

NEW BELIEVERS STUDY

Foundations For
New Believers



DESTINY POINTE CHURCH

www.destinypointe.com

An encouragement from the Palmer Family

You are on an incredible journey. At DPC, we desire to see you have a life-changing experience. As you COMMIT to coming to church you will see measurable growth in your walk with the Lord. We want to encourage you to make a commitment to attend every week. But don't wait until Sunday morning to "see how you feel." That never works. You have to make up your mind BEFOREHAND that NO MATTER WHAT, you are going to attend church.

When you come to church, bring your Bible, a notebook and a pen. Ask the Lord to open your heart to His Word. Participate in worship. Imagine that you are in front of Jesus telling Him how grateful you are and how much love Him. If you need prayer or encouragement, don't hesitate to go to ask for prayer. Romans says that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. The more you hear the Word, the more your faith will grow.

At DPC, we often say, "we desire to be the most friendly place in Columbia" and "If you want a friend, be a friend." And so we encourage you to be friendly to those around you and try to get to know people. Introduce yourself to others. Consider getting involved in a fellowship group offered throughout the month, or a discipleship group offered at different times. Perhaps consider getting involved in Setup/Take Down Team or Greeters, etc. If you are struggling in a particular area (anger, addiction, recent divorce or loss of a loved one), ask for help. DPC is a safe place full of people that aren't perfect but are opening their heart to allow God to work within them!

And remember—we love you here at DPC. We want GOD'S VERY BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY! As you commit wholeheartedly to the Lord Jesus Christ, this next year will be the most significant year of your life!

The Best is Yet to Come,

Josh & Jennifer Palmer
Lead Pastors

NEW BELIEVER'S STUDY GUIDE

study guide



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introduction

YOUR NEW BEGINNING



First of all, congratulations on your decision to begin a new life with Jesus! We are so proud of you for making the best and most important decision of your life. The Bible says that the angels in heaven rejoice when one person turns away from sin and turns to Jesus. Not only are the angels rejoicing, but we rejoice with you as well.

Our heartfelt desire is to help you reach your full potential and greatest destiny. We know that once you get a firm foothold on the path that God has planned for your life, there is no limit to how high you can climb and how far you can go. The New Believer's Study course is designed to be that first step on your path toward total victory.

YOU ARE A NEW CREATION!

The first thing we want you to understand is the powerful work that God began in you that moment you opened your heart to Jesus. The Bible says that you were "born again". That simply means from a spiritual standpoint that you began a whole new life.

2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is anew creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (KJV)

Even though you may have made some mistakes in your life, God paid a tremendous price for you. You were bought with the precious blood of His only Son, Jesus Christ. Like a diamond in rough, your edges may feel scratched and unpolished to you. But God looks far beyond where you are right now, and He sees your potential. He knows what you're capable of. He knows your true value. It doesn't matter what has happened in your past, your best days are still ahead!

introduction

YOUR NEW BEGINNING

Like the prodigal son in the parable that Jesus told, you recognized your need for a new beginning and have wisely chosen to “come home” to your Heavenly Father. And just like the father in the story, your Heavenly Father was watchfully waiting for you. When He saw you coming toward Him, He ran down the roads to greet you, put clean sandals on your feet, and a royal ring on your finger, and a robe of righteousness around your shoulders. You are His child, and you are HOME!

ALL IS FORGIVEN

Now is the time to simply accept His complete forgiveness and forgive yourself as well. Don't spend another moment regretting the past. We encourage you to keep your attention on what lies ahead, not behind. Fix your eyes on the face of Jesus. In his eyes, all you will see is His unfathomable love and unconditional acceptance.

GROWING IN NEW LIFE

Because we want your new life in Christ to be happy and successful, we designed our The New Believer's Study course to focus on the core principles that will help you grow. Each of these principles is taken from the Bible, God's Word.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-25, ²⁴Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” (KJV)

We know your decision to ask Jesus to be your Savior was sincere and that you truly want ALL the benefits of the new life He promises. This course will help you build your new life on the foundation of His Word so that you can grow into all He has for you.

Here is what you will learn over the next 6 weeks:

- **How to become a “friend of God”**...You were created for fellowship with God. He wants you to be more than His child. He sincerely desires friendship.
- **How to deal with hurt and disappointment**...Learning to forgive ourselves and others is key to living a successful and overcoming life. Your past may hold a lot of pain, but that pain does not have to hold YOU. You can be free!

introduction

YOUR NEW BEGINNING

- **How to pray...**Even His disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray effectively. Simple, honest communication with God is not only essential to real happiness, it's easy to learn.
- **How to understand the Bible...**God's Word does not have to be intimidating and difficult . As your mind and spirit are renewed by the Holy Spirit, a hunger and appreciation for His Word awakens and increases your understanding.
- **How to connect with others in the church...**God's family needs you. You have so much to offer others. Like a single plant transferred to a beautiful garden, finding your place in the Body of Christ is where your real growth begins.
- **Your higher calling and purpose...**You were chosen by God before the foundations of the world and destined for a unique and wonderful life. Discover Your New Life Today offers you an opportunity to discover that call and develop a vision for your life.

