

New Believers

Quick Start Guide



BP CHURCH



READ THIS FIRST

We'd like to be among the first to tell you how exciting it is to know that you have decided to follow Christ! This is such an important decision and we at BP Church want to help you understand what's next. The journey of a Christ follower is exciting and rewarding, and we'd love the opportunity to help you get from where you are to where God wants you to be.

Here are some things that will help you grow as you start your journey with Him:

- Start **reading the Bible**. If you don't have a Bible, take one of ours from the pew you just sat in. Don't know where to start? Try the Book of John.
- Read this **20 Day Devotional** found on the following page. This will help you grow in your understanding of how putting Christ first can change your life.
- Consider **baptism**. Baptism is a great way to share publicly that you have made a choice to follow Christ. (see Day 11 of the 20 Day Devotional for brief explanation).
- At the end of this booklet is another **30 Day Bible reading** guide that helps you see the overarching theme of the Bible.
- Attend one of our **weekend services**. This is great way to learn more about who God is and make friends with other followers of Christ.
- Sign up for the next **Newcomers class**. This class invites you to find ways to grow in your new found faith, and learn the history, the ministries, and the core values that make us BP Church. Email Brandon at brandon@bpchurch.ca

Once again, we are so excited about your decision to follow Christ and we trust that if BP Church is the place for you, that you will find friends here to journey with you and that you will grow in wisdom, understanding, and relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

BP Church Pastoral Team

If you'd ever like to **schedule a meeting** with one of our pastors to discuss Christianity or if you have any questions, feel free to contact us at 403.275.7133 or info@bpchurch.ca.

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A CHRIST-FOLLOWER?

If you just accepted Christ as your personal saviour, you may have known what you just did, but you may not know why you needed to do it. Here are a few Scriptural truths about why we need a saviour and why Jesus is the one we should trust in to save us.

TRUTH 1

Jesus is the only way to be saved and to receive eternal life. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can be saved unless it is through the Name of Jesus. John 14:6 says: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

TRUTH 2

Every single person in the world has sinned and disobeyed God's Holy commandments and has been separated from a relationship with a Holy God. By our very sinful nature we are prevented from entering heaven and cannot be set free from the guilt and chains of this world on our own. Romans 3:23 states: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

TRUTH 3

The cost of sin is eternal death. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Jesus, God's only Son, came to earth from heaven, lived a perfect life, and paid for our eternal life with His death on the cross - His life was given in exchange for ours! John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

TRUTH 4

We need to ask Jesus to save us and to forgive our sins. Understand that Jesus offers salvation to all who accept it because it is a gift. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

TRUTH 5

Now we are called to go and leave our sinning ways. John 8:11 says "...neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." We now seek to walk in the freedom that Christ gave us and demonstrate that love showed to us to the others and to share His message of hope to the rest of the world.

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL...

This 20 Day devotional is meant to help you read Scripture 5 days a week for 4 weeks. It will help you to grow in the areas that we feel are important as a Christ-follower which are:

to KNOW GOD

to LOVE OTHERS

to GROW DEEPER

and to SERVE OUR WORLD

Eugene Peterson, author of the Message Bible uses four simple words to help make your Bible reading time more meaningful. Use this structure as you read each day. Don't rush through this as you sit with God's Word. We are giving you smaller portions of Scripture, but we encourage you to read the entire chapter. That will help you gain a greater sense of understanding and context with what you just read.

**Here are the
steps to help
you** 

Step 1 | READ

Here you simply read, don't try to figure anything out. Read it slowly, meditatively; soak in the words. Let them flow over you, heart, mind, and soul. Simply take in what God is saying and notice words, phrases or people in these passages.

Step 2 | THINK

Next, we have prepared a few questions for you to consider about what you have read. Also, think about putting yourself in the story. What do you see or feel about what you are reading? Are there any words or themes that seem to repeat? What problems arise, or what doesn't seem to make sense? Consider it from different angles and perspectives. We can sometimes miss important elements when we rush through it.

Step 3 | PRAY

We have given you a brief prayer to pray but perhaps God revealed something to you through the reading. Was there something that stirred you or that you feel compelled to pray? Then pray that back to God. There needs to be a time to focus on your relationship and conversation with God. Give your reading back to God in prayer, asking Him for both clarity and strength to live what you've read out.

