
The Next 7 DAYS



Christian Life Church

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INTRODUCTION

Your salvation is definitely one of the greatest moments of your life. It is the most important decision you will ever make. We are so happy for you and excited as well. Knowing that you have received what Jesus did for you. And now that you have made a commitment to live for God, you may be asking yourself "What next?" Well, certainly praying, reading your Bible, and going to church will be ongoing essentials to your Christian walk.

Over the next week we will discuss 7 key topics that will be very helpful to you. We suggest tackling one short thought each day to build your spiritual life but feel free to move at whatever pace works best for you.

Each daily topic will help you gain greater understanding of a key principle to spiritual growth.

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DAY 1—THE LOVE OF GOD

The first topic we will be discussing is God and His awesome love for us. There is only one true God and He is the Creator and Maker of all there is. Because God is a God of Love, he is also a God of relationship. He desires to have a relationship with each and every one of us.

Because of what Jesus did by dying on the cross, we are able to have a restored relationship with God. One thing that is important to know about God is that he has always loved us, even though we may not have always been aware of it. It is a life changing moment when you realize that the God of all creation has not just created you, but that He loves you, He cares about you, and He desires the very best for you.

Because he is a loving God He is also a giving God. Not only did He give us Jesus, but the Bible teaches us that He has given us all that we need for a life that is both fulfilling and pleasing to Him. You can rest assured knowing that the love God has for you is not based on how good you are, how well you do, or how successful you are. He loves you just for who you are.

Knowing that God's love is not based on these conditions, but is based on his own character, should help you be confident and encouraged to know that His love won't be taken away.

Another aspect of the love of God, is that He is redemptive in nature. This means that His dealings with us are forgiving and redeeming, as opposed to being punitive and holding a grudge. It is important for you to know this aspect of God's love. Because we live in a world that can sometimes be vengeful, vindictive and mean. If we are not careful we can think that God deals with us the same way that people deal with us.

We can also tend to believe that God views us the same way that we view our selves. Sometimes we can be harder on ourselves than anyone else is for our own mistakes and short comings. But the way that people think, and the way God

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thinks are very different. Certainly God wants the best for us, and just as a parent may correct a child for their own good, God also brings correction to us. Just as a good parent does this in a loving and affirming way that trains and teaches the child, God also corrects in a loving manner.

One important thing to understand about God, is that He is not out to get you, and He is not waiting to see when you are going to make a mistake. His desire is for your best, and His loving nature causes Him to work on your behalf, helping you, protecting you, and watching out for you, even at times when you are not aware of it. So be assured that no matter what, the Creator of the universe loves you, He is with you, and He is for you. It is on the basis of God's love toward us that we can even know and understand what love is.

When you accepted Jesus, you were probably very aware of God's love for you. His love had always been there, but you came to a point of awareness and acceptance of it, which led you to receive salvation. There is so much included in the love of God, that as you grow in your relationship with Him you will have many more moments in your life when you understand God's love more deeply.

Just as your initial awareness of His love led you to salvation, your continued awareness will lead you into greater trust and commitment to God. We love because God first loved us, you can only truly give what you have received. When you love somebody, it is easy to obey, and when you understand that God loves you, you can trust that what He asks you to do is with your best interest in mind. As you grow in your trust and love for Him, it will be easier for you to do what He asks. As you continue to respond to the love of God, you will receive the power to love God, to love others, and to do what God asks of you with a willing heart.

The Bible gives a good definition of love. In one of the books in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians, in chapter 13 starting in verse 4, God is saying that "Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it doesn't 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 doesn't delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always per-

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perseveres. Love never fails.”

This is the love that God has for us, it was initiated when He created us, it was proven when Jesus died for us, and it continues to be expressed daily in God’s goodness and mercy toward us.

DAY 2—PRAYER

You were created to be in relationship with God, and communication with God is a big part of that relationship. God has given you many things to help you get to know Him better, and understand the purpose and the plans He has for your life.

We will talk more about reading the Bible, and going to church, but there is one thing God has given you that you can take anywhere, and that is the ability to pray.

