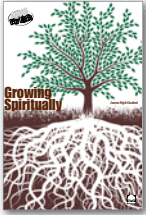


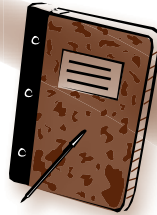
Growing Spiritually

This quarter's lessons offer instruction on how to grow in your personal walk with the Lord. Topics like studying the Bible, attending church, understanding God's will, and overcoming temptation are discussed.



The *Living My Faith Devotional Bible Study* is designed to help you dig into God's Word. Each lesson offers devotions for Monday through

Saturday, along with worksheet to be completed during your group study and articles that will help you better understand and apply God's Word.



Journal: Purchase a journal or notebook to record your personal thoughts and prayers. Bring your journal and student book to class

each week so that you can take notes during the lesson or write any special insights you gain from a particular activity. You may also use the journal for sermon notes or for prayer requests.



Bible study tools: In order for you to dig into God's Word, consider using a Bible dictionary and a concordance. If you are not familiar with these helpful guides, ask your pastor or youth leader for a recommendation. Or visit an online Bible tools Web site, such as www.blueletterbible.org. This site offers commentaries, maps, and many other tools to help you in your Bible study.

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A Solid Foundation

Monday

You have a problem . . . a BIG problem. In fact, everybody has this problem.

1. According to Romans 3:23, what is the problem?
2. Romans 6:23 tells more about the problem. What is the penalty for the problem we all have?
3. God has a solution to the problem. What is it?
4. Read John 3:16 and briefly tell how you can receive God's gift.

If you believe that Jesus Christ died in your place to pay for your sin, sign your name and today's date here.

Tuesday

Read 1 John 5:13, your memory verse for this week.

1. Was this verse written to believers or unbelievers?
2. What did the writer, John, want his readers to know for sure?
3. Have you believed in Jesus as your Savior? If you have, what does this verse promise you?

If you're a believer, say the verse out loud and use your name instead of "ye." If you're not a believer, consider what might be holding you back from that decision.

Wednesday

Read John 10:14–16 and 22–30.

1. In these verses what did Jesus describe Himself as?
2. What did He call believers?
3. Review the Scripture again. Describe the ways that a shepherd takes care of his sheep. You may also look at Psalm 23.
4. In what ways does Jesus keep and protect those who love Him?

Thank Jesus today for all the ways He cares for you.

Thursday

1. Read Ephesians 1:13 and 14. Whom does God send to live in us when we are saved?
2. Ephesians 1:13 says we are sealed with a promise. Read Romans 8:16. What is the promise?

No one can break this seal. God has promised the Spirit won't leave us until we are in Heaven, where we'll be in God's presence all the time. Assure yourself of this truth by reading 1 John 4:13.

3. How can we tell the Holy Spirit is living in us? Read Galatians 5:22 and 23 and list what the results should be. Circle an area you need to ask the Holy Spirit to help you with.

Friday

Some days you may feel like a failure in your Christian life. You feel guilty about your sin and may even wonder if you're really saved.

1. According to Romans 5:8, what kind of people did Jesus die for?
2. Why did He do that?

God realizes that because we live in the world, we can and do still sin even after we are saved. But God has made a way for us to restore our relationship with Him after we have sinned.

3. Read 1 John 1:6–9. What do you need to do when you sin?
4. What is God faithful to do?

Saturday

If you struggle with assurance of your salvation, trust God and the promises of His Word. In addition to learning the assurance verses listed on the worksheet on page 7, try this. Using the letters that spell the word “assurance,” make an acrostic of reminders that God has sealed your salvation forever. You can use verses if you want to. One is done for you as an example.

All my sins have been forgiven by God.

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WEEK 1

Memory Verse

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

Religion or Relationship?

by Kristi Walker

Some people think a “Christian” is a religious person, someone who goes to church and tries to do good things. But being a Christian means having a relationship with God.

A person begins his or her relationship with God by

believing that Jesus, God’s Son, died to take the punishment for sin;

asking forgiveness from sin; and

accepting the free gift of salvation that He offers.

After a person has trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation, that person has the responsibility of becoming more like Christ.

Youth worker Kurt Glancy developed the following acronym for his teens to help them remember exercises, or habits, that would help them grow as believers.



Spiritual Habits

Hang time with God (prayer and devos)

Accountability with another believer

Bible memorization

Involvement in the church (not just youth group)

Tithing commitment (e.g., time, money, efforts)

Studying Scripture (not just reading it)

These are all great things to do to stay focused spiritually. And they can certainly help us to grow in Christ. Unfortunately, though, we often base our spiritual growth on these things alone, and nothing more.

We often develop spiritual habits because we know they're good for us. Then gradually these habits become chores, like brushing our teeth or eating vegetables. We need to change our motivation from duty to delight. Talking with our Heavenly Father is a privilege that is ours as children of God! Fellowshiping with other believers encourages us and them. Tithing is a small way to give something back to the God Who gave up everything by sending His Son to die in our place for our sin. These things should bring us pleasure, like giving gifts at Christmastime. It's fun to give gifts because we love our friends and family and delight in seeing their faces light up when they tear back the wrapping paper.

When my brothers and I were little kids, our mom used to have cookies and Kool-Aid waiting when we got off the school bus. This wasn't drudgery for her. It was a joy! She loved us and thought of ways to show us that love. She'd stop everything she was doing to sit at the kitchen table with us and listen. She'd ask what we learned and who we hung out with at recess. She cared.

Religions are about checklists; but relationships are about love. Love is more important than offerings and sacrifices. Love is more important than making a spiritual checklist. However, spiritual habits *help* us to love because they help us know God better. The more we know Him, the more we love Him and the more we can extend His love to others.

Can a person grow without reading the Word and praying? Probably not much. Consider Galatians 5:22 and 23:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

A believer's life will display these qualities to show that he or she is growing as a Christian.

Life in Christ should be abundant—full of joy! We should be the happiest people alive. If you're not happy, ask God to help you change your motivation for living for Him from duty to delight, from religion to relationship.

And next time someone asks if you're growing spiritually, ask yourself, "Am I loving God and others more each day?"



Are You Sure?

The verses listed describe Jesus Christ's promise of salvation. Choose five of the verses to look up; then write down the phrases from each verse that assure you salvation lasts forever.

Romans 8:38, 39

1 John 5:13

Philippians 1:6

John 5:24

1 John 5:11, 12

John 3:16

2 Timothy 1:12

Romans 8:1

John 10:28

John 3:14, 15