LESSON 1

God: Your Heavenly Father



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me and saving my soul through Your Son, Jesus. And thank You for adopting me as Your every own child. I ask that You open my mind and heart to receive all that You have for me...wisdom, truth, hope and Your perfect love. Give me clear understanding for all that I am learning about Your purpose for me. In Jesus' name, I pray . Amen.

1 God: Your Heavenly Father

THE GOD-SHAPED HOLE

Before people commit their lives to Jesus, they have a sense that “something is missing” inside. Often, there is an unexplainable emptiness and a lack of fulfillment and purpose. One person said it like this: “there is a God-shaped hole in every human heart and only God can fill that hole.” Without God, people try to fill the hole with whatever they can—material things, money, shopping, other people. The attempts to cope can often develop into addictive behavior.



Read and meditate on Ephesians 2:1-10

Notice that verse 1 gives an interesting description of a person’s condition before salvation:

We are _____ in our transgressions and sin. In other words, there is an emptiness or “deadness” on the inside because our connection with God is broken.

Bringing it Home:

Did you have that sense of emptiness? Can you describe it?

Have you tried to cope with this emptiness? What did you do to try to “cover” this pain?

1 God: Your Heavenly Father

THE GOD-SHAPED HOLE

According to the scriptures in Ephesians, when the relationship with God was broken and sin separated man from God, what was God's attitude? What was He willing to do to restore that relationship?

Read and meditate on Ephesians 2:4-5



"⁴But God, who is _____, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (KJV)



Read John 3:16-17

"God so _____, He _____..."



Read Titus 3:4-5

"But when the _____ and _____ of God our Savior appeared, He _____ us..."



Read Romans 5:6-8

In verse 8, "But commendeth His _____ toward us in this: While we were still sinners, _____." (KJV)

Our Heavenly Father has gone to great lengths and paid a dear price to fill the empty space in our hearts with Himself. As Paul wrote in Romans 15:13:

¹³Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

THE DEBT OF SIN WAS PAID FOR—WE JUST HAVE TO RECEIVE IT

1 God: Your Heavenly Father

MADE FOR FELLOWSHIP

Ultimately, you were “designed” to be connected with God. Everyone is. It is a part of His plan and purpose for your life. But because of sin, mankind’s connection to the Creator was broken. God is holy, and He can’t connect with sin. Romans 6:23, says, *“the wages of sin is death...”* In other words, sin demand a payment, and that payment is death.

But because of Gods’ infinite love, He created at plan to restore the connection with mankind—and He was thinking of you when He did it! God loves you so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus into this world, the perfect sacrifice, to pay the price of sin once and for all. Not only did Jesus die, but He rose from the dead conquering sin, death, and hell forever.

Read Romans 10:9-10



⁹*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*
¹⁰*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* (KJV)

The second part of Romans 6:23 says, *“The gift of God is eternal life.”* Friend, because of His great love, God gave you the gift of salvation. It cannot be earned, and it cannot be altered. And the Good News is –nothing can separate you from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). One translation of 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, *“God has restored our relationship with Him through Christ...”*

Bringing it Home:

How does it feel to know the God of this universe desires fellowship with you?

Have you ever tried to earn acceptance from God by doing specific things or trying to be “good”?

Read Genesis 1:26-27

In whose image are you created? Why?



1 God: Your Heavenly Father

MADE FOR FELLOWSHIP

When you hear that God is your Heavenly Father, what picture comes to mind? Do you know that God loves you? Or do you see God as angry with You? Do see Him as disappointed with You? This can be a difficult subject for some because naturally, most people tend to view God the way they view their earthly father. If their earthly father was preoccupied and distant, they tend to view God as preoccupied and distant,. If their earthly father was loving and supportive, it is easy to view God as loving and supportive.

Bringing it Home:

Be honest—what picture comes to mind when you think of God? What do you think God thinks about you?

Friend, no matter what your relationship was like with your earthly father, God's love extends way beyond anything even the most perfect father could give. God offers perfect acceptance, perfect strength, perfect protection, perfect love—freeing, empowering love.

One of the most beautiful pictures of God's unconditional love is found in a story that Jesus told in Luke 15:1–24. As you read this passage, allow the words to paint a picture of how much this father loved his son.

Notice the response of the father when he saw his son at a distance (verse 20).

Notice the father didn't ask his son to clean up his life first. The father accepted the son just as he was.

Notice the father gave his son gifts, even though the son didn't deserve them.

Friend, this is a beautiful picture of how much God, your Heavenly Father, loves you. His love is unconditional— not based on your performance or your perfection.

1 God: Your Heavenly Father

RECEIVING FORGIVENESS

When you repent and place your faith in Jesus and what He did for you, the Bible says all your sins are forgiven and forgotten and that your relationship with your loving Heavenly Father is restored and made complete. Now nothing separates you from your Heavenly Father.