Prayer is communicating with God, and it is also a tool that God gave you to use to bring about change in your life. Just as you get to know people better through talking with them, you can build your relationship with God through prayer. The availability of a person is sometimes limited, but God is always available.

The Bible tells us He hears us whenever we call. So you can be confident that when you pray, God will hear your prayer. When you received salvation, you prayed a prayer, in which you asked Jesus to come into your heart, and you confessed Jesus as Lord. You prayed that prayer believing what you were saying...that was a truth that you came into agreement with, and vocalized through your prayer. That is very powerful, because when you believe truth and you give voice to it, that truth becomes a reality in your life. You don't have to be a Christian for a long time to be able to pray, or to even be effective in your prayers.

One of the most essential elements of any prayer is having a genuine belief in your heart. God knows what we have need of when we pray and He is a good God. He has many promises and blessings available to us, but these things are not automatic, they require our participation. When you pray believing in your heart, you are taking what He has made available and you are bringing it into your life.

Certainly there are different ways to pray, and many types of prayer, and all of them have their place and purpose. One common type of prayer is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. This is basically expressing to God your gratitude and thanks to Him

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for what He has done for you and for who He is. This type of prayer is so key to your outlook, that it really should be a prayer that should be prayed often. Again, you don't have to know a great deal about the Bible to pray this way, and you don't have to say it in a fancy way. Just tell God a genuine thank you for what He has done for you, and who you know him to be.

Another type of prayer is a request. The Bible tells us to make our requests known to God. As you grow in your relationship with God, and come to understand the great plans that God has for you, you will probably begin to notice that there are certain needs that you have in your life. Now, some people might say, "I need a brand new car," or a bigger house, but these are not the types of things we are referring to. There are needs that we each have in our lives that are not material things. You may have a need for patience, you might find yourself asking God to help you forgive someone who has hurt you. You may need to ask God for wisdom, or maybe strength, and there may be a real need for help in finances and other things in life. One request that we all pray in different ways and at different times is a request for help. Sometimes we don't know how else to put it except, "Lord help!" and God knows just what help we do need, and He is powerful to move on the behalf of his children. Just pray, and God will hear you.

One more type of prayer that we want to mention is called a declaration. This type of prayer involves taking verses from the Bible and truths that God has said about you, and speaking it out loud.

For example, the Bible says in Philippians chapter 4 verse 13, that "[we] can do all things through Christ who strengthens us." If you are facing a situation in life that you don't feel you're capable of handling, you can pray that promise by saying, "God, I thank you that your word says I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." A prayer like that helps you to realize that truth can apply right to your situation.

Now that we have talked about a few different types of prayers, it is important for you to know that God loves it when you pray. He loves it whether you are just pouring out your heart to him, making a request for yourself, or for someone else, or declaring

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something for your own life. He loves it when you pray because He knows that you are using your faith to agree with truth, and He knows the results will have an impact on your life causing your faith to grow, your life to change, and help you develop your trust in God. God certainly hears us when we pray, & while it is true that God always answers prayer, we must understand that His answer is not always what we think it should be.

There have been many times we may have asked God for something, and it did not come. At the time we may have thought that God said no, only to find out that the answer was "later."

There are also times that we may have asked God for something that did not come, and then looked back on it and frankly were so glad that God didn't give us what we asked for! Only in retrospect did we realize that it would not have been good for us.

When we pray, we have to stand in confidence, and trust that God really does have our best interest in mind and when we pray, He does hear us, and He does answer with our life's purpose in mind. Sometimes we pray and we see the answer right away; sometimes we will hear the answer while we are at church as the message is being preached, and sometimes the answer will show up in an unexpected way. But you will know that it was God who brought it all about.

When you got saved, your relationship with God was restored, and part of that restoration includes you being able to have access to God, any time day or night. He is your Creator and your Heavenly Father and He wants you to take full advantage of your restored relationship with him. You may at times ask someone to pray for you, or to pray with you. But you can also pray to God on your own.

So be encouraged that God hears your prayers, and is excited for you to take the initiative to pray. You have been given access to communicate with God, and that is a privilege and an honor that will help you grow in your relationship with God, as well as help your life to become all that it was created to be. So whatever prayer is in your heart to pray just say it genuinely, with faith knowing that God is listening.

