

# What's in the Notebook?

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## The Challenge



**What is the purpose of my life?** is a question most people want to answer. The answer is not complex. The Apostle Paul explains, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NASB). Our purpose in life is to glorify God.

**So, then, how do we glorify God?** The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we Christians have no veil over our faces; we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him” (TLB).

**How, then, do we become more like Him?** Luke, who wrote Luke and Acts in the New Testament, describes how that took place with the disciples in Acts 4:13, “When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John, and could see that they were obviously uneducated, non-professionals, they were amazed and realized what being with Jesus had done for them!” (TLB)

We need to spend time “being with Jesus” so we can know Him, and become more like Him in our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

Two disciplines help us spend time alone with God.



**Bible Study:** Hebrews 4:12 says: “The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”



**Prayer:** Hebrews 4:16 encourages us: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Spending time alone with God daily deepens our love, our passion, and our intimacy with God. From Abraham to Moses, to the Apostle Paul...to each of us, time alone with God is the most important single discipline in the Christian life. God wants us to get in on it! We can too, as we put into practice the simple plan on the following pages.

As we spend time alone with God daily, we will know Him, seek Him, and love Him more and more. That’s the purpose of our lives!

## What is Time Alone with God?

In order to encounter God, we need to know what happens when we meet Him.

**1** **We get to know God.** A guy and girl want to get to know each other. How do they do that? By spending time together. And some of the best times together are alone!

We get to know Jesus the same way we get to know a person we date – by spending time alone with Him. By doing that we experience God’s desire for us—“that I may know Him” (Philippians 3:10). Spending time alone with God helps us get to know Jesus intimately.

**2** **We hear what God has to say to us.** At school, at work, or at home we rush all day long – class to class, friend to friend, home to homework. Then we hit the sack exhausted.

Rarely do we sit quietly, taking an honest look at ourselves to find out who we really are. But God wants us to say with the psalmist: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

A time alone with God lets us see ourselves through the eyes of Jesus. It is not preparing our lessons, daydreaming, or reading the newspaper. It is when God speaks to us and shows us who Jesus is and how to be more like Jesus. As we look at Jesus and at ourselves we see more clearly who He is, who we are, and what He wants us to do.

**3** **We enter God’s presence.** Think about all of the things coming up for the day – a test, a party, an appointment, shopping, ball practice, band, a date. When we begin our day in God’s presence, we give those things to Jesus and trust Him to take care of them.

Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages us to, “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.” Then we invite Jesus to walk with us and guide us through every experience of the day. Beginning the day with God allows us to practice His presence all day!

## Why Have Time Alone with God?

Our motivation to spend time alone with God will increase when we understand why it is so important.

1

**God desires our fellowship.** Now that is a staggering thought! The God who made the stars, seas, ants, and babies gets joy, satisfaction, and pleasure from being with us! That's amazing!

Often people read the Bible and pray because they have to or because they should, or they just don't do it at all. But the exciting truth is that God wants us to read His Word and talk to Him because He likes to be around us. And we will enjoy Him too. When we are with Him, He "makes our joy complete" (1 John 1:4).

2

**Jesus deserves our attention.** Jesus paid a great price for us to have a relationship to Him. He sacrificed His life. He poured out His blood. He was nailed to a splintery, painful Roman cross. Why? Because He cares about us and He wants to get to know us!

When we are alone with God, we take our eyes off of ourselves and focus our eyes on Him. He is more than worthy of our praise, our adoration and, our love. He deserves our attention!

3

**The Holy Spirit gives us an intimate relationship.** How many times have we come back from a camp or a conference highly motivated to follow Jesus, then two days to six months later – bam! We fall flat on our faces. And so we are out of it spiritually until the next camp or conference. After this happens several times we begin to think: "This 'Jesus Christ business' does not work."

The problem is that we have not developed an intimate relationship with Christ that keeps us motivated to follow Jesus.

Jesus had a need for daily intimacy with His Father. The Gospel of Mark says, "And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35). Jesus was alone with His Father often. If it was that important for Jesus, then how much more important is it for us?



## Personal Commitment

Before reading further, commit yourself to spend time alone with God every day until doing that becomes a habit. Commit yourself now to spend time alone with God by making the pledge below.

# PERSONAL COMMITMENT

Because I want to get to know Jesus better,

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

agree to have a daily time alone with God at

\_\_\_\_\_ and at \_\_\_\_\_  
(place) (time)

for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Practical Suggestions

These tested ideas will make your times alone with God better.

1

**Use this notebook.** Use it for time alone with God daily. (You will find all the necessary pages for this at the back of this book.)

2

**Go to bed on time.** It is impossible to stay up late and then wake up fresh the next day. Set a date with the Lord in the morning, then go to bed early enough to get rested.