"And the blood of Jesus purifies us from every sin." (1 John 1:7). Have you fully accepted God's forgiveness? Or do you feel like He still holds your past against you? Do you feel guilty of your past? Do you feel like God isn't pleased with you or doesn't approve of you? Do you feel like your past sins create a barrier between you and God? Explain:

Imagine that every sin you ever committed was a big, black trash bag, and a thick rope tied the bag to your ankle. It's a heavy bag, and you've been dragging it around with you all these years. But it's so heavy that it keeps you from moving very far in life. It wears you out and brings you down. In fact, it's so heavy that you feel stuck. Now imagine that someone comes with a knife and cuts that rope so that you are free from that huge burden. Would you turn around and pick up all that junk and try to carry it with you? Of course not! When you receive the gift of God's forgiveness, you can leave all the garbage from the past behind!

¹³*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

¹⁴*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*
(Philippians 3:13-14 KJV).

1 God: Your Heavenly Father

FORGIVENESS IS FOR YOU

The Bible teaches that God is compassionate, kind and full of mercy. He loves you so much that He sent His Son to die so you can be forgiven of your sins.

Sometimes people won't accept the forgiveness that Jesus paid for because they think they have to make up for the past. This thinking allows the enemy to use your past to try to trap you into living in condemnation.



Read John 3:17

"For God sent not his Son into the world to _____ the world; but that the world through him might be _____."



Read Romans 8

When you choose to accept condemnation, you live far below God's best for your life. Friend, if God has forgiven you, why don't you forgive yourself.



Read Philippians 3:13-14

The only way to move forward in life is to learn to leave the past in the past. Forget what lies behind and look forward to the good things God has in store for you. Remember, Jesus came to set you free. But you have to make the choice to walk and live in that freedom every single day.

Bringing it Home

Are there areas in your life where you need to accept God's forgiveness? Are there areas where you need to forgive yourself? Confess them before God. (You can write them down if you desire):

Now choose to accept God's forgiveness! Receive His forgiveness just like you would receive a gift. When the enemy brings up your past mistakes, declare out loud that they are washed clean by the blood of Jesus and that God doesn't hold them against you. And if God doesn't hold them against you, you don't have to live in guilt. Today is the beginning of a new day of victory in your life!

1 God: Your Heavenly Father

SUGGESTED AFFIRMATIONS

It helps to say these affirmations out loud every day.

God loves me tenderly as a father loves a child. His love for me is unconditional and indescribable. His love for me isn't based on my performance or my perfection: it's based on the price He paid for me—the blood of His Son, Jesus.

I am forgiven and free from sin and condemnation through Christ Jesus. I am a new creation. (Romans 8:1)

God loves me. He loved me enough to send His Son, Jesus so that I could be in relationship with Him. (John 3:16)

God is my Heavenly Father. His love for me is perfect, and nothing can separate me from His love. (Romans 8:37-39)

I am accepted by God just as I am. He is working in my life to bring about His purpose. (Romans 15:7, Philippians 2:13)

All things work together for my good because God loves me, and I am called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

FATHER, thank you for drawing me to You this day. Thank You for showing me Your heart of love and compassion. Thank You for filling me with peace and truth this day. Amen.

EXAMPLE PRAYERS

HEAVENLY FATHER, thank You for another day with you. Thank You for new life. Open the eyes of my heart that I may know You more. Thank You for your goodness. Amen.

DEAR LORD, thank You for forgiving me. Thank You for accepting me and making me Your own. Help me understand the fullness of Your forgiveness so that I can continue to walk in freedom. I bless Your Name today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

HEAVENLY FATHER, thank You for forgiving me. Thank You for making me clean and for giving me a new life. I ask that You speak to my heart today and show me Your goodness and mercy. Amen.

LESSON 2

Freedom through Forgiveness



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for another day with your peace in my life. Thank You for forgiving me and making me new. Open my heart to understand your forgiveness so that I can forgive another and walk truly free the way you intended. I bless Your Name today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

2 Freedom through Forgiveness

HURT WILL COME

One fact in life is certain—people will hurt you, disappoint you and injure (and wound) you. Sometimes the wound is minor and superficial (like a scratch) — more irritating than anything else:

- ...A spouse makes an insensitive comment.
- ...A co-worker gives you the cold shoulder.
- ...A boss doesn't give you the credit you deserve.
- ...A friend let you down when you needed them.

Many times the wounds are much deeper and much more serious. They aren't just irritating and inconvenient — they are incredibly painful and, many times, life altering.

- ...A spouse leaves you for someone else.
- ...A co-worker lies about you to try to ruin your reputation.
- ...A business partner betrays you.
- ...A parent injures, neglects, or abuses you.

Think of an example this past week of a wound that was superficial, minor and irritating.

Now think about a wound that was deeper and more serious. Explain the impact it had (or is having) on your life.

2 Freedom through Forgiveness

YOUR RESPONSE IS WHAT MATTERS

How you respond when you are hurt and injured is vital to your spiritual growth. You can either choose to hold on to that hurt and that injury, which leads to resentment and bitterness, or you can choose to release the hurt and let it go through forgiveness, which opens the door to the abundant life God promises you.

The Bible is clear about what happens when you don't forgive:



Read Hebrew 12:14-15

Unforgiveness allows a bitter root to grow that causes trouble and defiles man. Joyce Meyer says, "Bitter roots always produce bitter fruit". Holding on to unforgiveness poisons YOUR own life with bitterness, which poisons relationships around you (your family, your friends).