DAY 3—READING THE BIBLE

The Bible is the Word of God, so what does this mean to you as a Christian? The Bible was written to the believer and is uniquely designed to give an historical perspective, wisdom, and guidance for everyday and direction and encouragement for the future.

In the Bible you will find accounts of real people living real life situations and see how their faith in God affected those situations. You will read songs and prayers that echo the cry of your own heart, as well as express the joy and thankfulness that you have for God. You will read about the life of Jesus and his interaction with mankind and find many promises that God has made available to you. All of these things work together to help us learn from others and navigate our life when we read and apply the truth we have learned. God uses all these elements in a combined way to reveal His character and nature to us.

The Bible was written by men as they were supernaturally inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is divided into two major sections: the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books). The Old Testament covers key parts of history in the lives of the people of God. The New Testament covers some of the miracles and teachings of the life of Jesus. It also gives some accounts of the lives of believers after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The New Testament is God's "owner's manual" so to speak for how churches and followers of Christ (disciples) should act and live.

Because the Old Testaments contains life lessons, wisdom, and insight, we can draw from the experiences of others to find direction and guidance in our own lives. And because the New Testament contains an account of the life of Jesus, and instruction and encouragement to the believer, we can draw principals and truth to help lead us in a victorious and God-pleasing life.

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You may be the kind of person who loves to read, and can read many chapters by your favorite author all in one evening. Or perhaps you do not typically do much reading. Wherever you find yourself, please know that reading the Bible is not like reading a novel. You are not just reading for relaxation or entertainment, but you are reading for meaning and life application.

Furthermore, technology today makes it easy to not only have instant access to the Bible on your computer or mobile device, but also to listen to any portion of Scripture audibly. We recommend the Daily Audio Bible podcast to follow along and listen to daily podcasts of the Bible in 15 minute increments to cover the entire Bible in one year. In our discipleship resources section of this app, you will find many resources to help you experience God's Word more fully.

In the Bible, there may be a certain topic that you want to study, or you might find a section of a Psalm or Proverb that will relate to where you are in life right now. There may be a time when you read a couple of chapters in the Bible, especially when you are reading parables, stories, and history. But there may also be times when you may only read a few verses that really stand out to you and speak to your life at that time. The important thing to keep in mind is to read for meaning, and something that will make sense and relate to you. You may even keep those same two or three verses as your focus for a few days, and that's great. It's not about trying to get through it quickly, or in large quantities. But it's about the connection of that Word to your life at that particular time. You will hear truth, insight, and direction from the Bible being preached when you go to church. But as a believer you also have the freedom and the opportunity to read and study the Bible for yourself any day of the week. Both are essential for good balance and knowing and applying the Word of God to your life.

So it's important, not just rely on what you hear preached, but to also read your Bible throughout the week so you can take full advantage of what God wants to communicate to you. If you hear something preached at church that you want to study further, or if you have a question or a topic in mind that you may want to investigate, you might want to do a study of that topic. Whatever's prompting you, the outcome will be a little more in depth studying of the Bible.

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Most Bibles have a concordance, which is a topical reference section, which is located in the back, and there are many fine online tools to help you accomplish this too. A concordance can be a helpful tool for you to look up words, topics, or concepts that you might want to study.

You may be wondering, so what should I start reading now? Well there are certainly some suggestions that may be more meaningful to you as you are beginning your relationship with God.

We will make two recommendations here as we close out today's key thought.

1. Start today following the One-Year Bible Reading Plan. This is the world's most popular method of reading the entire Bible in one year in 15 minute daily readings (or listening to an audio Bible). The One-Year Bible Reading Plan features a short reading from an Old Testament book, a New Testament book, plus a short excerpt from the Psalms and Proverbs. Countless millions of believers follow this plan. Check out the discipleship resources section on this app to get started.
2. Read the Gospel of John in the New Testament. If you read a chapter or so a day, you can easily finish it in a week. The Gospel of John provides an excellent overview and snapshot of the life of Jesus.

Whatever plan you choose to begin reading, make sure you choose a version of the Bible that will be easy for you to understand. We recommend a modern translation such as the New International Version or the English Standard Version. These are popular and reliable English translations.

