

**PRACTICAL STEPS TO HAVE**

**A**

**GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

**EVERY. SINGLE. DAY.**

**BY**  
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## **Practical Steps to Have a Great Relationship with God Every Day**

For years scientists believed that all energy and matter could either be particles or waves; they could not be both. Then people like Albert Einstein and Louis de Broglie established that light, matter, and energy were both. It was not either or it was both: light and energy could be both particles and waves. That little discovery shook up the entire scientific community. It forced scientists to look at the universe in a fresh way. Some things are not one or the other, they are both.

The biggest breakthroughs in anyone's God connection journey happen when:

1. They receive the gift of eternal life through faith based on who Jesus is and what He accomplished through His death and resurrection.
2. The Bible is the inspired word of God.

Once a person puts their faith in Jesus He becomes to them not only the entrance to wonderful new life, at the same time, He is also the river in which all of those divine nature promises flow. Just as light is both particles and waves; Jesus is both the doorway and the substance of eternal life at the same time. In C.S. Lewis' famous Chronicles of Narnia stories, once the children climb through the "wardrobe" they step into a whole new world; when you receive Jesus, you too step into a new dimension where you unite with God and the impossible can become possible. And Jesus actually becomes that new world. He is not only the way to life, He is the life. (John 14:6)

### **The Spiritual Growth/Knowing God Correlation**

As we talk about relationship with God, you have noticed that I also consistently talk about spiritual growth as well. That is because there is a strong correlation between the two. The more you get to know God, the more you will grow and the more you grow spiritually, the more you will get to know God. In 2 Peter 1:5-6, the Apostle Peter encourages all believers to diligently add to their faith some important life virtues (like moral excellence, knowledge, and self-control). In verse 8 he then writes, *"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

In other words, continued spiritual and personal growth allows us to be useful and fruitful in a real relationship with Jesus. When in a relationship with someone much more knowledgeable and experienced; the more we personally grow the deeper the relationship can become. Growth allows more in-depth knowledge of the person.

A little child can know their parents to a very limited degree at first. They know their mom and dad love, care for, and provide for them, etc. But they have very limited understanding of why

certain things upset them and other things make them happy, they have no bandwidth in regards to their personalities, priorities, or abilities. It took me, for example, until my teen years to have a clue about what my dad really did at work. And still at that age, I did not really understand so much about why he was the way he was or why he did what he did.

They have very little comprehension of all the factors that make up adult life. That little child is loved and can know their parents love, but they just do not yet have the capacity to share in a mature relationship. It is very limited in its depth.

As that child grows, especially once they become adults themselves their relationship can grow deeper and fuller. Why? Because the child, having grown and matured, now has the ability to relate much more to the complexities of life the parent has lived through. They now understand the pressures of paying the bills, the joys of seeing others grow and excel, or the inner drive to make a real difference in the world. A little child just does not have the capacity to grasp these types of things, so though the relationship can be wonderful, it can only go stronger and deeper as the child matures.

The more you grow spiritually and personally, the deeper and richer your relationship with God will be. Obviously, you will never know everything God knows or deal with everything He deals with; but you will understand Him better as you grow. There are many cycles in God's kingdom and knowing and growing is one of them. The more you know God, the more you grow and the more you grow, the better you can know Him.

### **The Big Three**

So now that you've stepped through the door of faith in Christ, let's look at three simple practices you will use the rest of your life to grow in your relationship with God, discover the vastness and depth of what God has already provided for you in the Son, and to become more and more like Jesus. I and every other growing Christian I know or have ever read about, have used or continue to use these practices. They work and always will.

Physicists tell us that hydrogen is the most fundamental element in the universe. As a matter of fact, they say all you need to form a massive star is hydrogen, gravity, and time. Isn't that amazing? Mind-bogglingly huge suns only need three things to become hot, light giving, powerful forces in the universe.

There are also only three main practices you need to have a great relationship with God. You can and should learn, explore, and try out various ways and aspects of doing these three practices. And there are always new and exciting truths to learn and experience with God as you do them. But keeping these three as pillar practices will keep you growing as long as you live.

