about the concept of confessing our sins personally to God, but the Bible also talks about public confession ([James 5:16](#)) when we have wronged one another. This doesn't mean we go around constantly talking about and confessing our sins to each other. Some sins are meant to be resolved between you and the Lord. The great thing is that in confessing our sins, we're acknowledging that none of us can do it on our own. None of us start out right before God, and it's only through His grace (God's blessings that we don't deserve) that we can walk in His way. When we confess, admit our wrongdoing, and ask for forgiveness, we are making things right with one another and with God.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Learn more about confession.
 - › In [2 Samuel 11](#), King David commits a great sin before the Lord—he slept with someone else’s wife and then had her husband killed. He tried to cover it up, but God knew about his sin. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David to convict him about what he’d done. The Bible says that David faced consequences for his sin, and he repented before the Lord. He knew the gravity of what he had done and confessed and was forgiven. In [Psalm 51](#), David wrote out His confession to God. This is clearly a public confession as well, since we are still reading it today!
 - › Read [Psalm 51](#). What stands out to you or resonates with you? How does David’s confession show his heart before God?
- Pray that God would keep you from temptation.
 - › The Bible tells us to be on guard and to watch and pray against temptation. You know what sins tempt you and where you tend to fall. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you overcome these sins, and consider sharing your temptations with a fellow believer who can pray for you and keep you accountable.



SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 32:1-5



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Have you ever felt God's "heavy hand" on you when dealing with your own sin?

Why do you think confession of sin releases a burden in us?

Why do you think God wants us to confess our sin even though He has already forgiven us through Jesus?



PRAYER:

Some churches confess sins together every week. Below is a prayer said weekly in many congregations as a way of confessing sin together.

“Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed—by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name. Amen.”

Anglican Book of Common Prayer



LOVING EACH OTHER DEEPLY

6) Redefining Love

We've talked a lot about living godly lives and growing as followers of Jesus. Our next step in growth is to work on loving one another deeply. It is something Jesus asked of those who follow Him. For our next few topics, we'll explore some of the ways we can work on loving others.

One of the most amazing things about what God did for us through Jesus Christ is that while we were still sinning, Jesus was willing to die for us. And God, as His Father, sent Him to be a sacrifice for us. This is the most incredible example of love that the world has ever seen.

The very first time the word "love" is used in the Bible is when God tells a man named Abraham to take his son whom he loves and offer him as a sacrifice ([Genesis 22](#)). God doesn't make Abraham actually give his son, but this story gives us a working definition of the word "love"—a father who is willing to sacrifice his son.

Later in the Bible, we read in one of those most famous verses that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son for us. God showed us what love meant when He sent Jesus to die for us.

The way the Bible defines love is very different from what is presented to us on television or in the culture around us. Love that God demonstrates is sacrificial, patient, forgiving and hopeful. It does not come and go based on feelings, but it is a love that stays committed because of what we know is true and because of God's steadfast character.

The Bible gives a great definition of love in [1 Corinthians 13](#). A man named Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to a church that was struggling to get along and stay focused on Jesus and His way. They were disagreeing and not being supportive of one another. They needed reminders of the kind of love God had showed them and how they could show that love to one another with the help of the Holy Spirit.

God loves you with an everlasting love. He loves you so much that He sent Jesus to die for you so that you could know Him, be forgiven, and live

in hope. God has now asked you to learn how to love others so that He can be glorified and His hope can bless others. We love others because He first loved us ([1 John 4:19](#))!



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- How do you define love?
 - › What are some ways you have thought about love in the past? Think about family, romantic relationships, friendships. What are some ways love is portrayed in our culture (TV, movies, magazines, online)?
 - › Now think about how God portrays love in the Bible. What is different from what you've thought about love? What's different from what our culture says about love?
- Spend time contemplating God's love for you.
 - › The Bible says that God knows you intimately and deeply. He knit you together in your mother's womb ([Psalm 139](#)). God loves you so much, and it is His great love for you that compelled Him to send Jesus. Take some time to journal or pray about the truth that God loves you. Thank Him for His undeserved love. Ask Him how He can help you grow in your love for others.



SCRIPTURE READING: [1 Corinthians 13](#)



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What stands out to you most in this chapter?

What part of the way love is explained in [verses 4-7](#) do you need to work on the most?

What part of God's love are you most grateful for?

How can you implement godly love in your daily life?



PRAYER:

Dear Father, I am so grateful for Your love in my life. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me and to demonstrate Your amazing love. I am not deserving of Your love, but You have shown it to me anyway. Show me how to love others, not through my own strength, but through the power of Your Holy Spirit at work in my life. Make me someone who shines Your love as a way of showing others what You are like. I praise You and thank You for loving me. In Your name I pray, amen.



1) Finding Where You Fit

As followers of Jesus, we become part of a body of believers all over the world. Although believers in Jesus come from every nation and ethnicity, we are united in the fact that we are saved by what Jesus has done for us.

The Bible tells us that this body of Christ has many parts, but we all work together to bring glory to God. This means that we all have a part to play in what God is doing, and that it is important for believers to be united.

The Bible says that as a believer, you have a unique gifting that you can use for God's glory. Each of us has been given spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit. These giftings can be nurtured and should be used for the good of the body of Christ. [1 Corinthians 12](#) says that there are many different kinds of gifts and service. Your gifts might be different from others, yet all of the gifts are needed in order for the body of Christ to function properly. Each of our gifts can be uniquely used to share the Gospel and to show the world who God is and what He is doing.

A great place to learn more about the gifts of the Spirit are in [1 Corinthians 12](#) and in [Romans 12](#). These chapters tell us a bit about spiritual gifts like teaching, wisdom, faith, prophecy, tongues, serving, encouraging, giving, leading, etc. Some gifts are more on display than others, but all of the gifts are important in God's kingdom.

It is a good idea to start thinking about how the Holy Spirit may have gifted you. As you read about the gifts and learn more about them, think about which ones stand out to you and how you might be able to use your gift to serve the Lord. There are some spiritual gifts tests online that might help you get started in thinking about where God has gifted you. However, the best way to discover your gifts is through prayer, seeking advice from other Christians, and seeing where you are naturally drawn. Also, remember that your specific gift is not the only way you can serve God. We are all asked to serve God out of obedience to Him and to support the body. This could mean stepping up in a variety of ways. But God has given each of us unique talents and abilities that we can use for His glory.

The gifts of the Spirit are not meant to be mysterious. They are meant to provide us with ways to serve God as we teach, encourage, and remind each other of the truth. [1 Corinthians 12-13](#) reminds us that we are all part of one body, and no matter what gift we have, the best of them is love—something we can all work to show each other as we use our abilities to share Jesus.

