

SESSION TWO

YOUR BEST LIFE

= *in God* =

THE PRINCIPLES
OF FOLLOWING JESUS ARE
WHAT EQUIPS US TO LIVE
OUR BEST LIFE.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH
CHRIST IS SUPPOSED TO BE
INTIMATE AND A JOURNEY WE
EMBARK ON FOR ETERNITY.

THE BIBLE

The Bible is essential for all of us who want to follow Jesus and have a closer relationship with Him.

As followers of Jesus, the Bible is the final authority for what we believe and how we live. It is the ultimate standard for every area of life.

The word 'bible' means "book of books", so we have a book that contains a lot of separate "books". It is made of 2 sections:

OLD TESTAMENT

39 books that take us from creation to just before the birth of Christ.

NEW TESTAMENT

27 books that take us from the birth of Christ to the first century of the Christian church finishing with a unique book that speaks of things to come.

There is a total of 66 Books, written by over 40 authors (fisherman, tax collectors, kings, prophets), written in different places (jail, in the wild, palaces), written over 3 continents (Asia, Africa and Europe), written over a period of 1500 years.

WHY READ THE BIBLE?

1. TO GROW SPIRITUALLY

We all know that we have to eat good foods if we want to grow strong physically. It is the same for our spiritual growth. The Bible is our spiritual food.

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4

When babies are born, they always want to drink milk. This milk helps them become strong and healthy. In the same way, when we are born again, we must read the Bible like a baby drinks milk—always looking for it so we can grow strong.

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1 Peter 2:2-3

The growth of our faith is not determined by time, but by our relationship with God. We come closer to Him as we read and obey His Word. The more we do this, the stronger our faith will grow.

2. TO LIVE A PURE LIFE.

It is possible to stay pure and holy in a world that is full of temptation to disobey God. We don't do it by will power or personal discipline alone. We do it by constantly reading God's Word and putting it in our minds and hearts.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. . . .I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:9-11

3. TO KNOW GOD BETTER.

Like any relationship, the more time you spend communicating with each other, the closer you will become. Our relationship with God works that way, too. By reading His Word, we begin to understand who God is and what His plans are.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

Many of us wonder what God's plan is for our lives. In the verse above, Paul writes that the way we know His will is by knowing Him better and becoming closer to Him.

More than knowing God's plans, we can also know His character and His nature. We see what He can do, how we can trust Him, and how much He loves us. As we grow closer to God, our faith and ability to trust Him are strengthened.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Romans 10:17

BIBLE READING HINTS

To be the person God made you to be, you'll want to spend time each day reading the Bible. It might be hard to begin with, but the Holy Spirit will equip and encourage you to do this. Try to make it a daily habit.

**READ SOME OF THE BIBLE EACH DAY
START IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WITH
EITHER MARK OR JOHN'S GOSPEL**

**RECORD WHAT YOU HAVE READ,
WHAT YOU LEARNT, IF THERE WAS
ANYTHING YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND
OR QUESTIONS YOU HAD AND HOW
YOU WILL PUT IT INTO PRACTICE IN
YOUR LIFE.**

**PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL WHEN READING
THE BIBLE. START BY ONLY READING UP
TO 10 VERSES AT A TIME, THEN STOP
AND PRAY, ASKING GOD TO HELP YOU
UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU HAVE JUST
READ**

REPEAT THIS PROCESS EACH DAY

ALL SCRIPTURE IS
GOD-BREATHED AND IS
USEFUL FOR TEACHING,
REBUKING, CORRECTING
AND TRAINING IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS,
SO THAT THE
MAN OF GOD MAY BE
THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED
FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.
2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

PRAYER

Prayer is powerful. It changes things in our lives and the lives of others.

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Talking to God is just like chatting to a friend. We can tell Him anything because He knows us better than anyone else. Like any conversation, praying also involves listening.

Prayer by ourselves and also prayer with others are both essential in our ongoing relationship with God. It is how we exercise our faith. We pray, believing God has answered our prayer by faith.

Pray with thanksgiving. That positions our spirit to anticipate an answer from God. Sometimes writing our prayers down can be useful when we are learning how to pray. God listens to what we say and answers our prayers in His timing. Sometimes it may not be the way we want or as quickly as we want or the way we had hoped.

We need to remember God is God and we cannot always understand the bigger picture that He can see. Sometimes His answer or seeming lack of answer is difficult to accept, but that is when we need to more than ever trust Him with all our heart.