You may have read some of the Bible in part before, or it may be brand new to you. Because the Bible was written to the believer from God, with your life and destiny in mind, you are well able to read and understand what God desires for your life. As with any new skill, your ability to apply the message of the Bible will develop over

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time as you are faithful to engage with God's Word consistently. So for right now, just be excited and encouraged about the fact that your Heavenly Father has given you a life guiding instruction manual, specifically with you in mind. So if you will approach the Bible with three simple things in mind, you will be very successful:

1. Believe every verse.
2. Claim every promise.
3. Obey every command.

DAY 4—GOING TO CHURCH & BEING INVOLVED

when you hear a meA church is more than just a building; it is a gathering of people, who together form the Church (with a capital “C.”) When we gather together at church, several important things are being accomplished at once. We hear uplifting messages (sermons) prepared by pastors. We have a wonderful opportunity to worship God through our singing and giving of tithes and offerings. We experience God in community and enjoy the fellowship of other believers and are encouraged and strengthened. At church we are exposed to many opportunities to grow spiritually and become fully devoted followers of Christ. It is at church where we can be trained to become a leader (a person of influence) in our social circles. The church is also a place where we can not only receive ministry, but release ministry through the talents and giftings that God has given us.

Every church has a purpose, and a pastor who oversees the vision and the purpose of that church. The simplest way for you to know what church you are supposed to be a part of is to discover who your pastor is, and then go to that church.

God has a place for every believer, and He has a pastor for everyone. As a new believer or perhaps a person who has recently rededicated your life to the Lord, going to church weekly is a vital step in your growth and development as a Christian.

Being in an atmosphere where God is celebrated and you are encouraged in your faith will help you gain momentum in your life. Often times ssage that is preached at church, you will find yourself thinking, that is just what I needed to hear, or that was just the answer I was looking for. The Bible does say that there is help found in the sanctuary (the church), and certainly a good church like **Christian Life** can provide help in a variety of ways.

One of the strategies that the devil likes to use against a new believer is to make them feel unworthy of God’s love, or incapable of living a life for God. If a person is struggling with these thoughts and they remain isolated, it will be much easier to

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believe those lies. When you go to church, you have the opportunity to be around other people who have experienced the same types of struggles. You find out that you are not alone, and that you are not failing. Rather, you are in a process called life, along with everyone else. But now you have the added advantage of the encouragement and strength of others to support and help you to stand strong.

Sometimes there may be days that it is even hard to get to church. Either because of how you feel, or do to circumstances that are hindering you. But there is something awesome that happens when you push through, and make it into the house of God. You find that there is a strength that is added to your faith by gathering with other believers. There are many elements that can be part of a church service, but there are some key aspects that every church should have.

When you go to church, there should be a time of praise & worship that is full of life and celebrates who God is. The message that is preached, should be based on the Bible, and communicated with you in a way that is understandable and relevant. A church will have direction and purpose, and will communicate that direction through the leadership. A good church will also have opportunities for involvement, so that each member can contribute according to their abilities.

Christian Life offers a number of opportunities for involvement. These opportunities range from ministry departments, where you can volunteer your time & talents. To connect groups where you can get involved to make new friends and to grow in your faith. One of the quickest ways to grow and develop in anything is to get involved in it. Your church involvement is no different.

When you see that a small group or activity is made available to help you connect with other believers, go ahead and sign up and jump right in! Taking advantage of these activities will give you the opportunity to meet a variety of people. As you get to know some different people, you may also find a positive relationship with someone who can be a great encouragement to your life.

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There are also a number of ministry departments at CLC that you can volunteer to be a part of. Whatever your interests & abilities are, you will be able to find a place where you can have a direct impact on the vision and purpose of the church to come to pass. Whenever you feel it is time to get involved, just ask someone what you need to do to begin this process.

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DAY 5—RELATIONSHIPS

Today we are going to talk about relationships. We hear a lot from the world's perspective about relationships, and there are many books or web sites you could go to that talk about healthy relationships, prioritize people and being connected, but the Bible is unique in that it features God's perspective on how relationships were designed to work to be successful and fulfilling.

