

How do I grow closer to God?

When we are unsure what to do; when we get discouraged; when we face temptation; when fear grabs hold of our heart—where will we turn? God never intended to leave us alone to figure it all out, which is the exact reason why He gave us the Bible. Through His Word, God promises to be our personal guide. God's Word is our compass, our guide, and our instruction book for life. Just like we would never bake a cake without a recipe or rebuild a car engine without a manual, a Christian should never attempt to live daily apart from God's Word.

Living by God's Word

Read these Scriptures and answer the following questions:

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

- According to this Psalm, what role should God's Word play in our lives?
- What areas of your life need the light of God's Word to shine on them?

Psalms 1:1-2

BLESSED is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down where the mockers gather. But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night.

- What does this passage say that a God-follower delights in?
- How often are they meditating on God's Word?

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

- According to this passage, what is true of all Scripture? For what is Scripture useful?
- Which are you in the most need of right now: teaching, rebuking, correcting or training? Why?

Hebrews 4:12

For 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.

- How have you seen the Word of God to be living and active in your own life or the lives of others?
- Why do you think God would design His Word to "penetrate" our lives and judge our hearts?

John 8:31-32

So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, "If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples." And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.

- What did Jesus say the condition of being a true disciple was?

- What did He say the result of knowing the truth would be?

Bible Reading Toolbox

#1 A Readable Translation of the Bible

We recommend the NIV to begin. For more on translations, go to www.zondervan.com.

#2 A Good Study Bible

On top of being understandable, it can be very helpful for the Bible you choose to be a good study Bible. We recommend two different ones, although there are many good ones available.

- **NIV Thompson Chain Reference**—this study Bible allows you to follow any subject, person, place or idea from the front of your Bible to the end.
- **NIV Study Bible**—Most widely used and accepted study Bible on the market today. Contains many charts, topical study, biographies and other aids for study.

#3 A Simple Plan

DO NOT attempt at first to bite off more than you can chew. Some try to simply read through the entire Bible beginning with Genesis 1:1, only to come down with a serious case of Levitic-itus—meaning they get stuck in some of the more difficult to read and understand parts of the Old Testament, like Leviticus. Or they may try to “read the whole Bible in a year.” Again, this requires a very labor-intensive commitment to study that most people cannot sustain over a year’s time.

We recommend you make shorter-term, more manageable goals. You don’t train to win a marathon by running 10K on the very first day. Here is a very simple 30-day plan to get you going:

1. Wait on God—begin each Bible reading time by relaxing for a couple minutes in God’s presence. This will get you in the proper frame of mind.
2. Pray Briefly—say a short prayer like, “God, guide me in the time,” or “Open my eyes to your truth,” or “Cleanse my heart...”
3. Read His Word—read a short section from the Bible. As mentioned before, you will need to decide what you will read. The plan below should get you through the next month.
 - Day 1-21: Read one chapter everyday from the Gospel of John
 - Day 22-25: Read one chapter everyday from Philippians
 - Day 26-30: Read one chapter everyday from Acts 1-5

For more plans, go to the maturity section at www.chandlercc.org.

A Helpful Tool for Digging Deeper

Although it’s not necessary, one more tool is worth mentioning. A good Bible handbook can help with questions that the normal reader would not be able to discern from the Bible itself. Sometimes insights on historical background or root definitions can help. A good Bible handbook that is written for the everyday person is **Halley’s Handbook to the Bible**.

Action Plan

The following actions will help me stay focused on God’s Word in my life:

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