Step 4 | DO

Finally, it ends with a statement or thought to help consider what God is trying to say or what is He asking you to do. This is where you seek to live out the teachings found in Scripture. We are to decrease and He is to increase. We will begin to change our character, speech, and actions, making His faithfulness evident not only to us, but to those around us.

READ

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—” (Ephesians 2:1–8)

THINK

What has been the biggest change in your attitude or lifestyle now having accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord?

Salvation is a gift given by God, and not from our own works. Why do you think people have a hard time accepting what God has done for them?

PRAY

Lord, thank You for dying on the cross for me, and in my place. I know that the sins and selfish ways I used to live made me an object of wrath. Now because I put my hope in Christ's death and resurrection, I am free, loved, forgiven, and don't need to live life on my own. Your gift of salvation is something I couldn't have earned, but I have freely received and am thankful for it today.

DO

Live out each day knowing that it's Christ's death, resurrection, and forgiveness that sets us free and not our good works. We are still called to do good works, but when we do them, it's out of gratitude that God withheld nothing from us, and so we should withhold nothing from God.

READ

“But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”” (John 8:1–11)

THINK

We can never know for sure, but what do you think Jesus wrote in the sand?

Who are the people in your life that you are holding a stone waiting to throw it at them? Now, can you think of anyone that wants to throw one at you? What can you do to help people drop those rocks?

PRAY

I know that in life people will wrong me and that I will wrong others. Thank you for forgiving me of my sins so that I'm able now to forgive those that have sinned against me. In the areas of my weakness and brokenness, help me to leave that life of sin and walk in this 'no condemnation' life that you offer (Romans 8:1).

DO

Living out the Christian life has to have both grace (neither do I condemn you) and truth (go and sin no more). Whether you are speaking to a friend or confronting someone about their wrong attitude or behaviour, make sure your words are both truthful, yet full of grace.

READ

“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” (Galatians 5:17–26)

THINK

Paul, the writer of Galatians, lists some of the obvious acts of the sinful nature. Can you think of any other acts that are not so obvious and yet are just as easy and deadly to get tripped up by?

From this list, what fruit do you feel is most evident in your life? What fruit are you most eager to grow in more? Why?

PRAY

I pray Holy Spirit that you would keep me from the acts of the sinful nature and help me to nurture these fruits in my life. I pray that the more I trust and obey your leadings, the more that your fruitfulness will be evident in my life as you are leading and guiding me.

DO

Do less bad stuff and more good stuff...ever increasingly! Pretty basic stuff.

READ

"Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:35-45)

THINK

Why do you think human beings are so enamored with power and status? What do we hope it will do for us?

If you were Jesus, how would you respond to a request like "*do for us whatever we ask?*" How did Jesus respond to His disciples?

PRAY

Lord, I thank you that we can come to you and ask for anything. But before I do, help me to remember that you have given me the one thing I truly needed which was eternal life in you. Help me to use my prayers in service for others, not wanting to get more from people, but to be empowered to give more to people.

DO

Don't seek to be like the people who want to be in charge so that they can be seen as great by others - that's just self-serving. Be more like Christ and look for ways to serve others. You may just find that by serving others, people may see you as great, but not because of your title but by your life and deeds. But by then, you won't care about what others think about you because you'll be too busy thinking about others and how you can make a difference in their lives.
WIN- WIN!

READ

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 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. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.” (Matthew 16:13–20)

THINK

In our culture, what do you think people would say when asked the question “Who is Jesus?” Is it mainly positive or negative? How do you think they would describe Him?

If someone asked you that same question (Who is Jesus?), what would you tell them?

PRAY

Lord, thank you for revealing your Son to me. I thank you that I have a relationship with Jesus. Thank you that you are building your church and that you chose to use Peter, the disciples, and people like me. I pray that you would continue to grow your kingdom in and through me.

DO

Make sure that Scripture reading is a strong discipline that you continue to develop. We want to ensure that our understanding about who Jesus is and what He has done are formed by the Word of God rather than our ideas or popular culture.

READ

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 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 2:42–47)

THINK

What would it feel like to belong to a church like this? How attractive to an outsider do you think it would be to sense that kind of community?

What 1-2 things could you do to the church or community of believers you belong to in order to make it feel more like that?

PRAY

Lord, I am called not only to a relationship with you but to a relationship with others who you have called out as well. Help me to live rightly in the community that you’ve put me in, to give ministry and to receive it, to share my possessions and open my life to others. Help my testimony as a child of God living amongst other children of God to be marked by unity, generosity, kindness, and forgiveness.

