

NEXT STEPS 1

Connect To God

Developing the Essential Habits of a Healthy Believer

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STEP 1: CONNECT TO GOD

Developing the essential habits of a healthy believer

THE BASIS FOR STEP 1

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Colossians 2:6-7

UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

“... So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” Acts 11:26

1. Before followers of Jesus were called “Christians”, they were known as disciples.
2. As disciples, we develop spiritual maturity through:

- **Bible study and prayer**

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:42

- **Fellowship with other believers**

*“And they steadfastly persevered, devoting themselves constantly to the instruction and fellowship of the apostles, to the breaking of bread...”
Acts 2:42 (Amp)*

- **Living a Spirit-led life**

“The (reverential) fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.” Acts 2:43

- **Giving of ourselves**

“... and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” Acts 2:45

THE GOAL OF STEP 1

That I will commit to the habits necessary to develop spiritual maturity and stay passionately in love with Jesus.

Life-giving habits result from the simple disciplines of establishing a plan of action, making those actions a priority, and involving other people in the process.

HABIT ONE: BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

A vibrant relationship with God is sustained through Bible study and prayer.

HOW DO I GET MORE FROM MY BIBLE?

1. I must accept its authority.

We believe that the Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, it is inspired, infallible and inerrant.

- Receive God’s Word with an open heart.

“But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy... Therefore take heed how you hear.” Luke 8:13-18

- Respond to God’s word with obedience.

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:22

2. I must absorb its truths.

- Hearing God’s Word.

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

- Reading God’s Word.

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near."
Revelation 1:3

- **Studying** _____ God's Word.

"...they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." Acts 17:11

- **Memorizing** _____ God's Word.

"Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart."
Proverbs 7:2-3

- **Meditating** _____ on God's Word.

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bring forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." Psalm 1:2-3

3. I must _____ apply _____ its principles.

"If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." John 13:17

- Read your Bible daily.
- Gather one truth from your reading to reflect on.
- Record what you learn in a journal or share it with someone.

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." James 1:22

TALKING WITH GOD

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing," 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17

Jesus exemplified a personal relationship with God through prayer that gave Him great strength. Every person who has ever been effective in service for God has developed this habit. The only way to be a healthy Christian is to spend time with God daily through prayer.

1. In my daily prayer time, I am:

- **Giving** _____ devotion to God.

“And in every work that he (Hezekiah) began in the service of the house of God...he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.” 2 Chronicles 31:21

- **Getting** direction from God.

“Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation.” Psalm 25:4-5

- **Growing** in my relationship with God.

“O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:25-26

2. Use Prayer Models Found in the New Testament

Must Maximize the Power of Prayer

Forty-eight times in the book of Acts, it says, “They prayed.” We will have the power the early church experienced when we pray like the early church prayed.

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:31

Prayer Model of the Early Church

A - Adoration Focus directly on God, adoring Him for Who He is: His names, His character, His roles, etc. Worship and praise God with your heart, mind, and voice. (1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalms 8:1-9, 19:1-11, 63:1-4, 100:1-5, 150:1-6)

C - Confidence All of us who live for Jesus Christ have the Holy Spirit living on the inside of us. If we believe this to be true, then how could we not be confident about coming boldly before the Lord? God’s Word instructs us to do so. (1 John 5:14-15; Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:23, 11:6)

T - Thanksgiving Give thanks for what God has done. Thank Him for salvation, the many blessings in your life, protection, provision, open doors, opportunities, and anything good He has done for you. (1 Chronicles 16:34; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:6)

S - Supplication Prayers of specific requests. They can be oral or written. This is the time to ask God for His divine help to meet needs, solve problems, work in another believer's life, etc. (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1-4)

Praying for Others

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come into the knowledge of the truth." 1 Timothy 2:1-4 (KJV)

1. Supplicate for the saints.

Supplications are heartfelt, fervent prayers made for other believers from the Word of God. Examples can be found in:

- Ephesians 1:16-23
- Ephesians 3:14-21
- Colossians 1:9-13

2. All kinds of prayer:

- The Prayer of Faith
- Praying for the sick

3. Prayer of Intercession:

Prayers made specifically for the lost:

- Proverbs 11:29 ~ Lost souls
- Proverbs 29:18 ~ Be led by God on how to win them to Christ
- Matthew 9:37-39 ~ More laborers to be sent into the harvest

4. Prayer for Kings and all that are in authority

For those in Natural authority:

- Proverbs 29:2
- Proverbs 21:1
- Psalms 75:6-7

I need people who really know me.