Relationships are one of the greatest blessings that God has given to us. We were never created to be independent or isolated, and God certainly knows that there is power in good relationships. There is strength in connecting with others, and there is a lot of truth to the fact that who you listen to, who you spend time with, and who you associate with, has a great impact on your life. One pastor said it this way, "show me your friends and I will show you your future."

Our thoughts, beliefs, and mindsets are strongly influenced by the people we associate with on a regular basis. It's very easy to spend time with someone, and pick up some of their habits and characteristics. You can even begin to take on their feelings and outlook as it relates to many areas of life. This is a powerful element of human interaction, and can be either positive or negative!

Keeping our interactions with others positive, and moving forward, requires our attention, to what and who we are allowing to influence us. Influence is a key factor in any relationship. There are people who you will influence, and there are those that are having an influence on you. It is very important to consider the type of influence that you will allow to impact your life. The more time you spend with someone, the more you get to know the way they think, and how they live their life. You will find it necessary at times to evaluate who is having an influence on you, and to make sure it is in line with your God-given purpose.

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In your life, you will usually have relationships that fall into three different categories.

1. People influencing and adding value to you.
2. Peers who are essentially at the same level as you.
3. People who you are passing along to them what you are learning.

Having good people in each of these three categories, will help keep you balanced, and moving forward. Not every relationship will, or even should hold equal position, place, or power with us. On a certain level, we may view our relationships as “fun friends to hang out with.” There is another level to relationships that provide connection and mentoring, which can call us to higher places in our own lives. God desires us to be in healthy relationships, where we are encouraged to grow, and develop in life and purpose.

When you got saved (committed your life to Jesus Christ), you may have already had some friends or family around you that were excited for you, and believed in Jesus. Or maybe, you didn’t know anyone who had a relationship with the Lord.

Wherever you are, you can be certain that God desires good connection and relationship for you with other believers who can encourage and strengthen you in your faith.

We talked yesterday about going to church and being involved. One of the benefits of being part of a great church and having many opportunities to get involved is that you can meet other people just like you who are also excited and moving forward in their faith. God will use the power of a relationship when He desires to bless you or bring something good into your life. This is a truth that God has set in operation. You can look for and ask God to help you recognize when these types of people are coming into your life.

Some of them may be for a season, and some might be in your life for a longer period of time. The great power of relationships can also be used in a negative way.

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When the devil desires to bring harm into your life, he may try to use a person around you to accomplish that. This is a principle in life, but it is not something to be afraid of, rather it's a principle to be mindful of concerning your relationships. You may find that there are some people in your family, in your close circle of friends or even at work who may not be happy about your decision to live for God. You can pray for them, but don't be discouraged if they choose to be negative. You may just need to make an adjustment concerning the place of influence they have in your life.

Your relationship with God is the most important relationship in your life. Every other relationship will have its place and priority, after your relationship with God. As your relationship with God stays first in priority to you, you will be able to know the proper priority that other relationships should have in your life. God has many great plans for you, especially in the area of relationships, so be encouraged and stay connected to positive and healthy people who will help add to your life and purpose.

DAY 6—BELIEFS & MINDSETS

One of the greatest powers that each of us has is the power to believe. You were created with the ability to believe. Who you believe and what you believe will determine where your life goes. It was your believing in what Jesus did for you, which caused you to accept and receive him as your Savior. There is so much included in Salvation that is made available to you, and your ability to believe it will determine what you receive.

Our beliefs are formed over time, and can change during our lifetime. Mindsets are ways of thinking. These are also developed over time through experiences, beliefs and information. Our beliefs and mindsets are very crucial to the outcomes of our life. We will connect and establish relationships based on our beliefs and mindsets. We will pursue purpose and goals that center around our core beliefs.

We give our time, energy and attention to issues and activities that center around them. So it is imperative to give attention to the types of mindsets that we have, and what our beliefs are founded in. God tells us in His Word that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and His ways are higher than our ways. This simply means that there is a way the world thinks and views things, and there is a different way that God views things.