3

**Get up in the morning.** This takes discipline! How can you make it easier to get up?

- > Pray the night before about getting up.
- > Exercise willpower. Once up, stay up.
- > Get wide-awake before meeting with the Lord. Exercise and shower if necessary.
- > Stand up or walk if sleep attacks you.

4

**Focus on Jesus.** Let your first conscious thoughts focus on Jesus. As soon as you wake up, kneel beside your bed and talk to the Lord.

5

**Keep going.** If you miss a morning, do not worry about it. You are not a failure if you miss a day. Begin again the next day.

6

**Be honest.** If you feel your time alone with God is empty and worthless, tell the Lord about it honestly. Claim the promise of His presence. Don't quit! He will honor your time with Him apart from your feelings.

7

**Be consistent.** Some days you will have a great time. Some days it will be rather routine. Either way, you will mature in Christ over time by spending time with the Lord every day.

**Remember what Jeremiah said** so long ago is true for you right now: "You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 29:13-14).



# How to Study a Passage of Scripture

**OBSERVE** (Use the *Title* and *Key Verse* sections of your Bible Response sheet.)

Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak to you, then read the passage several times. Read with an open mind, ready to receive and obey what God has to teach you.

**INTERPRET** (Use the *Summary* section of your Bible Response sheet.)

*Step 1* -- Read the verses before and after the passage in order to understand its setting and context.

*Step 2* -- Ask yourself these questions about the passage: *Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?* Then write your insights in an outline.

*Step 3* -- Look up unfamiliar terms in a dictionary or Bible dictionary.

**APPLY** (Use with the *Personal Application* section of your Bible Response sheet.)

*Step 1* -- Look for:

- > Promises to claim
- > Attitudes to change
- > Challenges to accept
- > Sins to confess
- > Commands to obey
- > Actions to take
- > Examples to follow
- > Skills to learn

*Step 2* -- Describe how the passage applies to you by asking yourself these questions: "How can I make this passage personal?" "How can I make it practical?" "How can I make it measurable?" Be specific.

## MEMORIZE

Pick a verse or passage of Scripture that speaks to you personally, and memorize it. During the *Moving Toward Maturity* series, concentrate on memorizing the assigned verses. You will find specific steps to Scripture memory on page 11.

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To begin your Bible study, pick a book of the Bible, divide it by natural paragraphs, then study one paragraph each day.

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## How to Memorize Scripture

**READ THE VERSE SEVERAL TIMES.** Read it silently, then aloud.

**UNDERSTAND THE VERSE.**

- > Read it in the context of the passages around it.
- > Read the comments about the verse in a Bible commentary (for example, *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*).
- > Write a few words about the passage.

**VISUALIZE THE VERSE.** Use your imagination to picture the verse. For example, Matthew 5:1-12 is part of the "Sermon on the Mount." Picture yourself there on the mountain with Jesus. Then place each "Beatitude" on the side of the mountain. Later, that picture will come to mind and help you recall these verses.

**BREAK DOWN THE VERSE INTO NATURAL PHRASES.** Learn the first phrase, then add the second. Continue adding phrases until you have memorized the entire verse.

**LEARN THE REFERENCE AS PART OF THE VERSE.** Say the reference, then the verse, and then repeat the reference again at the end. This helps you fix the location of the verse in your mind, allowing you to find it immediately when you need it.

**LEARN THE VERSE WORD PERFECT.** As you say the verse over and over, correct yourself until you learn it exactly as it is written. You are already taking the time to learn it, so why not do it right! This will give you confidence to quote and use the verse later.

**MEDITATE ON THE VERSE.** As you think and pray about the verse, ask God to speak to you. When the passage becomes meaningful to you, then it will be much easier for you to remember.

**REVIEW THE VERSE.** Each day review the Scripture passages you have already learned. If you review a passage every day for 30 days, it will be very difficult to forget.

# BIBLE RESPONSE



EXAMPLE

Date: *10/27 Monday*

Passage *John 1:1-5*

Title *Jesus brings light & life*

Key Verse *4*

Summary *The Word (Jesus)*

- 1. was in the beginning*
- 2. was with God*
- 3. was God*
- 4. made all things*
- 5. was life*
- 6. was light*

Personal Application *I need to let Jesus be who He wants to be to me. I can experience His light and life by spending time alone with Him every morning for the next 30 days.*

# How to Pray

Five important aspects of prayer take you deeper into your conversation with God. Use these every day. Write your thoughts on the PRAYER ACTION sheet beginning on page 30. Follow this example:

## PRAYER ACTION



EXAMPLE

Date 10/27

PRaise: Write an expression of praise.