You have been gifted by the God of the universe! He wants you to be a part of what He is doing in the world. It's an amazing truth and one that you can use in your journey as a disciple of Jesus.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- What are some of your natural talents and abilities?
 - › Think through some of your skills. How has God gifted you, and how can these things be used to help the body of Christ?
- How would God have you use your gifts in the church?
 - › You are unique and your gifts are needed! As you think through how God has gifted you, start looking for ways you can use those gifts to serve the body of Christ. Where can you serve in the church? How can you help other believers? How can you help those who don't yet know Jesus?



SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 12



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Which of the gifts of the Holy Spirit stands out to you?

Which gifts do you want to learn more about?

What do you think your spiritual gifts might be?

How can you use your gifts to support the body of Christ?



PRAYER:

Dear Father, it is incredible to see how creative You are! You have given each of us gifts in order to serve You better. Please show me where I fit in Your body. Make my gifts clear to me so that I can use them to better serve You and those around me. Thank You for sending me Your Spirit to help me live for You and walk in Your way. Thank you for Jesus, through whom I am invited into Your body for the glory of Your name. Show me Your will and help me to live it out today and every day. In Your name I pray, amen.



8) *Serving and Encouraging One Another*

When we become believers, we join a large, extended family! All of us who are followers of Jesus are on a journey together, heading in the same direction as we grow in faith and become more like Jesus. Just because you are a follower of Jesus, it doesn't mean that you will automatically relate to or naturally get along with every other Christian. We all have different personalities and interests. However, being believers means that we are all united in the most important thing, our belief in Jesus and His saving work in our lives.

As a follower of Jesus, you have the privilege and responsibility to serve, encourage and pray for other believers. The New Testament writers focused a lot on this as they encouraged new believers to get along with one another as they lived out the Gospel together. The term "one another" shows up about 100 times in the New Testament. Most of these "one another" uses are about loving one another, being united with one another, and showing humility towards one another.

Sometimes it is easy to criticize or judge one another, even though the Bible tells us not to ([Matthew 7:1](#)). But ultimately, we are to encourage each other with hope, love and truth. The Bible tells us to consider others above ourselves ([Philippians 2:3-4](#)) and to spend time praying for each other ([James 5:16](#)).

One of the last commands Jesus gave to His disciples before He died was for them to love one another ([John 15:17](#)). In fact, Jesus said that others would recognize them as His disciples when they showed love to one another. As Christians, it is a great witness to others when we are united as a body of believers.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Who are some other Christians you can encourage?
 - › As you grow in community with other believers, consider ways you can love, encourage and support them. Are you praying regularly for those at church, and for people in your everyday life?
- What are some specific ways you can support those around you?
 - › Consider focusing on one or two people in your life. How can you specifically serve these people? Are they in need of a phone call, a coffee date, a homemade meal, an encouraging verse?
 - › Bless someone. To bless is to give encouragement and affirmation, show acts of kindness and give gifts of thoughtfulness and time. Consider where you can bless three people weekly.
- Where do you need to give hope to someone else?
 - › Is there anyone in your life who is in need of a reminder of the hope they have in Jesus? How can you be a part of that in the coming week?



SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What stands out to you in this passage?

Why do you think this chapter focuses so much on unity in the body?

How can you encourage someone in the body who plays a different role than you do?

Think about your community of believers. How do you see everyone and their gifts working together for God's glory?



PRAYER:

Dear Father, I praise You for Your goodness and mercy. Thank You for showing me, through Jesus, what it looks like to live a life that is pleasing to You. I pray for the body of believers around me. Help me to serve and encourage others. Show me where I can bring Your hope and joy in their lives. Keep me from criticism or judgement, and show me how I can best represent You in their lives. Thank You for all that You have done and are doing. In Your name I pray, amen.



1) *Participating in Christian Community*

When we become followers of Jesus, we enter into God's family. You made a personal decision to follow Jesus, but that doesn't mean that you then walk alone and figure your faith out by yourself. In fact, it's just the opposite. God has invited us into His family and wants us to be a part of community.

In today's culture, it is sometimes easy for you to think of your faith as a very personal and solitary thing. You might hear about personal devotions, personal relationship and a personal walk with God. All of these things are important, but it is useful to remember that God also values our doing life together and walking in His way with others.

When the Bible was written, the authors most often wrote to groups of people. It was assumed that people were reading the Scriptures together, praying, worshipping, sharing meals together, etc. People were rarely alone and were not thinking of their faith as a solitary thing. The Bible makes it clear that as people follow Him, we are following together, keeping one another accountable in our faith journeys.

It is hard to live the Christian life on your own. We face many temptations to turn from God's way. When we surround ourselves with Christian community, we have a better chance of standing strong against those temptations.

As you grow as a follower of Jesus, it is important for you to surround yourself with other Christians. You can learn from them and their relationship with the Lord. They can learn from you as well. You can pray for one another, and share in life's joys and heartaches together. You can also count on your community to challenge and support you.

In the Old Testament, God was continually talking to an entire group of people, the Israelites. They were expected to live out His way together in order to show other nations what God was like. In the New Testament, God addressed His body of believers in Jesus. These people did life together—not just on Sundays, but all of the time. They were a group of Christ-followers in a culture that did not know Him.

The same should be true for believers today. We need one another in order to grow, learn, and stay strong. We need each other for support, care and love. You need to surround yourself with Christians who can encourage you. And you will need to be an encouragement to others as well. This is the body of Christ—and we are blessed to be a part of it!



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- How can you be involved in Christian community?
 - › It is so important to be friends with other believers! If you haven't yet, join a small group and get to know other believers. See where you can serve together as a way to use your gifts and get to know others. Begin seeking out community with other believers.
- In what ways can you support your Christian community?
 - › You have been given unique gifts by God and you are an important part of your community. Start to think of ways you can serve and bless those around you.
 - › Also be aware of ways your community can reach out to those who don't yet know Jesus. Who can you invite? How can you help? How can your community bless others?



SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 2:42-47



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What stands out to you in this passage?

Why were these early believers so committed to one another?

How could you benefit from community with other followers of Jesus?

What do you have to offer your community?



PRAYER:

Dear Father, I thank You for inviting me into fellowship with You, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Just as You are in community as the Trinity, I know that You want me to be a part of a fellowship with other believers. Please show me who You would have me get to know and surround myself with. Show me whom I can trust and depend on, and show me how to serve them as well. Give me a community of believers who can challenge me, encourage me, and bless me. Show me how I can do the same for them. In Your name I pray, amen.