DO

Who do you know right now that is in need and that you could make a difference or at least a dent in meeting that need? Have fun being a blessing!

READ

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:3–8)

THINK

If the church is pictured here as a body working together, what role/function/body part do you think that you are playing right now? Why do you think that? If you can’t think of anything, would role would you like to play?

Don’t rush this question as it’s not easy to identify gifts in yourself, but what do you feel are your top three gifts or strengths right now that God gave you to use for contributing to others and His Church?

PRAY

Lord, help me to know what my area of giftedness is and to walk in that faithfully. I thank you that you have put within me gifts, talents, abilities, passions, and experiences, all that I can use for to see your kingdom.

DO

Ask someone close to you the same question that you asked yourself above - what they think your top 3 gifts or strengths are?

READ

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.” (1 Timothy 6:17–19)

THINK

Imagine for a moment that you had \$10,000 given to you, but you couldn't spend it on yourself or benefit from it in any way. How would you spend or use that money to make an impact on as many people as you could?

If the Bible tell us not to put our hope in our wealth because it's so uncertain (which makes sense), why do most people put their hope in wealth?

PRAY

Lord, thank you for the things that you have given me that I use for my enjoyment. May you help me be kind and generous with those around me and share the blessings which I've received from you. I know that I am a steward of everything you've given me, and so help me to use it for your glory.

DO

Consider where you can be rich in good deeds and generous with your stuff to those around you.

READ

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. “This, then, is how you should pray: “ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’” (Matthew 6:6–13)

THINK

Are you more concerned about saying your prayers right or saying right prayers?

From the example Jesus gave to His disciples, which part of that prayer do you find most important to pray and why?

PRAY

Lord, thank you that you have revealed yourself as Father to us and that we can come to You as your children. Thank You for giving us an example of how we can come to you and the kinds of prayers that are important to You. Help us to always keep our conversations with You personal and frequent.

DO

Start each morning praying for God's will to be accomplished in your life. Then seek to live out that day available to God to do it through you. Consider Jesus' example when praying and focus on one aspect of that prayer to live out this day.

READ

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.'" (Matthew 18:21-35)

THINK

What kind of person would you have to be in order to be able to forgive someone 77 times? What number would you consider drawing the line at forgiving? Why?

Which people in your life are most difficult to forgive and why?

Who gets changed more when it comes to forgiveness - the person being forgiven or the one who does the forgiving? How did you come to that conclusion?

PRAY

Thank You Lord for forgiving me of my debts and sins and help me to be willing to forgive others of theirs. Sometimes I forget how big my debt was that you paid, and so remind me of your forgiveness so when other people offend me with their smaller debt, I am more willing and able to forgive.

DO

It's not always easy, but make sure that when you are tempted not to forgive others, to remember how God forgave you. That can free us from holding people in a 'prison of unforgiveness' because we know that God released us from ours.

READ

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.” (Matthew 3:13–15)

“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,” (Matthew 28:19)

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6:3–4)

THINK

Jesus died, was buried, and rose to life on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins. Water baptism is a picture of the death of our sinful nature; going under the water symbolizes burial with Christ, coming up out of the water symbolizes rising to new life in Him.

PRAY

Lord, help me to remember your death and resurrection and that you have given me a new life. Wherever I find myself, help me to be unashamed of what you have done for me and to share it with boldness to those I know. Whenever I have the opportunity to make a public confession of my faith, please give me the strength and courage to do so.

DO

If you have not been baptized yet, consider talking to a leader in your local church to learn about baptism and get baptized.

READ

“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)

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,” (1 Peter 3:15)

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:18–20)

THINK

Do you have one thing that you are passionate about that you can’t seem to help telling your friends about? It could be a sport, hobby, or special item. If so, why do you feel the need to share it with them?

What do you think being an ambassador of Christ entails? What special functions or roles do you think you would be called upon to do?

PRAY

Lord, please help me to be your ambassador today and to share your love to a broken and hurting world. When people ask me for the reason for my hope, help me to find and speak the words that express how much you mean to me and what you’ve done for me.

DO

Take a risk and share what Christ means to someone. Regardless if they reject it or receive it, our role is that we share it.

READ

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:5–11)

THINK

Jesus, we are told, is both fully God and fully man. That means that He was God's Son and yet at the same time chose to be a servant. Think for a moment the kind of love that is demonstrated there, for Jesus to be willing to come down from heaven and lay down His life for us as sinners.