Read Mark 11:22-26

When you hold on to unforgiveness, your prayers are ineffective.



Read Matthew 6:14-15

When you hold on to unforgiveness, God can't forgive you!



In Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus tells the story of a servant who owed \$10 million to his master. The master had pity on him and forgave him the entire debt. Another man owed that same servant just \$1,000. The servant grabbed the man by the throat and demanded payment. Then he had the man thrown into jail until he could pay the debt. Let's look at what happened next:

Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: ³³Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? (KJV)

The path of unforgiveness leads to torture. It allows the person (who injured you) to have control of you and life becomes hard; life becomes a burden. Unforgiveness steals your joy. It makes you more and more negative. "Hatred demands more and more emotional space until it crowds out all positive emotions," says Don Colbert M.D. It makes you more prone to depression, more vulnerable to addiction, and more susceptible to physical illness.

2 Freedom through Forgiveness

YOUR RESPONSE IS WHAT MATTERS

Bringing it Home:

How has holding on to unforgiveness impacted your life? Take time to reflect and record your thoughts below. Be ready to discuss your response in class.

Forgiveness is less about the other person (who injured you) and more about what is best for you. God wants you to obey Him because He knows forgiving others sets you free. When you forgive, you open the door to release the poison of unforgiveness, resentment, bitterness, and hatred. You release yourself from the control of the other person and position yourself to live the abundant life of victory that God has for you.

Someone once told the story of how a boulder fell on the arm of an experienced mountain climber. He was all alone high on a mountain with his arm trapped beneath this massive boulder. He tried everything possible, but the boulder would not move. Finally, he made a decision to do the “unthinkable.” He devised a makeshift tourniquet and amputated his own arm. Amazingly, he was able to make his way to safety, and he survived. All of us face certain decisions in life that seem to reduce everything to two choices: We can choose to cling to something that is dying—and die with it. Or, we can choose to release the thing that is dying in our lives so we can live and start over again.

Choosing to forgive is like this mountain climber releasing himself from what was going to poison his whole life.

Another story says that a village in a remote part of South America was built on the banks of a river. Their river was the water supply for the entire village. One day, the people in the village began getting sick. Many even died. After several days of inspecting, experts found a mother pig and her babies trapped under a rock in the river. Those pigs were poisoning the whole river. When they removed the pigs, the people were restored to health.

When you forgive, you take the “pigs” out of the water of our life.

2 Freedom through Forgiveness

FORGIVENESS IS POSSIBLE



Read Mark 11:25

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

How is it possible to let it go?

How is it possible to forgive?

You can let it go...out of sheer obedience to God's Word. When He asks you to forgive, it's for your own good. He only has your best in mind.

You can let it go...because God has forgiven you and let go of your transgressions. "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgave each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ." The key to forgiving is to quit focusing on what they did to me and start focusing on what God did for me.

You can let it go...God promises to be your Vindicator. He promises to make your wrongs right.

You can let it go..God never asks you to do something He doesn't empower you to do. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

You can forgive...because no matter what was done to you, no matter how unfair it was—God promises that somehow in His infinite wisdom , He will work all things out for your good. (Romans 8:28)

You can forgive...because no matter how much pain you may be in right now, God has a plan for your future. His plan is not to harm you, but His plan is good. His plan is to prosper you and give you hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Forgiveness is Not...

- Waiting until you feel like forgiving.
- Dependent on the other person to say they are sorry.
- Negating the validity of the pain you've been through.
- Letting the other person off the hook so no justice is required.

2 Freedom through Forgiveness

STEPS TO FORGIVING

First, you have to make a DECISION to forgive the person who hurt or offended you. Forgiving is an act of your will, not an act of your emotions. You may never feel like forgiving—but as an act of your will— you can choose to forgive. You can choose to let it go. You can choose to release your right to get even or make them pay. You can choose to release all the toxic emotions of resentment and bitterness. Below is a sample prayer you can use, or write your own from your heart:

Heavenly Father, I choose today to forgive _____ of any offense committed against me, whether knowingly or unknowingly. I release to You all of the memories and toxic emotions of unforgiveness that may be buried in my heart. I declare before You right now that this event, situation or circumstance of offense against me is now dead forever. I ask You to heal me, Father. Help me to move forward in the freedom and strength of forgiveness and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Making a decision to forgive is the first step in beginning the process of healing: it begins the process towards freedom. It may take a while for the wound to heal. But it will never start to heal unless we are willing to choose to forgive.

Our part is to make the decision to forgive—God’s part is to heal our wounded emotions.

Realize you may not immediately FEEL like you’ve forgiven the person. In fact, the Bible says you may even need to forgive again. Forgiveness is an act of faith—you have to believe that God is healing your heart, whether you feel like it or not. Eventually, the feelings will follow. It’s easier to act your way into a feeling than to feel your way into an action. Every time any negative emotions come back up, quickly go to the Lord in prayer. Remind yourself and the devil: “Father, thank You for giving me the strength to release that debt. Thank You for the gift of forgiveness. I thank You for taking this burden so that there is no record of wrong in the ledger book of my heart. Father, right now I release these negative emotions. I let them go. I thank You that You are healing me.”