TRUST IN THE LORD
WITH ALL YOUR HEART
AND LEAN NOT ON
YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING;
IN ALL YOUR WAYS
SUBMIT TO HIM,
AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR
PATHS STRAIGHT.
PROVERBS 3:5-6

HELPFUL WAY TO LEARN HOW TO PRAY

Praise

Something I thank God for,
Something I appreciate about God today

Repentance

Apologising for sinful things you have done
An attitude or action God wants me to work on today is...

Ask for others

Something for friends, family, school etc

Yourself

Ask for yourself

Prayer and fasting is another powerful means for breakthrough in our lives. Fasting is giving up something you love and praying every time you think about it. It's about sacrificing yourself and wanting more of God (Matthew 6:16)

LISTENING TO GOD

People don't normally hear an audible voice but more a gut feeling that you know is God. The most common experience of hearing from God is through reading the Bible. As you read regularly, God can reveal things to you and you will get a greater understanding of how the words apply to you. You may feel a peace in your heart, excitement, or clarity. Words may stick in your mind all day and scriptures can help to encourage and motivate you in your day to day life.

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

Matthew 2:13

We can also hear from God through dreams and visions. Joseph got instructions to flee to Egypt with baby Jesus via a dream - not all dreams and visions are from God however.

When we believe God has spoken to us through any of the above, we need to be willing to check what we have heard against scripture, the mature Christian leaders God has placed around us and that "gut" feeling we might also have. A word from God is never going to be contrary to Scripture.

CHURCH

Having a relationship with God is not something we're meant to do alone. God designed us to follow Him with other people who follow Him as well. This is what the church is. For many people, the word "church" means a place or a building. But the Bible tells us that the church isn't about location, but people—people who have faith in Jesus and follow Him together.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47

1. WORSHIP

The first and most important purpose of the church is to worship God. When we worship God we are saying that He is awesome, great, and deserving of all the honor, love, and passion that we give. We are all created to worship God, and worshiping together with other believers is one of the best ways to do this.

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."

John 4:23

2. FELLOWSHIP

Have you ever seen a group of burning coals? They burn hotter and brighter because they're together. If you take a single piece out, it will cool off faster. In the same way, we will grow stronger in our relationship with God as we spend time with people of the same faith.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

3. DISCIPLESHIP

The last command that Jesus gave His followers on earth was to go and make disciples. Making a disciple simply means helping other people follow Jesus. So being part of a church involves following Jesus and teaching others to follow Him.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20

4. TITHE & OFFERINGS

Tithe means “a tenth” and we believe in bringing the first 10 percent of increase in our wealth (sometimes that is our income) and giving it to God.

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.

Malachi 3:10

This scripture gives the reason to do this “that there may be food in my house”. God promises that as His people bring their tithes, He will build a church where we get fed, (spiritually and practically) nurtured and equipped to live for and glorify Him.

All our money belongs to God. Everything we have belongs to God. We don't own anything. God owns everything. Instead of being independent with our finances and money we need to be dependent on God to supply our needs.

Offerings are over and above the tithe and can be given to things such as building fund, missions trips or other projects and things. So tithes and offerings are two different things.

As we tithe, give offerings and are generous, God gives us so much more than we can imagine. .

EACH OF YOU SHOULD GIVE
WHAT YOU HAVE DECIDED IN
YOUR HEART TO GIVE,
NOT RELUCTANTLY OR
UNDER COMPULSION, FOR
GOD LOVES
A CHEERFUL GIVER.
2 CORINTHIANS 9:7

THINK ABOUT THIS..

THE BIBLE & PRAYER

DO YOU OWN A BIBLE AND READ IT EVERY DAY?

*DO YOU PRAY REGULARLY, ASKING GOD TO DO HIS WILL
IN YOUR LIFE?*

*DO YOU BELIEVE GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS? WHY OR
WHY NOT?*

MAKE TIME EVERYDAY TO READ THE BIBLE AND PRAY.

CHURCH

*DO YOU HAVE GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE
IN CHURCH WHO HELP YOU FOLLOW JESUS?*

ARE YOU WILLING TO BE DISCIPLED?

*ARE YOU WILLING TO DISCIPLE OTHERS AND HELP
THEM FOLLOW JESUS?*

AND I TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE
PETER, AND ON THIS ROCK I
WILL BUILD MY CHURCH,
AND THE GATES OF HADES
WILL NOT OVERCOME IT.
MATTHEW 16:18