10) Healthy Relationships

As we love one another deeply, it means working on growing and fostering healthy relationships. Jesus told His disciples that others would know that they were Christians, His followers, if they showed love to one another ([John 13:34-35](#)). We see this being put into practice as we read the New Testament. In the book of Acts, the followers of Jesus came together to support each other. They ate together, prayed together, and worshipped together. They sold their possessions and gave to anyone who was in need. They fostered relationships that supported each other at every turn ([Acts 2](#)). We also see where this failed in places, however. Paul and Barnabas, two great apostles, disagreed about a situation so much so that it kept them from ministering together ([Acts 15](#)). While an unhealthy relationship may not keep you from whatever God has for you, it can hinder you both personally and publicly.

It is important to remember that when you accepted Jesus as your personal Saviour, He gave you a new identity. You are no longer who you once were because you are now covered by His righteousness and filled with His Holy Spirit. This doesn't mean that you won't struggle with some of the same things you did before Jesus, but it does mean that, because of His Spirit, you now have the power to overcome sin and be more like Him. This is a truth that is important to remember when it comes to healthy relationships. While you can't control the behaviour of others, the Bible says that you should do everything you can to live at peace with others ([Romans 12:17-18](#)).

Healthy relationships also understand that Christ has accepted us, right where we were at. The Bible tells us that while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us ([Romans 5:8](#)). You were accepted in your sinful state, and sometimes we need to work with people where they are at. Again, this does not mean condoning or accepting sinful or dangerous behaviour. But it does mean trying to show them the compassionate love of the Father.

Finally, healthy relationships thrive on forgiveness! All of us are going to fail each other because, even when we are saved, we still struggle with sin. We will need to forgive others, and we will need others to forgive us.

God has called us to love one another deeply. This means working to have healthy relationships so that we have strong community, represent Him well, and glorify His name!



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Which relationships do you need to work on?
 - › Are there some unhealthy relationships in your life? What can you do to work on them? Where might you need to enlist help from others to create a healthy relationship with someone? Ask God to show you the part you need to play in growing relationships in your life.
- What are some ways you can show love, acceptance and forgiveness to others?
 - › As you work on relationships, God invites you to love others through acceptance and forgiveness. Is there a specific relationship that you need to encourage? Is there someone whom you need to forgive? Set a time to meet with these people and begin fostering healthy relationships.
- Do you need help forming or restoring healthy relationships?
 - › Sometimes relationships are so broken that we need outside help to begin working on them. If you have broken relationships in your life, you may want to consider calling on a Christian counselor, a strong Christian friend, or attending a program like Celebrate Recovery. Some relationships might be too damaged for you to completely fix on your own. Finding someone or a group of people with wisdom to help you work on your relationships is a great idea!



SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 4



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What stands out to you in this passage?

Why do you think this chapter focuses so much on unity in the body?

Is there anyone you need to forgive or anyone from whom you need to ask forgiveness?


How can you encourage others through your conversations?



PRAYER:

Dear Father, I praise You for who You are and for the things You have done. You are always worthy of my worship. I thank You for saving me, even while I was still in my sin. Thank You for loving, accepting and forgiving me. I pray that You help me to do these things in my relationships. Show me where I can show love to others. Help me to forgive. Give me wisdom to accept people while not condoning their wrongdoing. I pray that You help me foster healthy relationships so that people can see and know that I follow You. For the glory of Your name and Your Son, amen.

GIVING PRIORITY TO THE LAST, THE LOST, THE LEAST, THE LITTLE AND THE NEARLY DEAD



11) *Sharing What Jesus Has Done for Me*

We spent the first few topics focused on living godly lives, and the last few topics on loving each other deeply. Now we're going to spend some time learning what it looks like to prioritize those who are in need. We will start with those who are in ultimate need—people who need Jesus' salvation.

You may have heard the word “evangelism” before. It basically means bringing or sharing the good news! This good news is that Jesus came to rescue us from our sin, restore our relationship with God, and invite us into eternity with Him. This is good news, indeed!

In the New Testament, after Jesus rose from the dead and went back to Heaven, the disciples started sharing this good news with everyone. In fact, it is because they shared this news and spread it around the world that we know about Jesus today. As we read the Bible and the accounts of the disciples speaking about Jesus, we see that what they did was share what Jesus had done for them—how He had rescued them, fulfilled God's promises, and given them new hope.

The last command that Jesus gave His followers before He left earth was for them to go make more disciples, teaching them to obey His commands and baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit ([Matthew 28:19](#)). As Christians, it is part of our calling to share Jesus with others so that they can receive His salvation too.

Sometimes it can seem overwhelming to tell others about Jesus. It might feel like we don't have all of the answers or correct theology or biblical knowledge. But, ultimately, what we do when we talk to others about Jesus is simply share what He has done in our lives.

You know your story and you know who you were before Christ and what you are like now. You know how He has changed your identity and brought you new hope. This is what you can share with others—the hope that you have in Jesus!

In thinking about sharing Jesus with others, consider the following questions and your answers to them:

Who is Jesus? What does the Bible say about who He is and how have you experienced that truth in your life?

What has Jesus saved you from?

Why do you now have hope?

Jesus has done an amazing work in your life, and it should be shared with others. God is telling a big story throughout the Scripture, and He invites us to be a part of it.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- How would you talk to someone about Jesus?
 - › Consider taking some time to write out what Jesus has done in your life. What is your salvation story? How is God working in your life now? Why and how did it “click” for you when you accepted Jesus?
- Who can you share Jesus with?
 - › Are there people in your life who need Jesus? Start praying for them right away! Ask God to give you an opportunity to share the hope that you have in Him.
 - › Keep reading your Bible! The more we read the Bible, the better we know God’s story and the work He has done to bring about our salvation. If we know the story and what God has done in our lives, we can share it with others!



SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

How does Christ's love compel us to share the truth with others?

What does it mean for you to be Christ's ambassador?

How has God's righteousness changed your life?



PRAYER:

Dear Lord, I am so grateful to You! Thank You for sending Jesus to die for my sins, to restore my relationship with You and to give me hope. I deserve nothing, but You gave me everything! Lord, I pray for the people in my life who don't know You. I ask that You work in their hearts and prepare them to hear Your good news. Help me to be bold in sharing Your Word and the truth of what You have done in my life. Give me the words to say and help me to offer Your hope in a loving way. In Jesus our Saviour's name, amen.



12) Praying for God's Heart, Understanding and Direction

God's desire is for you to become more like Him through the power of His Holy Spirit. As a follower of Jesus, you will become more aware of the last, the lost, the least, the little and the nearly dead around you. As believers, our desire is to become less focused on ourselves, and more immersed in the story that God is telling about Himself and the things He is doing. We get the privilege of sharing in God's mission with those around us.