Begin to change what you say about the person who hurt you. Quit looking back! Unforgiveness keeps you trapped in the past. Once you forgive, start looking forward to the good things that God has for your life. Start looking for Him to repay you for the wrongs you’ve suffered.

2 Freedom through Forgiveness

SUGGESTED AFFIRMATIONS

It helps to say these affirmations out loud every day:

I choose to live a life of forgiveness so that I can walk in the freedom Christ intends for my life. I choose to forget the hurts of the past and focus on the plan of God for my life today. (Philippians 3:13)

I am able to forgive others because Christ forgave me and empowers me to do anything He asks me to do. (Ephesians 4:32)

I choose to forgive so that my prayers can be effective. (Mark 11:22-26)

I choose to forgive so that I can receive the forgiveness that Christ freely extends to me. (Matthew 18:21)

Father, thank You for giving me new life. Thank You for empowering me to do Your will. Search my heart today and show me if there is any unforgiveness from the past

PRAYER EXAMPLES

that is holding me back from experiencing all You have for me today. I give You all honor and praise, in Jesus' Name.

Lord, today I choose to open my heart to You. I ask You to heal every broken place in my life and fill me with Your peace and strength today. Remove all bitterness and hurt and fill me with Your joy today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Lord, thank You for another day with You. I choose to forgive other, and I ask Your forgiveness for anything in my life that has displeased You. Thank You for Your gentle correction and leading me and guiding me in Your paths of righteousness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, I humbly come to You today and thank You for Your goodness and grace. Help me to see people through Your eyes of love. Help me to see others the way You see them. I bless You today, Amen.

LESSON 3

Communicating with God



PRAYER

Dear Lord, today I open my heart again to You. Thank You for Your patience and grace working in my life. Help me understand prayer in a greater way as I seek the truth from Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

3 Communicating with God

YOUR PRAYER CONNECTION

Communication and conversation are important in any relationship. Christianity is about relationship—a relationship with our Heavenly Father through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Prayer is simply communication with God. It is a conversation with Him. Prayer is sharing what is on your heart with your Heavenly Father and allowing Him to share His heart with you. It is both speaking to God and listening.

Prayer keeps you “connected” with God and feeds your spiritual growth. Without developing a habit of prayer, you become disconnected from Him. It’s like having your “spiritual phone” off the hook, so to speak.

What is the first thought that comes to our mind when the word “prayer” is mentioned? Be honest. Do you have any feeling of:

- Guilt? I know I don’t pray enough.
- Frustration? I don’t know how to pray!
- Apathy? I really don’t care much about prayer.
- Fear? I’m just hoping they don’t call on me to pray!

Think About It:

Who is the person that is the closest to you in your life? How did you get to be so close? Did you go through tough times together? Would your relationship still be if you didn’t speak with each other?

3 Communicating with God

DEVOTED TO PRAYER

How do you define the word, devoted? If you have a dictionary, take a moment to look it up. If you don't, write down a definition in your own words.

According to Webster's Dictionary, one definition is "to set apart for a special and often higher end." Devoting yourself to prayer is for a high purpose.



Read Acts 2:42

What four things did the new believers devote themselves to?

All believers, should be devoted to these same things, including prayer. Prayer is a natural part of your relationship with your Heavenly Father. Prayer is simply opening your heart to your God.

Bringing it Home:

What are you devoted to in your life right now? Can you set aside time to devote to prayer? Is there anything you need to stop being devoted to?

Don't let the enemy keep you so busy that you miss the most important things in life. Even if you start with 5 minutes a day, start somewhere.

3 Communicating with God

NOT JUST FATHER BUT DADDY

Have you ever thought about calling your Heavenly Father, Daddy? Think about when a young child endearingly calls out, Daddy. It speaks about the closeness of the relationship, not just the function of it.



Read Romans 8:14-17

(verse 15) "*whereby we cry, _____, Father.*" (KJV)

The Greek word *Abba*, is the same as the English word, Daddy. You are a child of God adopted in His family. He is your Father. God wants you to see Him as more than the One who saved you, who protects and provides for you. He wants you to know His heart. He wants to have that endearing, close relationship with you. He wants you to know Him as Daddy.

Read Hebrews 10:19-22



Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; ²²Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (KJV)

Your Daddy God is ALWAYS available to you. He ALWAYS welcomes you with open arms. You never have to be afraid to come to Him. He will always meet with you.

Jesus' blood washed away your sins, there is nothing that can separate you from God. You can come boldly into His presence and stand with confidence before your Heavenly Father.

Read 1 John 5:14-15



"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the _____ that we desired of him." (KJV)

God is always willing and eager to listen to you.

He is never too busy for you.

He will answer your prayer when you ask in faith according to His will.

3 Communicating with God

THE LORD'S PRAYER

In Matthew 6, Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer as a model for a healthy, balanced prayer life. Each element of this prayer focuses on an important dynamic to incorporate in your own prayer life. Remember, the Lord's Prayer wasn't give to be recited mindlessly over and over again. (Matthew 6:7 it is a model, or format to follow.



Read Matthew 6:9-13

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN...HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME...