The Bible shows and teaches us that the life of a Christian will follow a different thought structure than the life of someone who does not believe in God. There are perspectives, viewpoints and opinions that abound in the world. You will get as many different opinions as the people you ask. But there is a way of thinking and a way of believing that is in line with God's thoughts. As you go to church, read your Bible, and connect with other believers, you will be presented with new ways to think. The process of changing your beliefs and mindsets centers on who you trust, and what experiences that you have. God is trustworthy, and what he says is true. We each have the opportunity to change negative beliefs and negative ways of thinking to be based on God's Word.

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Where our thoughts go, our actions usually follow. If we are thinking something long enough, we will eventually do it. Say for example, you get a thought in your head to go buy a cheeseburger, fries and a milkshake, but you also know that this is not a part of a healthy lifestyle. If you dismiss the thought and move on, and don't entertain the idea, it will be easier for you to make a choice that will give you a more positive outcome. But if you think about that cheeseburger, fries and a milkshake for a few days over and over, you will eventually drive to a fast food restaurant and place the order! So it is with principles, mentalities and beliefs. Your life will move in the direction of your dominant thoughts. The good news is, God has given us the power over our thoughts, and He has also given us His Word, so that we can establish His thoughts in our minds.

No doubt there are a number of beliefs, thoughts and mindsets that are already established in your life. When you accepted Jesus, those thoughts, mentalities and beliefs did not change all of a sudden. There is a process involved in changing our thoughts, habits and our ways. This occurs over time. God does not expect for you to come to know him, and then have a lifetime of beliefs changed instantly.

Now certainly there are some changes that have already begun, and there are more to come. But just like life is a journey, the process of changing some of our mindsets is a journey as well. An experience is a powerful event, and many times our beliefs come from our experiences. Once we have experienced something, we usually form a belief. We then tend to hold an expectation, that that belief will be proven true. Because of this, we tend to see in everyday experiences that belief being played out. The power of our expectation usually causes the outcome to be exactly what we thought it would be. We have trained ourselves to stay in common and familiar experiences without even knowing it.

For example, imagine a young boy in school who tries to be creative on a project, but ends up getting a poor grade. On top of that, he is laughed at and called stupid. This may seem like no big deal to others, but inside his mind, it started to create a wrong belief about himself. He then begins to expect to do poorly. He does not put effort into his work because he believes it will not be good anyway and so he con-

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tinues to receive poor grades. In truth, if he believed what God says about him, he could have graduated at the top of his class, and been voted most innovative thinker. But a wrong belief took hold instead, and created a negative expectation that played out as he believed.

The Bible tells us that we will know the truth, and the truth shall set us free. The more we believe the truth that God has revealed to us, the more we trust and expect that truth. We are set free from old limiting ways of thinking, and we expect different outcomes. When we set our mind and expectations in a certain direction, we usually get what we expect. But this time, we have trained ourselves how to be free, by believing God's Word.

The Bible tells us to renew our minds, so that we are not conformed to the ways of the world. Our mind is renewed by the Word of God. As you read the Bible and as you hear the Word of God preached, you will at times be challenged in your thinking. When this happens, you have the opportunity to change your mindsets and thoughts to become more like God's mindset and less like the world's.

As you read and hear the Word of God, your faith will increase, and you will be able to adopt new beliefs and mindsets. Then it will only be a matter of time before you will find that these beliefs based upon the Word of God have brought you freedom and victory in many areas of your life.

DAY 7—HABITS & ROUTINES

It has often been said that we are creatures of habit. We can settle into a way of doing something that is so automatic that it doesn't require much thought. There are also routines that we have developed that are a part of our everyday living.

We build our daily lifestyle around many habits and routines; some are because of necessity and help us manage all that we are taking care of in life. As we continue to grow and develop in our relationship with God, we will need to take a look at the habits and routines in our life to make sure they are truly reflecting our beliefs.

There is a commonly agreed upon progression that begins with our beliefs and creates habits that help to define our character and our life outcomes. Beliefs are foundational to build upon. That is why it is so important for your beliefs to be centered on the Word of God and His truth. Your beliefs then lead to your thoughts and your attitudes. These lead to actions, then over time habits are formed. What you do constantly becomes a habit. Habits can be either positive or negative.