Part of growing as a follower of Jesus is being more consistent in our obedience to Him and His mission. As we know Him, we recognize His voice in the midst of the noise ([John 10:27](#)). We start to take part in the Great Commission— as Jesus was sent, He now sends us to make more disciples ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)).

Part of being involved in the great commission includes becoming more missional or mission-minded. Often times, an international trip comes to mind when we think of missions—maybe going to serve somewhere like Haiti or Uganda. Sometimes this is what God asks us to do as part of our mission work. But being on mission for Jesus includes doing that right here at home—in the workplace, with friends, with neighbours, and with family. We can love and serve those around us through sharing the good news about Jesus and serving those right here in our community.

We are on mission to draw people to God through the truth that we share, the way that we live, and the love that we show one another. As we grow closer to God, it's His character and heart that grows in us through a close walk with Jesus—which includes praying and seeking God's heart.

Of course, being on mission and having God's heart requires committed prayer. The Holy Spirit is sent to believers to help us live for Him, and to give us God's heart of compassion for those around us.

Ultimately, God always has been and is still up to something in our world. We are invited to join with God in what He is doing. We can be a part of the restoration He is bringing and the salvation that He is offering. As we pray for God's heart and understanding, He will direct us in the ways we can best serve Him and others.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Begin praying for God's heart and understanding.
 - › God promises to change us through the power of His Holy Spirit. Start praying that He would work in your life to give you His heart for people in need.
- Ask for God's direction.
 - › All believers are on mission, but that looks different for each one of us. Ask God to show you where He would have you go and whom He would have you serve.
- Start noticing.
 - › Who has God placed around you? Among your friends, family and co-workers, who needs to know about Jesus? Do you have a heart of compassion toward them? Are you looking for ways to share with them and serve them? Start noticing who God has placed in your path!



SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 25:1-5



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What are some ways you can trust God more each day?

How are God's ways different from your ways?

What are some things you need to learn about God's truth and hope?



PRAYER:

Dear Lord, You are telling a beautiful story, and I am so grateful to be a part of it! Since sin entered the picture so long ago, You have been working to restore my relationship with You. I don't deserve it, but I am grateful for Your mercy and love. I pray that You will show me how I can be on mission with You. Give me Your heart and compassion for people in need, showing me who I can be serving and helping. Grant me boldness to tell others so they can be followers who love You. Help me to serve people with Your understanding, and show me the direction You would have me go. I am grateful to be Your servant through the power of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.



13) Giving of Ourselves and Our Resources

Following Jesus means recognizing the way the Lord has blessed us and given to us so that we can do the same for others. Part of loving each other as God has asked us to, is making ourselves available through our time and our resources. This begins with an understanding that everything we have is a gift from God. We have time, gifts and resources because God has allowed us to have them. So when we give, we are recognizing that every good thing is a gift from Him ([James 1:17](#)).

As you continue to walk with Jesus, a good practice would be to start every day in a position of offering up your resources to the Lord for His purposes. It is by giving ourselves to Him, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that we acknowledge God's mercy and join Him in the things He is doing.

God also makes it clear throughout the Bible that His heart is for the poor and those in need. Over and over again, God reminds His people to care for the widow, orphan and the poor. This issue is one that is close to the heart of God, which is clear when we read about Jesus' life on earth. Jesus' life was spent ministering to and serving others. He spent time teaching, praying for people, healing people and serving those around Him. Our goal is to become more like Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Selflessly giving and serving will draw us closer to the heart of God.

We see throughout the Old and New Testaments, that God's people gave a portion of their money back to God for the care of His people and the sharing of the gospel message. In the Old Testament, Malachi 3 points out that He was disappointed that people were not tithing (giving 10 percent of their resources). God says the people were robbing Him by keeping everything to themselves. In the New Testament, it is clear that the believers pooled their belongings in order to support one another ([Acts 4:32-35](#)), and they took a collection each week when they met together ([1 Corinthians 16:1-2](#)). God has given us everything we have, and He invites us to give a portion of it back to the Christian community in order to advance the work of His kingdom.

Giving our time and money is good even when we are pulled in a variety of directions. It is important to work on creating margin in our lives. Focus on what is most important and why. As you read Scripture and pray you will know God's heart more and what He finds most important. Order your priorities around those things.

Give of your financial resources for the glory of His name and for the work of the gospel. Serve others with your time because it is a way to worship the Lord and become more like Jesus. Invite God to help you to become less distracted by your own desires and more focused on His.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Start praying that God would help you sacrifice for His glory.
 - › Consider praying [Romans 12:1](#) each day with an open-hearted posture to what God would have you do.
- Where are you serving?
 - › Have you begun to serve yet? If you haven't yet, look for ways you can serve in the church community!
- Where are you giving?
 - › Give of your financial resources to the local Christian community and other organizations who are working to advance the gospel and show compassion to those in need is a way to honour the Lord.
- Where are you blessing others?



SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Why do you think generosity is encouraged in this passage?

What does it mean for you to be a cheerful giver?

How might God have you be more generous with your time and money?



PRAYER:

Father, You are worthy of all glory and honour and praise! Thank You for generously sending Your Son Jesus who served and gave Himself for us. Lord, I pray that you show me how I can better give of my time and resources. Give me a deep love for others and a desire to serve as Jesus did. Help me to be less self-focused and more others-focused. I pray that You give me a cheerful heart as I give my money and my time for Your glory. I am blessed beyond measure, and for that I am grateful. Amen.



14) *Praying Regularly for Three People*

One of the things we have been doing for a long time as CrossRoads Church is praying regularly for three people who don't yet know Jesus. It is something we are committed to doing because we believe that God wants all to come to a saving knowledge of Him ([1 Timothy 2:3-4](#)), and we know that the prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective ([James 5:16](#)). We encourage every Christian in our congregation to begin praying for three people, committing to lifting them up to the Lord and asking God for their salvation.

We would love you to join us on this prayer journey. Consider three people you are closest to who don't yet know Jesus. Find a creative way to be reminded of your commitment. Perhaps writing their names in a prayer journal, or putting their names up on your refrigerator or mirror.

Start praying weekly for these three people in these specific ways:

- Pray that God would give you the opportunity to share the good news about Jesus with them. Ask that God would prepare you to share about what Jesus has done in your life and to give you a perfect opportunity to speak truth and grace into the lives of the three people you're praying for.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of the people you are praying for. Ask Him to help them realize their sin, to see their hopeless state without Jesus and to make them receptive to the truth.