When you pray, you are praying to God who is your Father. You should come first with a heart of worship declaring His worth and excellence. He is holy and awesome, and your declaration of His worth captures His attention. He inclines His ear to your praises. (Psalm 22:3)

YOUR KINGDOM COME...YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...

Prayer should be to seek first His Kingdom, or His way of doing things. The Bible says that righteousness, peace and joy are part of God's Kingdom, and when you invite His Kingdom, you invite His peace, joy and righteousness. Read Matthew 6:25:34 to see the benefits of putting God first in your life. Focusing on His Kingdom and His way of doing things keeps you in an attitude of submission and surrender in prayer. Jesus was, in essence, saying...before you start listing all the things you want, sincerely submit yourself to God's leading.

GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD...

Jesus was encouraging believers to bring your needs to the Father and trust that, because He cares for you, He takes pleasure in providing for you. Psalm 55:22 shows us to cast our cares upon the Lord and He will sustain us. This a great time to tell the Lord about the things that concern you and trade your worries for His peace.

FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US...

Jesus teaches the importance of forgiveness so that God can hear your prayers. Be quick to confess your sins .

3 Communicating with God

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL...

Ask your Father to help you resist temptation. Ask Him to protect you from the enemy. In the Old Testament, people lived in an agricultural society. Often they would plan hedges around their fields to keep their animal safe from predator. The writer of the Old Testament would pray, "God, put a hedge of protection around our lives." What a great analogy! Pray that God puts a hedge of protection around your life, your family, your church, relationships and community. 1 Corinthians 10:13, *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*

Bringing it Home:

Isn't the Lord wonderful to give us a model for our prayer life so we can talk to Him and grow in our relationship with Him? Is there anything else you notice about the Lord's prayer? Take time to write a prayer in your own words using this model.

I am a child of God. I have an Advocate with the Father through Christ Jesus. (1 John 2:1)

SUGGESTED AFFIRMATIONS:

I submit my will to the Father and have confidence in prayer. (1 John 5:14)

Heavenly Father, I pray that You give me the spirit of wisdom and revelations that the eyes of my understanding will be flooded with your light.

PRAYER EXAMPLES

Father, thank You for creating me and given me new life through Jesus. Teach me to do Your good works and stay on the path You have prepared for me, that I might live the good life that you ordained.

LESSON 4

Your Manual for Life



PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank You for loving me and showing me Your goodness. Teach me Your ways that I may walk with You. I open my heart so that I may receive all that You have for me this day. Amen.

4 Your Manual for Life

NEW DESIRES

The Bible says that when you accept Jesus as your Savior, you are “born again” by God’s Spirit. Your sins are washed away, and you have a new beginning with God. And the Holy Spirit comes to live inside your heart.



Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a _____ creature: old things are _____; behold, all things are become new.” (KJV)

As a new creation, you will begin to notice some changes in your life. You will begin to notice that you have new desires:

- A new desire to get to know your Heavenly Father—through His Word and prayer.
- A new desire to please Him and not live a self-centered, sinful life.
- A new desire to spend time with other believers.
- And you’ll notice also that when you do make a mistake, when you do sin, there will be an uneasy feeling deep down on the inside of you. This is the Holy Spirit gently convicting your heart not to live the “old life” anymore.

Bringing it Home:

Since you made Jesus your personal Lord and Savior, have you noticed your desire changing? Have you noticed the Holy Spirit’s conviction? Briefly list a few ways below .

Another desire you may now notice is a DESIRE to read God’s Word. Do you wonder why? In the natural, when a baby is born, the instinctively desire the mother’s milk to sustain life and growth. It’s the same way with your new spiritual birth. God’s Word is the nourishment that will help you grow in faith and thrive spiritually.

4 Your Manual for Life

NEW DESIRES



Read 1 Peter 2:1-2

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, ²As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby..." (KJV)

Believers desire the milk of the _____. Why do you desire God's Word? So you can _____.

Throughout the Bible, God's Word is compared to food. Just as physical food gives you physical strength and energy so you can be healthy and grow, God's Word is spiritual food that gives you spiritual strength and energy to be healthy and grow.

Hebrews 4:12



One translation says, "for the Word of God is living and powerful..."

The word powerful means "full of energy". God's Word is spiritual energy and strength to us.

In order to grow and become mature in your walk with God, it's important to develop a consistent diet of God's Word by making a habit of reading the Bible every single day. Just as you consistently take in food every day to be nourished physically, you need to consistently take in God's Word everyday so that you can be nourished spiritually.

A good example of this is found in Exodus 16 when God supernaturally provided food (bread) for the Israelites every morning called manna. God gave these instructions, "will rain down bread for heaven for you. You are to go out each day and gather enough for that day" (Exodus 16:4). Isn't it interesting, the people couldn't gather enough manna for two or three days, or it would spoil? They had to trust and seek God every single day and gather the manna every single day. In the same way, we need to gather and eat God's word very day.