3. Prayer .

I need people to pray for me personally.

4. Support .

I need people who will protect me.

5. Outreach .

I need people with whom I can share my story.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

HOW DO I GET CONNECTED WITH A CONNECT GROUP

1. Find a Group

- Find a group by contacting the church office, visiting our website (www.linkedupchurch.com) or emailing connectgroups@linkedupchurch.com.
- Contact the leader.
- If you desire to lead a group, attend Connect Group Leader Orientation and get equipped to lead a group that you are passionate about.

2. Commit for a Semester at a Time

New groups start two semesters each year: Spring (February – May) and Fall (September – December). Most groups are open to new members throughout the semester.

3. Experience a Life Change

You'll never fully experience all that Linked UP Church has to offer until you connect in a small group! Connect groups were vital to the first century church's growth, and they are just as vital now.

HABIT THREE: LIVING A SPIRIT-LED LIFE

“(May) the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

Having close relationships with other people is only part of God’s plan for our lives. He desires to be our most intimate friend.

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Ruwach – [Hebrew] – a wind, breath, a violent exhalation, blast of breath.

“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Genesis 1:2

Pneuma – [Greek] – a current of air, blast of breath, a strong breeze.

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63

1. The Holy Spirit is a person .

“... I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.” John 14:16

2. The Third Person in the Triune Nature of God .

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” John 14:26

THE HOLY SPIRIT’S ROLE IN OUR LIVES

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:4-8

1. The Holy Spirit enables us to know God’s:

- Comfort .

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” John 14:16 (KJV)

- **Conviction** .

“But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 16:5-8 (KJV)

2. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live with Christ like:

- **Character** .

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

- **Power** .

“But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (KJV)

3. The Holy Spirit equips us with:

- **Spiritual Gifts** .

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

• Spiritual Direction .

*“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh: Your sons and your daughters shall **prophesy**, Your young men shall see **visions**, Your old men shall dream **dreams**. And on My menservants and on My maidservants will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath...And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 2:17-21*

1. God’s dream for my life.
2. Vision to see the next steps.
3. Biblical truths to affect an eternal result.

HOW DO I RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. The Promise

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49 (KJV)

2. The Gift

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

3. Ask to Receive

⁹ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. ¹⁰ For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. ¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke 11:9, 10 & 13 (KJV)

4. Receive the Power of the Holy Spirit by Faith

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8 (KJV)

5. Bible Evidence of Speaking in Tongues

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:4

6. How do I know what I am saying?

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 1 Corinthians 14:2 (KJV)

Prayer: *Father your word says that the Holy Spirit is a gift. He is a gift. I don't work for Him; all I do is receive Him. So, Father, I receive, right now, as an act of my will and my faith, the Holy Spirit, with the Bible evidence of speaking with other tongues. Father, I thank you right now that I have received the gift of Holy Spirit right now in Jesus name, Amen.*

7. Relate to Him daily.

"The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you." 2 Corinthians 13:14 (MSG)

8. Release your spiritual gifts with confidence.

"Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel." 1 Corinthians 14:12

HABIT FOUR: GIVING OF OURSELVES

"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." John 3:16

The Gospel is the ultimate demonstration of God's generous nature towards mankind. The Bible consistently teaches that God blesses us so that we may bless others.