- Pray that they would see Jesus in you. The book of [1 Peter](#) reminds its readers that we should live such good lives among those who don't know Jesus that they would see our good deeds and then glorify God. Our lives should draw people to Jesus and should make His way appealing and good. Pray that God, through the power of His Holy Spirit, would make that true in you.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Choose three people to pray for.
 - › Who immediately comes to mind when you think of three people in your life who don't know Jesus? Commit to praying weekly for them. Provide reminders for yourself (pictures, notes, phone alarms, etc.) so that praying for them becomes a habit.
- Begin praying!
 - › Pray that God would soften their hearts, make them aware of their sin, and reveal Himself to them. Pray that they would see their need for a Saviour. Ask God to give you opportunities to share the good news about Jesus with them.
- Pray that your life would reveal Jesus to them.
 - › You are on a journey with Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is working in you to make you more like Him. Invite the Holy Spirit to grow His fruit in your life so that you better reflect God's character to those around you.



SCRIPTURE READING: [Ephesians 6:18-20](#);
[2 Timothy 2:24-26](#)



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Do you find it hard to talk about Jesus? Why or why not?

As you share your faith, what should your attitude be?

In what ways can you share your faith?

How can your persistent prayer change things?



PRAYER:

Dear Lord, I praise You for providing a way for all to be saved. Thank You for working to restore us to a right relationship with You. Right now I want to commit to praying for _____, _____ and _____. You know their hearts and their need for You. I pray that the Holy Spirit would begin to work in their lives, to draw them closer to You. Show them their sin and their need for the salvation that You offer. I pray that the way I live my life would be a witness to who You are and what You do. I pray that You would give me the words to speak and the opportunity to share how You have changed my life. Jesus, I pray for these friends and ask that You would do a mighty work in them, saving them, and glorifying Yourself. In Your name I ask all of these things, amen.



15) Minute-Longer Conversations

At CrossRoads Church, we talk about minute-longer conversations. By this we mean trying to spend just a little longer talking to those you come into contact with each day. You never know when taking a little extra time to interact with someone might give them hope, provide an opportunity for an invitation to church, or give you a chance to share more about Jesus.

So what does a minute-longer conversation with someone look like? It could be lots of things! Maybe instead of simply waving at your neighbour when you're in your yard, you go over and chat for a few minutes. Perhaps you chat with the grocery clerk or your server at a restaurant. Maybe it means digging a little deeper when you're in a conversation with a friend. Is there an opportunity to go one step further, to offer a bit of encouragement, to make their day brighter? Ultimately, minute-longer conversations give us a chance to show people more of what Jesus is like. It shows caring, interest and compassion. These conversations may stay completely surface, but you never know when you might have a chance to mention your faith, or talk about something Jesus has done in your life, or even share the Gospel with them.

The concept of minute-longer conversations is simple, but it's also easy to ignore. We're often in a hurry, but when we take a few extra minutes to talk to someone, we never know what God might do with that conversation or how He might bring renewed hope into someone's life. This could lead to a deeper friendship with someone and even their eventual salvation!

Start praying that God would give you patience and help you to eliminate hurry and distraction from your life. See where He might have you slow down in order to be more attentive to individuals who are hurting or need an extra word or smile. The Holy Spirit may open up an opportunity for you to go deeper with someone.

As you think about minute-longer conversations, don't forget the three people you are regularly praying for. Think about how you can interact with

people by going a bit deeper in your conversations. Ask that extra question. Follow-up on things they've mentioned before. As you talk, think about what the Bible has to say about things going on in their lives, and share it with them. Spend some extra time sharing hope with the people in your life.

Minute-longer conversations are simple, but can make a big difference in someone's life. You can be a part of getting someone to notice and think about the things of Jesus!



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Commit to minute-longer conversations.
 - › Decide that you're going to implement this practice with people when you're running errands, interacting at work, or spending time with friends or family. Look for ways to go a bit deeper!
- Become OK with more interruptions.
 - › Sometimes minute-longer conversations means not rushing so much and spending more time focused on others. Ask God to help you slow down and notice where people are at and what they might need.
- Use the minute-longer conversations concept with the three people you're praying for.
 - › Go deeper when you can with the three you've committed to pray for. Use these opportunities to share more with them about the hope Jesus offers.



SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 10:8-15



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

How does this passage relate to the idea of minute-longer conversations?

What does it mean to you to bring Good News to those who haven't heard it?

What are some ways God is sending you to others?



PRAYER:

Dear Lord, You are good and Your mercy endures forever! Thank You for taking time with me, for being patient with my failings, and for stepping into my life and speaking truth. Thank You for sending Jesus to spend years on earth showing us how to live and dying on the cross for our sins. Lord, I pray that You help me notice people each day who are in need of a minute-longer conversation. I pray that You give me words to speak so that I can bring hope and the power of Your presence into their lives. I pray that these short conversations would spark curiosity and hope that eventually lead them to You and Your salvation. Continue Your work in my life as I follow You. In Jesus' name, amen.



DELIGHTING OURSELVES IN THE LORD THROUGH WORSHIP

16) *Worship At All Times*

We've focused time on living godly lives, loving one another deeply and giving priority to the last, the lost, the least, the little and the nearly dead. We want to spend the final part of this booklet looking at what it means to delight ourselves in the Lord through worship ([Isaiah 58:13-14](#)).

We can tend to think of worship as solely the time when we're focused on God by singing at church. We often call this "worship time." But worship is much more than singing. Worship in the life of a believer can be 24/7 as we acknowledge and praise God for all things throughout the day.

We worship Jesus by loving Him with all that we are and by loving those around us. When we focus on these things, we are worshipping God the way He has asked us to. Any of us can sit and sing a song directed at God, but what the Bible makes clear is that our worship is shown to be true through our actions.

What does this look like practically? There are so many ways you can express your worship to God each day. Worshipping God may mean that you spend time in His Word learning His ways. It may mean spending time in prayer, praising and thanking Him for who He is and what He has done. Worship might mean that you volunteer your time serving those in need or helping out at church. Worship is giving of your financial resources to the church and other places that are focused on sharing the gospel. Worshipping the Lord might mean taking one of your skills and using it for His glory. God is honoured when His creation walks in His way and lives as He created us to be.

Although we sometimes create a separation between our Christian community and what we do at home or work the rest of the week, we shouldn't. There is no separation between the sacred and the secular, because the earth is the Lord's and everything in it ([Psalm 24:1](#)).