*From Ps 8: Lord, your name is majestic in the earth and your glory is above the heavens.*

THANKSGIVING: Write down what you are most thankful for today.

*Thanks for my friend Tony, for my good test grade, and for my parents.*

CONFESSIon: Write down any sin(s) you need to confess.

*Lord, I've struggled with lust, I confess. Forgive me and strengthen me. (2 Timothy 2:22)*

PETITION: Write down needs you have in your life today.

- 1. to get all of my homework done*
- 2. to love Angela when she bugs me*
- 3. to speak with Michael about Jesus today.*

INTERCESSION: Write the names of people you want to pray for and a phrase expressing your prayer for each person.

PERSON

PRAYER

*Angela & Me*

*get along better*

*Michael*

*come to Christ*

## Thirty Days of Praise

Use these Bible passages to express praise to God.

Day 1: Psalm 8

Day 16: Psalm 104:1-23

Day 2: Psalm 23

Day 17: Psalm 104:24-35

Day 3: Psalm 34:1-3; 50:1-6

Day 18: Psalm 111

Day 4: Psalm 63:1-4; 66:1-7

Day 19: Psalm 112

Day 5: Psalm 67

Day 20: Psalm 113

Day 6: Psalm 84

Day 21: Psalm 134

Day 7: Psalm 86

Day 22: Psalm 135:1-7

Day 8: Psalm 90

Day 23: Psalm 138

Day 9: Psalm 91

Day 24: Psalm 139

Day 10: Psalm 92

Day 25: Psalm 145

Day 11: Psalm 93

Day 26: Psalm 146

Day 12: Psalm 95:1-7

Day 27: Psalm 147

Day 13: Psalm 96

Day 28: Psalm 148

Day 14: Psalm 100

Day 29: Psalm 149

Day 15: Psalm 103

Day 30: Psalm 150

## Thirty Days of Confession

Use these Bible passages and questions to focus your confessions.

- Day 1: 2 Timothy 2:22. Do I have impure thoughts?
- Day 2: Philippians 2:14-15. Do I complain or gripe?
- Day 3: Ephesians 6:1-3. Do I honor my parents?
- Day 4: Ephesians 4:31. Am I bitter toward anyone?
- Day 5: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Am I careless with my body?
- Day 6: Matthew 6:33. Do I seek what God wants first?
- Day 7: Matthew 6:14. Do I have a bad attitude toward someone?
- Day 8: 2 Timothy 2:22. Do I have impure motives?
- Day 9: Colossians 3:9. Do I lie?
- Day 10: Ephesians 6:1-3. Do I respect my parents?
- Day 11: Ephesians 4:31. Is there anger in my life?
- Day 12: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Do I have bad habits?
- Day 13: Matthew 6:33. Is God the most important person in my life?
- Day 14: Matthew 6:14. Am I holding a grudge?
- Day 15: 2 Timothy 2:22. Are my thoughts pure toward the opposite sex?
- Day 16: Philippians 2:14-15. Do I have a critical attitude?
- Day 17: Colossians 3:9. Do I steal?
- Day 18: Ephesians 4:31. Do I talk about others behind their backs?
- Day 19: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Am I lazy?
- Day 20: Matthew 6:33. Have I given God everything in my life?
- Day 21: Matthew 6:14. Do I have a wrong relationship with someone?
- Day 22: Colossians 3:9. Do I cheat in school?
- Day 23: Ephesians 6:1-3. Do I have problems with authority?
- Day 24: Ephesians 4:31. Am I jealous of anyone?
- Day 25: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Do I eat too much?
- Day 26: Matthew 6:33. Am I trusting God with my life?
- Day 27: Matthew 6:14. Is there anyone I resent?
- Day 28: Philippians 2:14-15. Does my attitude honor God?
- Day 29: Ephesians 6:1-3. Am I rebellious?
- Day 30: Ephesians 4:31. Do I argue with other people?

## Seven Days of Thanksgiving

Focus your thanks to the Lord in two areas each day: (1) Bible passages that describe His promises and gifts to you, and (2) your personal experiences of God's blessing in your life today.

**Day 1** Pray through 2 Peter 1:4 to express thanks to God.

Lord, thank You for Your great and precious promises that You have given to me that I might be part of Your divine nature.

I also thank You for:

Your amazing love,  
letting me be in Your family,  
making me really live, and  
life at its most fantastic in Jesus.

**Day 2** Pray through 1 John 1:7 and Colossians 1:14 to express thanks to God.

Father, I thank You for the blood of Your Son Jesus Christ that cleanses me from all sin and frees me from Satan's power.

I also thank You for:

Your patience,  
Your comfort,  
Your closeness to me,  
Your disciplining of me, and  
Your love inside me.