What are they?

1. Devotions (Christ)
2. Believers (Community)
3. Actions (Commitment)

All of these are based on and empowered through the one most important spiritual growth factor of them all. This one flows through every aspect of your Christian life and is included in Devotions.

### **Devotions (Christ)**

Your time alone with God, devotional time, is the life-line of knowing God and living out His purposes for your life. Nothing can substitute for it and no one can do it for you. God will help you and others can teach you and encourage you, but you are the only one who can decide to prioritize your time with God.

What do I mean by devotions? Open-hearted, interactive time with God based on the Bible and some type of prayer. The word and prayer, as it is often called, are the two most important things you can do for your spiritual health. They complement each other wonderfully and often can be done together.

### **The #1 Growth Factor**

After a lot of study, prayer, and interacting with thousands of Christians, I believe the most important spiritual growth factor is our response to God's words. The word of God is so much more powerful than most church goers realize. Yes it will give you instructions about how to live the best life possible, give you greater understanding of God, and how the world really functions. That is all powerful and true, but it also actually has the ability to actually impart God's life into our souls and bodies.

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit shows believers *"the things freely given us by God (vs. 12b)*. The very next phrase is very revealing, *"And we impart this in WORDS..." (vs. 13a)* Paul is teaching us that this life changing, Spirit revealed knowledge of what God has already provided for us in His Son, was being "imparted" or bestowed, supplied, passed on, given" by the Words he and other messengers spoke. Words are containers, and God's words carry His life and nature in them.

John 1:1 tells us, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Far be it from me to understand the depths of the eternal Trinity, but this passage

and many others make it clear that in the very beginning of all things there was “the Word”, this Word was both with God and was God. God and His word are one.

John 1:4 shows us how much power God’s words have when it says, *“All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”* Hebrews 1:3, referring to Jesus, the word of God made flesh says, *“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power.”*

Genesis 1 tells us that the created universe came into existence when God spoke words. God’s words carry His life and power; so much so that when He said, “Let there be light” out of nothing came light. His words created a physical universe out of nothing. And those same words carry His power today, because they are eternal.

God and His word are one. Jesus upholds all things by His powerful words. The Bible also tells us that God’s words:

1. Carry God’s power to save us from sin and make us new creations: Romans 1:16-17, 1 Peter 1:23-35
2. Is spiritual food and drink bringing growth: Matthew 4:4, 2 Peter 2:2
3. Heals our bodies and souls: Psalm 107:20, Proverbs 4:20-22
4. Does what Jesus does on earth while He is seated in heaven: Romans 10:6-11
5. Sets us free: John 8:31-32
6. Trains, transforms, and perfects us: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:26-27
7. Imparts God’s love, life, wisdom, power...to us: 2 Peter 1:4, Psalm 119
8. Builds strong faith: Romans 10:17
9. Shows us how to live strong, overcoming lives: Luke 6:46-47
10. Helps us know God and what He is really like: John 1:1, 14

And so much more.

If you will prioritize interacting with God through, receiving them with a humble heart, His written words that will do more to strengthen your relationship with Him and transform your life than anything else you can do (James 1:21). The more God’s words take root in your soul, the better you will know Him and the more you will become like Him. If, every time you open your Bible you open your soul wide to God, make it time with God the Person(not just a spiritual exercise), and receive those words as truth you will be amazed at how you will know God better, love Him more, and experience powerful life transformation.

## **H2O of Spiritual Life**

Hydrogen is the most common and fundamental element in the universe. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, to make a star that is the only element you need to get it started (it will eventually form other elements).

But if you want water, which is an absolute necessity for human life, you need to add oxygen to it. In the spiritual life, oxygen is a lot like prayer. When you combine the Word of God with prayer, then you release more of God's truth, love, and power into your own soul and for others you pray for.