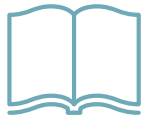
There are so many ways to worship God, but one of the most practical things you can do is to be aware of God's presence and purpose throughout

your day. No matter what is going on in your day, you can stop to bring praise and glory to God. Take time to train your thoughts to focus on the Lord throughout your day.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- What does worship mean to you?
 - › Think of some of your favourite worship songs. What are the lyrics? Why do you appreciate them and what do they teach you about who God is and why He deserves praise?
- In what ways can you offer yourself in worship to God?
 - › Worship is so much more than singing! Think about your life, your duties, your skills, and your desires. How can each of these be offered to God in worship? Begin to implement more worship of God (by loving Him and others) throughout your week.
- Worship Him!
 - › Take one day this week and focus it on worshipping God. From the moment you wake up to when you go to bed, look for ways in which you can worship Him. Praise Him each time you notice something that He has done or is doing. You will begin to realize that even in the most mundane things, God is working and worthy of worship!



SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 92



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What does this Psalm tell you about how to worship God?

What in this Psalm shows you that God is worthy of worship?

Write your own Psalm of worship to God.



PRAYER:

Dear Father, You alone are worthy of all glory, honour and praise! You are before all things, and in You all things hold together. You are the Author and Perfecter of my faith, and for this I am so grateful. Lord, I worship You because You have done good things. You have rescued me by sending Jesus to save me from my sin. Lord, I pray that this truth would cause me to worship You each new day. Show me, throughout my day, how I can better honour You. Make me aware of the things You are doing so that I can give You praise. Help me to be willing to worship You with my body, my time, my finances, and my service. It is all because of You that I can rejoice in hope. In the name of Jesus, my Saviour, amen.



11) Coming Together Weekly in Worship

Worshipping the Lord doesn't require a building, a team of musicians, or a pastor. However, the Bible and the history of both Judaism and Christianity make it clear that it is important to come together with other believers weekly to share in worship, praise and community.

Part of the importance of getting together for weekly worship is for us to encourage and to be encouraged as we walk together in following Jesus. When we isolate ourselves and separate from fellowship with other believers, it is easy to fall away because we're lacking accountability. When we spend time with other believers each week, we're reminded that others are living out the Christian life too.

There is also something powerful about believers together declaring the truth of Jesus. The Holy Spirit lives in each of us and He is there to counsel individual believers. But Jesus also said that "where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" ([Matthew 18:20](#)).

When you come to church on Sunday, you are joining a long tradition of worshipping God with other believers. You are fueled up so that you can start your week with a reminder of biblical truth, and the encouragement that comes from joining other believers. As you attend regularly, you will begin to recognize people and form relationships. You will begin to care for the church and be a part of it.

When you come to a gathering of believers, the entire event is meant to be an act of worship to God. We often think of the singing as worship, but each part of the service is meant to provide ways for us to worship Him. The Scripture is read, and we worship Him for the truth He has provided in His Word. This continues as we listen to the pastor explain the Bible so that we can take what we have heard and put it into practice throughout the week. When the offering is taken, it is a chance for us to worship the Lord by remembering that everything we have is a gift from Him. We give back a portion of our finances in thankfulness and as a way of advancing His kingdom through the work that is done with that money. Even the time

we spend greeting one another is a way to worship God by blessing and encouraging others who are created in His image. Each part of the service is meant to draw us into worship of our Creator, refuel us for the coming week, and encourage us as we interact with other believers.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Are you attending a gathering of believers weekly?
 - › Getting together weekly with other believers is important. It is not only an encouragement, but it keeps you accountable. Make it a goal to attend church every week—it should be a priority for you as a follower of Jesus.
- Notice how you can worship God throughout the service.
 - › Remember that worship goes beyond the singing! Next time you're at a service, notice each part of it and how you can worship God through it. Are there things you hadn't noticed before? Are there ways your worship of God is enhanced when you are attentive to each thing that is happening?
- Get involved!
 - › Become a part of this community of worshipers! Look for ways you can begin to serve as part of your worship to God. This may mean getting involved on Sunday by serving in children's ministry or on the welcome team. Or it could mean serving in other ways at CrossRoads throughout the week with youth, in the kitchen, or through a variety of other means. See how you can serve the church family!



SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 133



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What does this Psalm tell you about the importance of spending time regularly with other believers?

Why is it important to worship with other believers weekly?

How can coming together weekly with other believers be a blessing to you?



PRAYER:

Dear Lord, I praise You because You have saved me and invited me into Your growing family. I pray that You will encourage me to be faithful in coming together with other believers to worship You each week. I pray for those leading us in worship through singing and the teaching of Your Word. Encourage them, keep them faithful to You and Your truth, and give them boldness to declare what You have asked of them. Show me how I can serve Your church as an act of worship to You. In Jesus' name, amen.



18) Setting Apart One Day in Seven to Rest in the Presence of Jesus

The idea of Sabbath, or a day of rest, goes back to the example set by God at the very creation of the world. The Bible tells us that God created every good thing in six days. On the seventh day, He rested ([Genesis 2:2-3](#)). God is all-powerful and doesn't need physical or mental rest, but He had finished His work, and so the Bible tells us that this seventh day He set apart and made holy. Remembering the Sabbath is something the Bible says is important and is a good gift from God.

Remembering and celebrating a Sabbath each week is a way for us to abide in Jesus and worship Him. When we stop, slow down, and remember Him, He can work in us so that we bear fruit ([John 15](#)). It is a way for us to get recharged and reconnected with God. A weekly Sabbath is a great benefit to your walk with God.

So, what does celebrating a Sabbath look like practically? That is up to you. The Sabbath for a believer is not about following a specific set of rules or making sure you do this or don't do that. It truly is a gift that God has given you—a time where He allows—and asks—you to stop and spend time resting! The Bible says that the specific day of Sabbath is not necessarily important ([Romans 14:5-6](#)), only that we take time each week to rest.

Your Sabbath time might look different from someone else's. It might be on a Sunday or another day of the week. What is important is that you are intentional about it. What do you need to organize in your life so that you create a margin to insure you have a day to rest and honour the Lord? Your Sabbath time might include extra time with the Lord, reading His Word, memorizing Scripture, or spending time in prayer. It might mean more time with your family, and less time doing chores or work. Maybe it's an afternoon nap or celebrating God in His creation.

Sabbath is a time when you do something that restores your soul, draws you back to Jesus, and gets you ready to worship and live for Him in the week ahead. Whatever Sabbath looks like for you, make sure that it is a time when you remember to worship the Lord and praise Him for all He has done.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Do you currently celebrate a Sabbath?
 - › You might be attending a service, but are you intentionally setting time aside each week to rest? Think about what it might look like for you to create margin in your life so that you can remember the Sabbath each week.
- What does Sabbath look like for you?
 - › Think of what specific things you might want to incorporate into your Sabbath time. What activity restores you and brings you joy? What things draw you closer to the Lord? How can you and your family celebrate the Sabbath together? Come up with some ideas and begin implementing them each week.
- Worship God for giving you the Sabbath!
 - › What a good God we serve! He has given you a gift—a day each week to stop, rest, and reflect. He invites you to take time off and spend it recharging and honouring Him. Take some time to worship God by thanking Him and honouring the Sabbath.