**Day 3** Pray through 1 Peter 2:24 to express thanks to God.

Lord Jesus, I thank You that You bore my sins in Your body on the cross, so that I can die to sin and live righteously, and that by Your wounds I am healed.

I also thank You for:

the body of Christ (other believers),  
the privilege of prayer,  
my home, and  
my parents.

**Day 4** Pray through Ephesians 2:8-10 to express thanks to God.

Lord, I thank You that I am saved by grace through faith, and that it is Your

free gift -- I don't have to work for it. Thank You that as Your new creation, I can live for You and help others.

I also thank You for:

my body,  
my health,  
my strength,  
happy times,  
sad times, and  
in-between times.

**Day 5** Pray through Psalm 91:11-14 to express thanks to God.

Lord, I thank You that You give Your angels charge over me to guard me in all my ways. They will steady me with their hands and protect me. You will deliver me because I love You.

I also thank You for:

opportunities for spiritual growth,  
comfort when I'm depressed,  
joy when I'm sad, and  
courage when I'm scared.

**Day 6** Pray through Ephesians 1:3-6 to express thanks to God.

Lord, thank You for choosing me to be adopted into Your family. Thank You for blessing me with all the good things You have stored up for those who belong to Christ

I also thank You for:

food,  
clothes,  
a place to live,  
freedom to say what I think and feel, and  
freedom not to say what I think and feel.

**Day 7** Pray through 2 Corinthians 8:9 and 9:8 to express thanks to God.

Thank You, Lord, for paying my debt of sin that I never could have repaid. Thank You too for giving me the grace I need today to live for You.

I also thank You for:

saving me from selfishness,  
saving me from pride, and  
saving me from eternal separation from You.

## Seven Days of Petition

Focus your petitions on: (1) Bible passages that describe what God wants for you, and (2) your personal requests for God to supply your needs.

**Day 1** (Read Galatians 2:20.) Jesus, help me to live as someone who is dead to my own selfish desires. Take charge of my body, my mind, and my emotions. Live Your life in me today.

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 2** (Read Galatians 5:22-23.) Jesus, please help me express these qualities to other people.

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 3** (Read Ephesians 5:18.) Jesus, I claim the filling of Your Spirit. Fill me now. I pray for all that comes from Your Spirit: courage, power, wisdom, sexual purity, boldness, compassion, enthusiasm, honesty, and openness.

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 4** (Read I Corinthians 12:4-6.) Lord, help me to know my spiritual gift(s) and use it for Your glory.

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 5** (Read Ephesians 6:10-17.) Jesus, it's tough to be a Christian in this world. The pressure gets heavy at times. I ask for Your strength and protection. I put on Your armor: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit -- the Word of God.

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 6** (Read Isaiah 41:10.) Lord, sometimes I am afraid. But I know I don't have to remain scared because You are my help and my strength. Help me today to overcome fear by trusting in You.

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 7** (Read Acts 1: 8.) Jesus, I want to be a witness for You to my friends. Give me the power and courage to be Your witness today.

Other needs: \_\_\_\_\_

# Praying for Myself

As you pray for yourself, use a form like the one below to (1) record your requests and (2) help you keep up with God's answers to those prayers.

## NEEDS IN MY LIFE

Date Prayed                      Request                      Answer                      Date Answered

EXAMPLE

10/27 To get all my homework done every day      I got it all done except for one day      10/31

11/6 To love Angela when she bugs me      Today I carried Angela's tray after she cut me down      11/8

12/2 To speak with Michael about Jesus today      I mentioned Jesus' name and asked if we could talk more      12/3

## Praying for Others

Through your prayers God will work powerfully in other people's lives. Pray for: your family, your Christian friends, friends who need Christ, your school, your church, and the spread of the Gospel around the world. Be very specific in your requests.

Record your prayers on your PRAYER ACTION sheet beginning on page 30.

Keep a record of the things you are praying for and write down God's answers to your prayers on pages 22-28. Put in requests on each day of the week. Then pray for those requests on that day. Doing this will keep you from having too many requests on one day.

### SUNDAY

EXAMPLE

Date Prayed	Request	Answer	Date Answered
10/27	Mom	Mom	10/28
	-flu	-out of bed &	
		feeling much better	
11/3	Dad		
	-new job		
	-growth as a Christian		
12/2	Daniel		
	-grades		
	-parents' divorce	parents talking again	

## Prayers You Can Pray for Others

Look at these prayers of the Apostle Paul. They will help you know how to pray for other people. In fact, pray these specific prayers for them.



"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in 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).



"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for us who believe (Ephesians 1:15-19).



"I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge -- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:16-19).



"We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3).