There are many types of prayer, but at the most basic level it is simply communicating with God. It is directing your heart and mind towards Him in thoughts, words, songs, or even just a quiet heart open to Him. The great thing about prayer is you can do it any time and any place. You can pray for ten seconds or you can pray ten hours, depending on what is happening in your life.

If you will read, study, and meditate on Scripture consistently, it will teach you the power of prayer and how to pray. If you combine praying Scripture and prayerfully studying God's word, you multiply its effect in your life. The Word and prayer are the life blocks of the spiritual life.

## **You Will Deal with Emotions**

You definitely need to know about dealing with your emotions in life, but also in your relationship with God. Some days it will be so easy. You will want to interact alone with God and you will feel His presence in wonderful ways. Other days, your emotions will come up with every excuse possible not to do it. There will be days when you will simply not feel like spending alone time with God. At some point, everyone deals with this.

Galatians 5 says that the flesh (sin-nature) wars against the spirit in you. Your born-again spirit always wants to be in God's conscious presence. But the sin that still lives in your body and the not-yet renewed parts of your soul, does not want to be with God. Remember how Adam and Eve ran from God, hid from Him. We too, still have to deal with that soul temptation. Plus, the enemy will feed the desires of the sin nature to try to keep you away from face to face interaction with God, because he knows keeping you from direct, regular fellowship with God will make you weak and no threat to him.

I can tell you from experience that if you will take action quickly and get yourself to consciously say, "God, thank you that you are with me, right here and right now. I am going to spend time with you and I invite you to meet me," within seconds or just a few minutes eighty to ninety

percent of the time, you will have won that battle and will receive something positive from that alone with God time. Remember, Jesus is the Life. Jesus is your life. He is the one true source of never ending love, peace, joy, and world overcoming power. He wants to meet you, He wants to empower you and fill you. He just needs you to come to Him with an open, receptive soul.

Realize what is happening when you “just don’t feel like it.” That is your old nature trying to take control and/or the enemy wanting to block you from your Heavenly Father. You have not lost your salvation, God has not moved away and He is not rejecting you. Emotions are most often simply a result of thoughts and are not reliable sources of reality. God put it in writing, He loves you always, He will never leave you or forsake you, and you have confident access to Him 24/7 (Ephesians 3:16-19, Matthew 28:20, Ephesians 3:12).

Make a set time each day and then commit to it. Prioritize God on your calendar and you will soon be walking in His presence throughout the day. And that is when you step into dimensions of real, overflowing, inside out life.

I don’t have time in this book to go in depth in how to study the Bible and pray, but if you will do what I just said: pray the Scripture and prayerfully study Scripture you will keep increasing in your knowledge, relationship, and life impartation from and of God. Keep learning, listen to teachings, read books, do courses and most of all keep doing devotions...you will keep growing. Again, the Word and prayer are your most important practices for knowing God and living His purposes.

## **Community**

I hope I’ve said it often enough and clearly enough in this series that your alone time, your vertical relationship with God is your top spiritual growth priority. But did you know, there are aspects of God you will never experience on your own? God has chosen not to give you everything directly.

When I was in college I was dealing with a situation that I could not figure out how to solve. I prayed, asked God for wisdom for several days and was getting no clear answer. Except one day in prayer, this thought came in my head. “Go talk to Mike about it.”

I fussed with God a little bit. “I don’t really like Mike very much. He is just so full of himself and asking for his input will just make him that much worse. Anyway, God, if you can tell me to go talk with him why don’t you just tell me now? You obviously know the answer, why do I have to go ask him?”

I was met with silence. I have often experienced that when God gives me a clear thought, he rarely gives me a full explanation as to why He wants me to do it. He wants me to trust Him and do what He told me. After a few more days of frustration, I finally went and talked with Mike. He was actually nice and what he shared was exactly the answer I needed to solve my problem.

Which brings me to the second of the big three of the “know and grow” spiritual practices: community. God exists in community: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He created us in His image, also for community. It was God who said after creating Adam, “It is not good for man to be alone...” and Adam had an awesome relationship with God at the time. But God Himself said people need people.