SCRIPTURE READING: [Psalm 92](#)



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Notice at the top of [Psalm 92](#) that it is listed as a Psalm for the Sabbath. Why do you think this is a Sabbath Psalm?

How do you think observing a Sabbath can help you flourish and bear fruit?

How do you think you can worship God through celebrating a Sabbath?



PRAYER:

Dear Father, I praise You for thinking of me and providing a day for me to rest and recharge. Thank You for giving us an example of rest when You rested on the seventh day. I thank and praise You for being a God who gives good gifts to His children. I am not worthy, but You are so full of grace. I pray that You show me what it looks like to observe a weekly Sabbath that honours You. Show me how to slow down, create space, and abide in You. I pray that the Sabbath will benefit me so that I can continue following You and walking in Your way. You are so good, God, and Your mercies continue forever! In Jesus' name I pray, amen.



19) *Worshipping God Through the Psalms*

One amazing way to worship God is through the Bible's hymnbook! The book of Psalms is one that addresses nearly every emotion that humans experience. It is a book of songs and poems, praises and laments. It's a book of joy and anger, anguish and hope. Spending time in the Psalms is a great practice for you as you worship God and grow in your love and knowledge of Him.

Psalms in Hebrew is a word that means "praises." Originally a lot of the Psalms were set to music and used in worship.

The Psalms are a wonderful thing for you to incorporate into your worship of God. They give instruction about how to live and what it looks like to love and obey God's Word. They give you words to use when you are filled with joy and want to praise God. They also allow for you to express your tough questions, anxiety, depression or doubts to God. Although the Psalms are often thought of as songs of praise, many of them—the laments—are full of anguish, which acknowledge the reality of life, sin, loneliness and pain. The Psalms deal with anger, with unfairness and a lack of justice. Any emotion you might go through at work, with your family, with your personal journey is addressed and given voice in the Psalms.

In this booklet, we've been using the Psalms for our Scripture readings since the 15th conversation. Although we've covered a various selection of topics in the past few days, the Psalms have such variety that they are relevant to so many different areas of life.

Most importantly, the Psalms teach us about God's character. They teach us about how God cares for His creation and for us specifically. They show us truth about the rest of the Bible. They teach that God is sovereign and just and good, no matter our circumstances.

Because the Psalms are so rich for your walk with Jesus, it is a good idea to begin reading them each day and to work on memorizing and meditating on them. The use of "meditating" in the Bible has nothing to do with the

popular use of it in Eastern religion. In the Bible, to meditate on God's Word really has to do with focusing in on what God says through the Scripture. When you meditate on the Bible, you think about it, remember it, reflect on it, and act on it.



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Look at the different types of Psalms.
 - › There are different categories of Psalms. Consider reading the following Psalms to become more familiar with the different types of Psalms in the Bible:
 - * Hymn: [Psalm 8](#)
 - * Communal Laments: [Psalm 74](#)
 - * Royal Psalms (a royal psalm is a praise or prayer from a king): [Psalm 18](#)
 - * Individual Laments: [Psalm 22](#)
 - * Individual Thanksgiving Psalms: [Psalm 138](#)
- Choose a Psalm to meditate on and memorize.
 - › The Psalms are a beautiful thing to incorporate into your worship. Choose a Psalm that fits where you are at right now. If you are joyful, thankful, wanting to praise, sad, angry, etc., there is a Psalm for you! Choose one that you want to focus on. Read it numerous times and note what God is saying to you. Practice memorizing it by repeating it's lines over and over until you know it. You may have a Psalm in mind, but if not, consider meditating on and memorizing one of the following: [Psalm 1](#), [Psalm 23](#), [Psalm 40](#), [Psalm 42](#), [Psalm 51](#), [Psalm 62](#), [Psalm 121](#) or [Psalm 145](#).



SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 139



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What does this Psalm teach you about God?

What does this Psalm teach you about yourself?

How can you worship God through this Psalm?



PRAYER:

Read [Psalm 16](#), a prayer of David, as your prayer for today.



20) *A Posture of Thanksgiving*

It is easy to worship and thank God when times are good. And we should! When you can look around at the things in your life and see all that you have been blessed with, when you are joyful and happy, when things are going your way, take time to praise and thank God for what He has done!

Sometimes it can almost slip our minds to show God gratitude when life is going well. When things are good, it is easy to miss seeing how God has orchestrated it all, or we start to think that we are the cause of our own good fortune. When life is good, it is easy to become wrapped up in it and forget that it is God who gives us every good thing. We should be forever grateful to Him, and we should take time to thank Him daily.

But it is also important to take up a posture of thankfulness, even when life is bad. But how can we be thankful for bad circumstances? It is not necessarily that you need to be grateful for a terrible situation, but it is important to be thankful for all that God is doing and has done in spite of what you're going through. No matter what, there is always something to thank God for. Even if nothing else comes to mind, you can always thank Him for sending Jesus to save you from your sin. Thank You!

Being thankful in all situations doesn't mean that you need to just sit and wallow in your situation. Continue to pray for God's mercy and ask for His help to redeem your circumstance. But maintain a posture of thanksgiving in the midst of it, knowing that God is a good God Who is worthy of our worship and thanks.

We must acknowledge that following Jesus does not mean we will always be happy or that things will always be good. In fact, if we look throughout the history of Christianity, we will see that some of the most faithful believers suffered greatly. Suffering should be a part of our theology, because it is a part of life.

God knows and cares about the details of your life. So when you face difficulty, respond to God by thanking Him for knowing and caring about

everything you are facing. And remember that Jesus suffered the ultimate price—death on a cross for you. If you ever question His love, remember that and thank Him for it.

It is also important to remember that God has a plan and a story that He is telling, and it's about Him. God is telling a beautiful story from beginning to end that brings glory to Himself. We are invited into that story as followers of Jesus. We have a part to play, however big or small. We enter into it with thankfulness, hoping that we can bring God glory and shine the light back on Him.

Living with a posture of thanksgiving means surrendering to the plans of God and worshipping Him in all circumstances. He is good and worthy and full of grace. Thank Him at all times!