There will come a day where every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (both followers and detractors alike). How do you imagine that day? What does it look like? Sound like? Feel like?

PRAY

Thank You Lord for your sacrifice, for loving us so much that you would come from heaven to earth to save us from our sins and show us a better way to live. That you took on the nature of a servant and call us to do the same. We thank you, we love you, and we worship you as our Lord and King.

DO

Take time to stop and worship the Lord. Thank Him in two different areas: for who He **is** (loving, just, forgiving) and for what He **does** (saves, sets free, heals).

READ

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16)

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” (Galatians 6:9–10)

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23–25)

THINK

How difficult would it be for you to confess your sins to someone else? What would make that kind of confession difficult? What might be the benefit or appeal to do that?

The Bible talks a lot about how we are to treat others. Why do you think God seems to care about how we treat each other?

PRAY

Lord, help me to not live my faith in isolation; help me to find close brothers or sisters that I can share not only my faith, but my life with as well. Thank You that you've brought me into a community that allows me to be cared for, and also give me opportunity to care for others.

DO

Make sure you have regular habits of meeting together with other believers (like going to church, attending smaller group gatherings or going out with Christian friends). Christianity is a team sport and functions best when we don't go it alone.

READ

“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (1 Peter 4:1–9)

THINK

What, in your opinion, are other ‘evil human desires’ that Peter didn’t mention but are still very dangerous and can damage people?

Peter writes that people think it strange that we do not participate in those kind of worldly pleasures. In what way is your life counter-cultural? If friends or coworkers look at you, what would they find strange that you don’t participate in that they might?

PRAY

Thank you that you have forgiven me of my former sins. Help me live out the rest of my life not for evil desires, but to do the things you’ve called me to do like being clear minded, self-controlled, a person of prayer, and to love others. Give me the grace to stand when others ridicule me for not joining in things you find detestable, but help me to stand strong in the convictions you’ve given me.

DO

Ask for and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. He will lead and guide you in the areas of your life that you need to pursue and in the areas that you’ve spent enough time doing and need to leave behind.

READ

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. “ ‘Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” (Matthew 25:14–30)

THINK

When it comes to God, how do you view Him? Do you see Him as angry, compassionate, unforgiving, kind, etc.? What has God given you that you feel should be used for God’s purposes?

PRAY

Lord, I realize that everything that I have, I have been given by you as your steward. Help me to be faithful with what you’ve given me to see your kingdom expand. Give me wisdom and discernment in how I should live each day to it’s fullest and not to be afraid of you, but to seek to please you in every area of my life.

DO

Write down what you feel God has gifted you with (abilities, talents, skills, finances, possessions, etc.). Consider how you can use those talents to give back to God in service to Him.

READ

“So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ” But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”” (Mark 5:24–34)

THINK

This woman suffered for 12 years. What is the longest you’ve had to suffer or put up with something?

Because of her illness, she was considered unclean and anyone she touched would make them unclean. Knowing that, how desperate do you think she was to reach out and risk the anger of the crowd to receive healing? How desperate do we find ourselves in our times of suffering?

PRAY

Thank you Lord for the faith of this woman who encourages me to also have the faith to find my healing in you. Whatever obstacles I may face, no matter the crowd I must push through, no matter what condition I’m in, may I always look to you as my source of healing, comfort, and provision for my day.

DO

If you are suffering from something today, go to Jesus for healing. You may not receive immediate answers or relief like this woman did, but Jesus is where we will ultimately find our hope and peace in difficult times.

READ

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13)

THINK

This Scripture speaks to correct people who look very spiritual outwardly, but inwardly they do not love others (which is a requirement for people of faith). Reading Paul's description of love, what sticks out the most to you? Is there any one in your life currently that you love with this kind of love?

PRAY

Lord, I want you to do great things in and through me, but Lord, always help me to have a rich and deep sense of love for those who are not only my friends but those who consider me an enemy. May in my faith I never appear arrogant or proud, or try to be better than my brothers or sisters. Help me to always live out the faith, hope, and love that you've called me to live out.

DO

Love others...and the only way to do that is - Practice, Practice, Practice!

READ

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (John 15:1–11)

THINK

It would be ridiculous to imagine a branch that falls off a tree and tries to replant itself on its own. And yet people do just that. They seek to live out their faith on their own strength and apart from Jesus Christ? Do you think that is even possible? Why or why not? Would that kind of faith even look like?