1 Corinthians 12-14 and Romans 12-14 describe Jesus’ church; His community as a His body. Jesus is the head of the church and each individual believer is an important part. Some of us are like eyes, others like ears, others like hands, and others like feet. Though each part needs to stay directly connected to the head to function properly, it also needs to be connected to other parts of the body to thrive. No hand can function when it is separated from the wrist, or the wrist from the forearm. Neither can an eye, ear, or throat. We can only be our true and best selves when connected with other believers.

### **We Each Have a Portion of Jesus Abilities**

God has set it up so that we learn about Him, grow, and demonstrate Jesus to the world when we are connected in relationships with other Jesus followers. God has intentionally made all of us partially dependent on other people; not just Him. Christ lives in each believer and each of us have a portion of His gifts, insights, and experiences. That means that often Jesus will talk to you and help you through another member of His body.

When God puts a group of imperfect, still being healed and renewed people from various backgrounds, different personalities together, it becomes a powerful place to learn to love, forgive, and receive God’s grace. Imperfect, growing people will sometimes say and do stupid and hurtful things to each other. At some point, you will get hurt or hurt someone else. God wants you to learn how to deal with these things so please don’t run away when this stuff happens. Work through it, learn to love, receive and give with other Jesus people. You will know God better as a result and show the world a better way.

When teachers teach, organizers organize, singers sing, and healers heal; the world sees a fuller picture of Jesus and we all benefit. Neither you nor I are gifted to reach and help every type of person. We have an important role, but there is only One Savior. By uniting our gifts, we accomplish much more and get to know God better as well.

## **Different Types of Groups**

The first church met from house to house and in the temple. Jesus taught huge crowds but also met much more often with smaller groups of 3, 12, and 70. All size groups are important, but for greatest growth potential, make sure you get in some type of smaller group of 3-20. Only by getting in smaller groups can you practice your faith in a safe setting, learn to love, and work with others to touch the world.

Jesus spent much more time with His group of 12 than in any other group. He knew the more face to face time He could spend with His disciples, the greater the impact would be. Many people think going to a weekend service is the most important aspect of community. Please be involved in that, but also make smaller group interactions a big priority.

Always stay connected with other believers if you want to stay more fully connected to God.

## **Action (Commitment)**

Francis of Assisi is an historical figure for many reasons, but one of them was his approach to living out his faith. I had often read in various articles that Francis would go to the local church building in his area and read a portion of Scripture (in those days only the church and possibly a few elites had their own Bibles), then go and do what it said. Once he had done it enough to make it part of his life, then he would go read some more. Wanting to check and see if that was true or just legend I read a biography about him. When that author also wrote about this practice, I took it as solid evidence it was true.

Though Saint Francis influence and fame in the world is far greater than mine, I would not recommend that exact practice. As I emphasized just a few pages ago the Words of God are not just instructional or knowledge carriers, they are also power givers and life transformers. They carry power within them to produce more of the life and virtues of God in us.

In the New Testament both Jesus and the Apostles taught us that in Christ we are righteous, holy, joyful, loving, disciplined, just and so much more. If you look at yourself right now, there are many of Jesus' virtues that have not yet manifested in your life; nevertheless, God says that is who you are right now in Christ, in the spiritual. Meditating on who God says we are is actually one of the most powerful ways to become in our world who He says we are in Christ. Prayerfully saying God's words about yourself and seeing yourself that way in your imagination actually help you become who and what God says you are. I have seen it work over and over both in my life and the lives of many others.

But as with all truths, there needs to be a balance. James 1:22 tells us that we need to be doers of the word and not just hearers, or we will simply deceive ourselves. We will talk ourselves into believing things about ourselves that are not yet realities in our lives if we do not act on what we hear/read. I have actually heard some immature believers resist any type of correction because, “they are already perfect in Christ.” One young man was one of the most arrogant people I’ve ever seen and refused to grow in humility because of “who he was in Christ.” Pride comes before a fall and he soon fell very hard.