THREE AREAS OF GIVING

1. Give of our time.

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

2. Give of our talents.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all." 1 Corinthians 12:7

3. Give of our treasure.

BENEFITS OF GIVING

1. Giving draws us closer to God.

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21

2. Giving is the antidote to materialism.

"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Timothy 6:17-19

3. Giving strengthens our faith.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding... Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats (presses) will overflow with new wine." Proverbs 3:5, 9-10

"Give and it will be given to you... For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38

4. Giving is an investment in eternity.

"Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life!" 1 Timothy 6:18-19

BIBLICAL GENEROSITY IS:

1. Willing

"For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have." 2 Corinthians 8:12

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart..." 2 Corinthians 9:7a

2. Cheerful

"...for God loves a cheerful giver!" 2 Corinthians 9:7b

3. Sacrificial

“For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” 2 Corinthians 8:3-4

4. Expectant

“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” 2 Corinthians 9:6

“...but they first gave themselves to the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 8:5

ESSENTIAL HABITS OF A HEALTHY BELIEVER

Personal and Corporate

*“The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.”
Psalm 33:11*

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers...” Acts 13:36

1. **Bible Study and Prayer:** Weekend Services.
2. **Fellowship with Others:** Connect Groups.
3. **Living a Spirit-led Life:** Next Steps.
4. **Giving of Ourselves:** Dream Team.

APPENDIX - STEP 1

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QUESTIONS ABOUT TITHING

What is tithing?

“Tithe” means “a tenth part.”

What is the difference between a tithe and an offering?

A “tithe” is giving the first tenth of my income.
An “offering” is anything I give in addition to my tithe.

Why should I tithe?

Tithing reminds me that everything I have was given to me by God.

“Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the ability to produce wealth.” Deuteronomy 8:18

Tithing demonstrates that God has first place in my life.

“And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God.” Deuteronomy 14:23

Tithing expresses my love to the Lord.

“Each of you should bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.” Deuteronomy 16:17

What should I tithe?

The tithe should come from the first part of what I earn.

“Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of all your income.” Proverbs 3:9-10

Where should I give my Tithe?

The tithe should be given where I worship.

“Bring your whole tithe to My Storehouse (Temple).” Malachi 3:10

When should I Tithe?

The tithe should be given weekly.

“On the first day of every week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

1 Corinthians 16:2

HOW TO START AND MAINTAIN GOOD HABITS

Step One: Desire

You must start with a strong desire. You must be internally motivated. External motivations don't last. If you start only half-heartedly, you will never make it to the success point.

Step Two: Decide

Begin right now! Don't wait. Don't procrastinate. You don't slide into a new habit. "One of these days" never arrives. You must have a starting point. It's easier to break a bad habit today than it will be tomorrow!

Step Three: Declaration

Announce your intentions publicly. Make a covenant or resolution. The power of a vow is awesome. It is particularly powerful if you put your commitment in writing.

Step Four: Determination

Never allow an exception until the new habit is securely rooted in your life. Each lapse will be fatal. A single slip unwinds many turns at first. Continuity and success at the start is essential. Never be swayed by "just this once." The act of yielding weakens the will and reinforces your lack of self-control. It takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit and it takes another 3 to 4 weeks (doing it daily) for it to become a part of your life.

Step Five: Just Do It!

Whenever you feel the slightest urge or prompting to practice this new habit - DO IT THEN! Don't wait. Seize every opportunity to reinforce your habit. Those feelings will not last, so whenever you feel inclined to perform your new habit, do so!

Step Six: Double Up

Get a partner who will support you and encourage you. Find someone who is willing to hold you accountable and check up on you, especially in the early days before the habit is firmly rooted in your life.

Step Seven: Depend on God

Rely on God's power to help you establish the habit. Remember, Satan does not want you to develop habits that help you grow spiritually and make you like Christ, so he will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, or discourage you. Pray!

HOW TO APPLY BIBLICAL TRUTH

1. Explore the passage.

What did it mean to the original hearers?

What is the underlying timeless principle?

How could I practice that principle?

2. Proclaim His promises.

Battles – 1 John 4:4; Luke 10:19; Romans 8:37

Money – Philippians 4:19; Psalm 1:1-3

Fear – Psalm 27:1

Sickness – Psalm 103:3

Confidence – 2 Corinthians 3:6

Safety – Psalm 121:8

3. Share it with others.

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Romans 10:14