Read this passage again. What word(s) stand out the most? What is the main thing John is trying to communicate to us?

PRAY

Jesus, You are the vine and I am one of your branches. I pray that You would continue to prune me so that I will bear much fruit and that I will never seek to be fruitful apart from You. My life, hope, and salvation are found in You, and so help me to remain and to be obedient to all that You ask of me.

DO

Remain in Christ’s love today. Consider when you are reading the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) to look for and write down Christ’s commandments to us. Seek to live those out.

READ

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the Lord Almighty. “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.” (Malachi 3:10–12)

THINK

The tithe is considered giving back 10% to God of what you have earned as your heart acknowledgment that everything you have received, you have received from Him. It also provides for the work of the Lord through the church and other ministries.

How do you feel about giving the tithe to God or giving to others in general? Do you tend to see money as something you've earned or as something God has blessed you with for His purposes? Is it easy or difficult to give? Why or why not?

PRAY

Thank You for everything that You have provided for me. Every dollar that I've earned or opportunity that has come my way, I give praise to You for. Thank You for the air that I breathe, the mind that I have, and the body that allows me to accomplish the things that I have accomplished. May I never forget that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, and that I don't own anything but can receive it gratefully from You.

DO

If giving is difficult for you, start small but start immediately. The best way to break free from the control that money can have on us is by starting to give it away. Money is a great servant but a terrible master; Jesus even tells us that we can only serve one master, so keep money in its place so that it serves you rather than you serving it.

The Bible's Story in 30 Days

Day 1	Creation	Genesis 1:1–2:3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 2	The Fall	Genesis 3:1–24	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 3	The Flood	Genesis 6:9–8:19	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 4	God's covenant with Noah	Genesis 8:20–9:17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 5	God calls Abraham	Genesis 11:27–12:9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 6	God's covenant with Abraham	Genesis 15:1–21, 17:1–8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 7	Isaac's birth and Abraham's testing	Genesis 21:1–7, 22:1–19	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 8	The Israelites go to Egypt	Genesis 46:1–30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 9	The Israelites leave Egypt	Exodus 12:37–51, 13:17–22	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 10	The Ten Commandments	Exodus 20:1–21, Deut. 5:1–21	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 11	Joshua's farewell speech	Joshua 24:1–33	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 12	The Israelites request a King	1 Samuel 8:1–22	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 13	David and Goliath	1 Samuel 17:12–58	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 14	God's covenant with David	2 Samuel 7:1–29	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 15	Solomon builds the temple	1 Kings 3:1–2, 1 Kings 5:1–6:11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 16	The kingdom is split	1 Kings 11:42–12:24	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 17	The northern kingdom is conquered	2 Kings 17:6–23	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 18	Judah is conquered	2 Kings 25:1–30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 19	Return from exile	Ezra 1:1–11, Ezra 2:68–70, Ezra 3:8–13	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 20	Job's life and suffering	Job 1:1–2:13, Job 42:10–17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 21	Jesus birth	Matt. 1:18–25, Luke 2:1–21	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 22	Jesus' baptism and temptation	Matthew 3:13–4:11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 23	Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem	Luke 19:29–48	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 24	The Last Supper and Jesus' arrest	Mark 14:12–50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 25	Jesus crucifixion	John 19:1–42	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 26	Jesus' resurrection and ascension	Luke 24:1–53	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 27	The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost	Acts 2:1–41	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 28	Paul's conversion	Acts 9:1–31	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 29	The gospel goes to the Gentiles	Acts 10:1–48	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 30	The new heaven and new earth	Isaiah 65:17–25, Revelations 21:1–27	<input type="checkbox"/>

Scriptures to Memorize

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. (John 1:1–2, HCSB)

“For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him.” (John 3:16–17, HCSB)

Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.” (John 4:13–14, HCSB)

Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:29, HCSB)

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow Me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” (John 8:12, HCSB)

Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31–32, HCSB)

“My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from Me.” (John 10:27–28, HCSB)

Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in Me and believes in Me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?” (John 11:25–26, HCSB)

“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples.” (John 13:34–35, HCSB)

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in Me. There is more than enough room in My Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:1–2, HCSB)

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6, HCSB)

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in Me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in Me and My words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are My true disciples. This brings great glory to My Father.” (John 15:5–8, HCSB)

Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen Me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing Me.” (John 20:29, HCSB)

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him you will have life by the power of His name. (John 20:30–31, HCSB)