There are similarities between physical strengthening and spiritual strengthening. A muscle has to be exercised to stay strong or grow stronger. If you do not use a muscle, it will not turn to fat, it will shrink. If you want to grow in love, you need to exercise Jesus like love actions. If you want to grow stronger in faith, it is vital to exercise your faith muscles.

To grow in God, meditate consistently on who God says you are and take action to speed up the process of God’s word becoming flesh in your life.

### **Knowledge/Action Ratios**

Knowledge will typically be ahead of doing, and this is a good thing. Knowledge gives you direction and vision of where to focus and what actions to take. Without knowledge you will not know where to focus or have the power to take the needed growth steps. Even Saint Francis would get knowledge first, showing Him direction, what to do: then he could take action.

Is there a healthy knowledge/action ratio? I don’t think there is a one-size fits all here. Some people simply love to read, study, and learn more than others (which typically goes with their gifts and calling). There is no way to have the time or energy to implement everything they are studying as they are learning it. So their knowledge/action ratio will be lower. Others don’t like to read and study so their knowledge/action ratio will be higher; they would rather serve and do than learn.

The advice I would give is, make sure you are consistently practicing at least one new skill, virtue, practice as you go.

A lot of research has shown there are two main ways to add new positives in your life (outside of God just zapping you; which He does on occasion.)

1. Focus on 1 main goal for 21-120 days. Study it, say it, see it, support it (with others), and sow it (take action) until it becomes second nature to you. This works in every area of life.
2. Commit to super, super easy doable steps in 5-7 areas of life and make sure you do those minimums every day. The man who made this approach famous said he wanted to get in shape, but hated working out. So every day he committed to doing 1 pushup; that was super, super easy. In just a couple of days, he saw that doing 1 pushup was too easy, so he started doing 5 pushups. That was still easy, so he kept increasing and in a few months was working out 30 minutes, 3-5 times per week and was in much better shape. He did that in 5-7 life categories and within six months had some major positive changes in his life.

Depending on how you are wired, either one of these approaches have proven successful.

### **More Action Benefits**

Quickly here are a few more benefits to becoming an action taker, a doer of the word.

- God has set up the world on a receiving and giving cycle. You must receive or you have nothing to give. But if you do not give, at least some of what you receive, the receiving will slow down or stop. Selfish people are never happy, growing people to a great degree because they break this life cycle. There are people who need what you have to give; you are the means God uses to get some of His resources, help, or support to them.
- You learn what the words really mean through personal experience. Some Scriptures remain in the theoretical world until you act on them. You can never learn to play the guitar simply by reading about it. When you start to practice, then you really start to understand what you read or saw on-line or in that book. You will learn much more about prayer by doing it, than just reading about it.
- Taking action releases more guidance. In Matthew 25 Jesus taught us that if we use what God has already given us, then He would give us more. If you will regularly stop and ask yourself, “What do I know for sure God wants me to do?” in the main areas of

your life; you will be amazed at how much guidance God has already given you. Do what you already know to do, act on that, and more insight and direction will come: you will never lack for guidance from God.

When I am stuck as to what God wants me focusing on, what goals I should set, or what His will is; it is amazing how often I get clarity when I ask myself that question. “What do I already know God wants me to take action on in the key areas of my life?”

### **Always More**

Even though those three practices are simple to remember:

1. Devotions (Christ)
2. Believers (Community)
3. Action (Commitment)

If you will consistently practice them they will keep you growing deeper with God and stronger in your life. At one level these practices are so simple, but they can also go incredibly deep. So many books have been written on each of those topics because you can keep learning new approaches, fresh insights, and eternal truths going deeper, higher, and wider.

It does not have to get stale if you keep seeking God and pressing on. There are always new insights and experiences when you follow the multi-dimensional God. Before we finish our time together in this “getting started” guide, I want to cover two more really important topics. These have made a HUGE difference in my journey with God and I’ve seen the same in many others.