Habits that are established begin to define your character and will affect the direction of your life. This shows us that habits are part of a progression. It takes a lot of effort to try to change a habit just by dealing with the behavior. There is so much behind the habit that needs to be changed as well. If you try to change a bad habit but you do not change the underlying thought and beliefs that help put that habit in place you will feel frustrated and unsuccessful.

Recognizing that a change is needed is a good first step, but our habits were formed over time and it will also take time to break the old habit. As a matter of fact, researchers say that a new habit can be formed by doing the same thing consistently for 21 consecutive days.

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Some habits aren't bad, they are just some that make you uniquely you. Most of the people who know you well can probably name a habit or two that is funny or interesting. And you can probably name a couple of theirs as well. But when there are habits that have been developed overtime that were based off of wrong beliefs or thoughts, these habits can have a negative effect on us. Maybe every time someone cuts you off on the road you have a negative remark. If this is how you respond every time, it is a habit. You do it without even thinking and it has become a repetitive behavior. It affects you negatively because you get a little worked up or maybe even angry. If you tell yourself you will change that habit just by keeping your mouth shut you will still be frustrated because you will still be thinking it. But if you understand your habit is traced back to belief and an attitude, then you can look into what you believe and why you believe it.

For example, maybe you believe people are out to hurt you, there is probably a reason you think that way. Once you deal with your belief and your thought and your attitude about that situation, your habit will then change. Having the ability to acknowledge there are some negative habits in your life is a great benefit.

Some habits may be minor expressions of frustration, while others may be very detrimental to our life. Now that you have received Jesus, you are in right relationship with God. You will have some habits that are broken more easily because of the beliefs you now have. As you grow in your relationship with God you will see more and more how your habits are connected to your thoughts and beliefs.

Some habits may take more time to change because the beliefs supporting them take time to change. Life is a process and process takes time. You don't have to try to list every habit that you have, just be aware that you are a work in progress and that you do have help available from God to make any changes in your life that you need to.

God desires for you to succeed. He loves you with bad habits or not. But He wants the best for you and He has also made it possible to make new positive habits that will benefit you. The way to create a habit is to start with the belief. If you believe that God will protect you rather than believing that people are out to hurt you,

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then your automatic response when someone cuts you off on the road will be a thank you to God for His protection, rather than a negative remark to a person. Habits are more of a unconscious and constant action developed through repetition.

A routine, however, is more of a conscious and regularly followed procedure. We also have routines in our life and they serve to help manage any responsibilities and necessities life brings. These routines also reflect what we value and believe is important. As we reevaluate and reprioritize what is important, our routines will change as well.

Now that you realize how much going to church helps your faith to grow, you will most likely establish going to church on a regular basis as a routine. Another routine you will likely adopt is taking a few minutes to read your Bible and pray each day. As you establish routines that are based on your belief in God, you will see your life heading in a positive direction.

Habits and routines are part of everyday life .What you do occasionally will not have as much of an impact on you as what you do frequently. When you establish habits and routines that are based on God's Word and His principles you life will begin to reflect His ways in your everyday living.

You may even want to re-listen to The Next Seven Days material over and over and over for the next few weeks. As your thoughts are renewed through this teaching, you will begin to see new habits forming in your life.

God is with you, He is for you, and He loves you. He has great plans for you. Over the last seven days you have heard, read about, and given thought to seven different topics that are very important to know and apply to your life. Your life is a process, and process takes time.

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You might be wondering, okay, I have made it through these last seven days what is next for me. Well, obviously, we want you to know that our Journey discipleship team is available to help you go even deeper in your new walk with Christ. In fact, Take out extra Pastor Ron has written a series of foundational teachings for you and put it in a packet called the Big 5. A Journey discipleship team member would love to hand this off to you and help you become more deeply established in your new life.

There is no obligation or pressure, we just want you to know that you are not alone in your pursuit of God, we are here to serve you.

In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said that if you would seek first the Kingdom of God and live in His righteousness, then He would give you everything you need in this life and the one to come.

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NEXT STEPS

Congratulations! You have completed the Next 7 Days Devotional. Nicely done. To find out what's next, feel free to contact me. - David

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