Bringing it Home:

Has God's Word ever provided spiritual strength to you? Has a passage of scripture ever encouraged you? Have you ever felt a certain scripture has helped you grow in your walk with the Lord? Write one down below:

4 Your Manual for Life

GOD SPEAKS TO US

Did you know that God wants to speak to you? Some believers complain that God never speaks to them. Yet, if they are asked about how much time they spend in God's Word, often their answer is, not much. Friend, the primary way God speaks to His people is through His Word. God will never ask His children to do anything that is contrary to His written word. That's why it is so important to KNOW what God's word says.

The Bible is your INSTRUCTION MANUAL on how to live the Christian life.



Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

How much of God's Word is inspired or God-breathed?

Is God's Word useful or profitable?

List four ways God's Word can help us live our Christian life:

4 Your Manual for Life

RENEWING YOUR MIND

At salvation, your spirit automatically becomes new, but your mind and thought patterns need to be renewed to God's thought patterns. Just like a computer can be re-programmed, your mind can be re-programmed.

Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Your mind is renewed, or re-programmed, by filling your mind with God's Word. Joyce Meyer says it like this, "We have to get rid of our old stinkin' thinkin'."

For example, maybe for some reason you've always thought that God was angry with you. Your thought patterns may have prevented you from going to the Father out of fear that He may punish you if you make a mistake.

But now as you read the Truth in God's word you see...

John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He sent his only begotten Son..."

Ephesians 2:4-5, "But because of His great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ..."

Maybe you thought that if you became a Christian, you had to be broke and miserable! But now see the Truth in God's Word:

John 1:2, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health just as your soul prospers."

Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says, the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

John 8:32, "And you shall know the _____ **TRUTH** _____ and the _____ **TRUTH** _____ will set you free."

The more truth you know, the freer you'll become in your mind and thoughts!

4 Your Manual for Life

YOUR SPIRITUAL SWORD

Did you know that there is a battle going on in the spiritual realm over you? You have an adversary, the devil, looking for a way to devour you (1 Peter 5:8) or to steal, kill and destroy you. (John 10:10) Even though the devil will fight against you, the good news is, Jesus has give you power and authority over the devil. God's Word is your protection from the enemy.

Read Ephesians 6:10-20 (17)



"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the _____."

Read Matthew 4:1-11



This chapter tells about a time when Satan tried to tempt Jesus while He was in the wilderness. Jesus was fasting and praying . The enemy knew He would be physically tired and was looking for a way to deceive Jesus. Look at verses 4, 7, and 10. What 3 words did Jesus say? _____

Jesus spoke God's Word to defeat the enemy, but notice the enemy didn't leave the first time Jesus resisted him. The enemy tried and tried to find an open door. Friend, you have to be more determined than the devil. Stand and see your deliverance.

Read James 4:7

Making Time for the Word



"Therefore, submit yourself to God, RESIST THE DEVIL and he will flee from you." (KJV)

Can you see how vitally important it is to develop a habit of reading God's word every day? Here are some practical ways to incorporate God's Word into your life:

- Choose consistent time of the day to read your Bible.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God's Word to you.
- Begin reading in Psalms, Proverbs, and the New Testament.
- Keep a journal.
- Find a Christian friend to join you in Bible study.

4 Your Manual for Life

SUGGESTED AFFIRMATIONS

It helps to say these affirmations out loud every day:

I do not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from God. (Matthew 4:4)

Because I love God's Word and meditate on God's Word—I will be successful and prosperous. I will be like a tree planted by the streams of water; whatever I do will prosper. (Psalm 1, Psalm 119)

Because I abide in the Word of God, I am truly a disciple of Jesus. (John 8:31)

God's Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:11)

I meditate on God's Word day and night. I quickly obey the Word, and I speak God's Word; therefore, I am prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8)

I overcome because of the blood of Jesus and because of the Word of God. (Revelations 12:11)

Dear Lord, as I open Your Word today, I thank You that it brings light to my heart and life. Search my heart today with Your Word. Show me Your love, and show me the are-

EXAMPLE PRAYERS

as of my life where I need to make adjustments. Thank You for Your faithfulness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, thank You for leading and guiding me in righteousness. Thank You for restoring my soul and renewing my mind by the washing of the water of the Word. Help me to remember all Your commands so that I can obey You more each day.

Precious Lord, I ask today that You open the eyes of my heart so that I may clearly see Your Word. I am Your sheep, I hear Your voice, and the voice of a stranger I'll not follow. Thank You for teaching me to follow You today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

LESSON 5

Your Church Family



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for keeping me close to You and giving me tools to be successful in this life. Show me Your plan for me, and help me to put You first in everything I do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

5 Your Church Family

PROTECTION THROUGH CONNECTION

The Bible teaches that when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you become a member of the body of Christ or the family of God. In other words, you now have a place to belong. You belong to the family of God. You belong to the flock of God. You belong to the body of Christ.

Read John 1:12, 1 John 3:1



You have become a _____ of God!

Hebrews 2:10-11



You belong to the _____ of God!

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27



You are a part of the _____ of Christ!

Read Luke 12:32



You are a part of the _____ of God!

The Christian Life is not meant to be lived alone. There is no such thing as "long ranger" Christian! Every believer needs to be part of a local church. You cannot grow in your walk with the Lord in isolation. You grow when you are committed to a local community of believers. In fact, one of the first tactics the enemy uses to try to sabotage a new believer is to get them isolated and disconnected from the local body of believers. The enemy knows that a "lone sheep" is vulnerable to attacks of a predator. Stay strong by staying connected.