TIPS TO GET STARTED:

- Write down the things that you are thankful for.
 - › Take some time to make a list of the things you are thankful for. God has provided so much, but it is sometimes easy to overlook it all! You may also want to consider taking time to do this at the end of each day. Many days seem mundane, but when you stop and think about all that happened, you will notice how God showed up in so many ways. Thank Him for it!
- Read [2 Corinthians 4:7-18](#).
 - › Paul suffered greatly. Take some time to read these verses and note the tension Paul talks about. What does He care about? What is Paul's response to his suffering?



SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 107



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What does this Psalm teach you about being thankful?

How have you seen God's goodness in your life?

What is a situation where you are thankful for God's rescue?



PRAYER:

Dear Lord, I give thanks to You because You are good and Your loving kindness endures forever! You have been kind to me and shown me grace, although I do not deserve it. No matter what circumstance I find myself in, I know that I can trust You and the things You are doing. Help me to have a posture of thankfulness no matter what. Show me what it looks like to praise You, even in the bad times. Help me to find things to be thankful for with each new day. I pray that my life would be an offering to You, that I would be a part of the things You are doing and bring all praise and glory and honour to You. You are worthy of all my worship. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

RESOURCES

You are on a journey as a follower of Jesus. Below is a list of resources you might want to consider as you grow in your relationship with Him.

BIBLES

If you don't have one yet, you need one! We recommend the NIV or NLT translations.

- **Study Bible:** Some Bibles have extra notes that help you better understand the context and culture around what you're reading.
- **Bible Reading Plan:** You can get reading plans to help you read the entire Bible. Consider a One-Year Bible or simply search the Internet for reading plans to help you make your way through the whole book.
- **Reader's Bible:** You may also want to consider getting a reader's Bible that has removed the chapter and verse markings. This is the way the Bible was originally written, and reading it in this way helps you to take in the big story of all that God is doing. The Immerse Bible from Tyndale House Publishers is a great reader's version.

BOOKLET

- Go to the following link to access a booklet about the basics of Christianity: http://www.crossroadschurch.ca/downloads/sb_crossroads/ChristianityBooklet.pdf

BOOKS

- **Christianity – A Very Short Introduction** by Linda Woodhead
- **Jesus – A Very Short Introduction** by Richard Bauckham
- **Basic Christianity** by John Stott
- **Why I am a Christian** by John Stott
- **Knowing Christianity** by J.I. Packer

- **How Christianity Changed the World** by Alvin J. Schmidt
- **Christianity An Introduction** (Third Edition) by Alister E. McGrath
- **Jesus and the Gospels** by Craig Blomberg
- **Church History in Plain Language** by Bruce L. Shelley
- **Mere Christianity** by C.S. Lewis
- **The Biggest Story** by Kevin DeYoung (great children's book)
- **Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus** by Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg

CROSSROADS

- **Celebrate Recovery**
- **Alpha**
- **Engage / Equip**
- **Baptism**

SCRIPTURES

- **Conversation 1**
 - › [Psalm 32:8](#); [John 10:14-15, 27](#); [2 Corinthians 7:1](#)
- **Conversation 2**
 - › [Genesis 6:18](#); [2 Chronicles 7:14, 30:27](#); [Matthew 7:11](#); [John 15:7](#); [Philippians 4:4-7](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#); [1 Peter 3:11-12](#); [Hebrews 4:16](#); [James 5:13](#)
- **Conversation 3**
 - › [John 1:12](#); [Romans 8](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Galatians 2:20](#); [Ephesians 1](#); [1 John 3:1](#)
- **Conversation 4**
 - › [John 14:16-17, 14:26, 16:13](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [Romans 8](#); [1 Corinthians 2:12](#); [1 Corinthians 10:13](#); [2 Timothy 1:7](#)

- **Conversation 5**
 - › [Luke 11:4](#); [1 Corinthians 10:13](#); [1 Peter 3:7](#); [1 Timothy 6:9](#); [James 1:13-18](#)
- **Conversation 6**
 - › [Matthew 5:43-44](#), [22:37-39](#); [John 13:34-35](#), [15:9-17](#); [Romans 9:12](#); [Philippians 4:1-6](#); [1 John](#)
- **Conversation 7**
 - › [1 Corinthians 12](#), [14](#); [Ephesians 4](#); [Hebrews 2:4](#); [1 Peter 4:10-11](#)
- **Conversation 8**
 - › [Matthew 5:16](#); [Romans 12:7-10](#); [1 Corinthians 5:11](#); [Galatians 6:9-10](#); [Ephesians 2:10](#); [Philippians 4:1-6](#); [Hebrews 10:24-25](#); [1 Peter 4:9-10](#)
- **Conversation 9**
 - › [Psalm 133:1](#); [Matthew 18:20](#); [Acts 1:14](#); [Romans 12:4-5](#); [Hebrews 10:24-25](#); [1 John 3:24](#)
- **Conversation 10**
 - › [Ephesians 4:1-6](#); [Philippians 2:1-5](#); [Colossians 3:12-15](#); [1 Peter 3:8](#); [1 John 4:7-12](#), [19](#)
- **Conversation 11**
 - › [Isaiah 58](#); [Zechariah 7:8-10](#); [Matthew 7:12](#), [25:35-40](#), [28:19-20](#); [Luke 10:30-35](#); [James 1:27](#); [1 John 3:17](#)
- **Conversation 12**
 - › [Psalm 67:1-2](#); [John 15:1-17](#), [17](#), [20:21](#); [Romans 1:16-17](#)
- **Conversation 13**
 - › [Luke 12:33-34](#), [16:13](#); [Acts 2:42-47](#); [2 Corinthians 9:11](#)
- **Conversation 14**
 - › [Acts 3](#), [4](#), [7](#), [9:28](#); [Romans 1:16](#)

- **Conversation 15**
 - › [Acts 3:1-10; 8:26-40, 16:22-34](#)
- **Conversation 16**
 - › [Psalm 29, 103:1-6, 108:4-5, 139:13-18, 150; Romans 8:31-39; Ephesians 1](#)
- **Conversation 17**
 - › [Acts 2:42-47, 13:42-44, 20:7; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:24-25](#)
- **Conversation 18**
 - › [Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:12; Psalm 23; Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 2:23-28; John 16:33; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 4:9-11](#)
- **Conversation 20**
 - › [1 Chronicles 16:8-13; Psalm 28:7, 95:2, 100:4; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 9:11; Colossians 3:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#)

VIDEOS

- Join [RightNow Media](#) for access to multiple videos on the Christian faith
- **That the World May Know** DVD series by Ray VanderLaan (On understanding the culture of the Bible)

WEBSITE

- www.desiringgod.org. Search “mp3 Biographies” to listen to these people of faith.



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