The Christian life is more than a commitment to Christ, it is a commitment to the local church. John Wesley, a great Christian leader of the past, said this: "We are called to fellowship with one another. It is not optional. There are two things we cannot do alone – we cannot marry alone, and we cannot be a Christian alone."

It is so important to settle in your mind that you cannot be a Christian alone. I heard someone say that when a believer isn't in fellowship with a local body of believers or church, their life is like a coal that is removed from a raging fire. No matter how bright that coal may glow, no matter how hot that coal may be, when it is separated from the fire, it gradually loses its flame and becomes cold. Make the decision to stay committed to your local church so you can stay "on fire" for the Lord.

5 Your Church Family

POWER OF CONNECTION

Living as a member of the family of God, the flock of God and the body of Christ brings a sense of living life TOGETHER. There is a sense of living life CONNECTED to brothers and sisters in Christ.

Look up the following scriptures. How do they apply to living with a sense of togetherness and connectedness?

1 Corinthians 12:12

THIS SCRIPTURE SHARES THAT THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS OF THE BODY BUT THEY ARE ALL ONE

Ephesians 2:19-22

THIS PASSAGE SHOWS THAT JESUS IS THE CHIEF CONERSTONE AND WE ARE ALL BUILT UPON HIS FOUNDATION. TOGETHER WE ARE MADE STRONGER.

Ephesians 3:6

THIS PASSAGE SHOWS THAT WE ARE ALL HEIRS OF CHRIST. THEREFORE WE ARE ALL PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISES.

Ephesians 4:16

THIS PASSAGE SHOWS THAT EVERY JOINT OF THE BODY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL FUNCTION OF THE BODY AND THIS BRINGS INCREASE TO THE WHOLE.

Colossians 2:19

THIS PASSAGE SHOWS THAT CHRIST IS THE HEAD AND EVERY JOINT AND MEMBER CAN CONTRIBUTES TO THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF THE BODY.

5 Your Church Family

POWER OF CONNECTION

God is not sitting in Heaven with an attendance card giving you points for attending church. He has a purpose for this command. One purpose for attending church is so that you can receive and grow. You receive from the teaching of the Word, you receive from connecting with others; you GROW in your walk with the Lord. In the following verses, identify how you benefit from being committed to a local church.

Acts 2:42

THE EARLY DISCIPLES BENEFITED FROM FELLOWSHIP, GROWING IN DOCTRINE, AND IN PRAYERS AS THEY SPENT TIME TOGETHER.

Romans 10:17

FAITH IS INCREASED BY THE HEARING OF THE WORD OF GOD. ATTENDING CHURCH AND HEARING TEACHING WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH.

Ephesians 4:11-13

ATTENDING CHURCH WILL EDIFY YOU, PERFECT (MATURE) YOU, AND EQUIP YOU FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

1 Peter 5:2-3

ATTENDING CHURCH WILL FEED YOUR SPIRIT AND STENGTHEN YOUR FAITH.

The local church is not only a place to receive, it is a place to GIVE and to SERVE. It is a place to USE YOUR GIFTS and TALENTS for the Lord. You may not recognize those gifts right now, but as a believer, God has given you spiritual gifts. And like a sponge, you can only take in so much before you overflow and have to give out.

The scripture teaches that every member of the body of Christ is valuable and has an important function in the body. (See Romans 12:4-8 and Ephesians 4:11-12)

5 Your Church Family

GIVING AND SERVING

Belonging to a local church also gives the opportunity to minister to ONE ANOTHER.



Read John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give unto you, _____; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all *men* know that _____, if ye have love one to another." (KJV)



Read Romans 12:10

"Be _____ one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;" (KJV)



Read Galatians 6:2

"Bear ye one another's _____, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (KJV)

Bringing it Home:

DPC desires to teach you how to identify your gifts and talents and give you an opportunity to give and serve. Have you thought about what you have to offer to the local church?

It helps to say these affirmations out loud every day:

SUGGESTED AFFIRMATIONS

I am chosen by God, and I am a valuable part of the body of Christ. (Isaiah 43:10)

God has given me gifts and talents for His glory to use for His purpose. (1 Cor. 12:7)

Because I am part of the flock of God, it is His good pleasure to give me the Kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

5 Your Church Family

EXAMPLE PRAYERS

Dear Lord, thank You for showing me Your goodness and grace. Thank You for giving me a place to belong in the Body of Christ. Show me the gifts and abilities You've given me so that I can serve others and be an instrument of Your love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Gracious Heavenly Father, thank You for directing me to a body of believers. Thank You for Your Word that guides and fills me. Help me to follow Your commands and be a light to those around me. Water the seeds of faith in my heart that I may stand strong in You, Jesus. Thank You for loving, Amen.

Dear Father, thank You for Your Word, Thank You for my church leaders who teach me Your truth and invest in my spiritual growth. I pray for those who are in leadership that they may hear Your voice stronger and more clearly day by day. Help me be a blessing and serve those around me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.