

Welcome to the Six-Week Startup—helpful beginning points for those desiring to follow Jesus Christ. If you give just a few minutes a day to the following short projects, you'll start to grow in your faith and knowledge of God. Work at your own pace—don't feel like you have to hurry your way through all of this. Some parts of this will seem very natural and helpful to you, other components will feel more like "exercise" that you know is healthy but isn't necessarily easy! Enjoy!
- Dan Jarvis // danjarvis.us // Copy freely.

Week 1 of 6

Spiritual Disciplines—Practice Bible Reading

For the next seven days, you will "sample" different types of Bible readings.

Day 1—The Point of Bible Reading

- Read: Luke 6:46-49 & James 1:22-25
- Think: What warnings are issued to Bible readers/hearers?
- Respond: What about the Bible do I know, but have not yet obeyed?

Day 2 —Importance of Spiritual Discipline

- Read: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Timothy 3:14-17
- Think: What does it mean to "run to get the prize," spiritually?
- Respond: What spiritual disciplines am I looking forward to the most?

Day 3 — Try Reading a Short Bible Book

- Read: Second John (2 John).
- Think: What were the main themes of John's short note?
- Respond: How could I apply verse 5 to my life today?

Day 4 — Consider a Lesson from Jesus

- Read: Luke 12:13-34
- Think: What are the things you tend to worry about most?
- Respond: How could you apply verses 30-31?

Day 5 — Old Testament Examples of Faith

- Read: 1 Samuel 17
- Think: Why would God use a young boy (David) for this battle?
- Respond: What difficult situations are you facing that require courage & faith?

Day 6 — The Prophets Speak Boldly

- Read: Isaiah 58
- Think: What spiritual problems did the people of Israel have?
- Respond: What does God want us to do to demonstrate our faith?

Day 7 — Wisdom for Life

- Read: Proverbs 11
- Think: What individual proverb here is most needed by the world today?
- Respond: Which one do I personally need today?

Spiritual Disciplines—Practice Praising & Thanking God

For the next seven days, you will explore different ways to express worship to the Lord.

Day 1—He Gives Us Blessings

- List: Five things you can thank God for in your own life
- Praise: pray specifically over each area you are thankful for. Tell God why you appreciate those things, and why they give you joy.

Day 2 —He is Worthy of Praise

- List: Look through Psalm 145 for reasons to praise God
- Praise: Write down three things about God you love the most, and carry the paper in your pocket today.

Day 3 — He is Forgiving and Gracious

- List: Sins you need to confess to God
- Praise: Thank God for His great forgiveness and mercy (1 John 1:9).

Day 4 — He Has Promised a Wonderful Eternity for His Children

- List: Find characteristics of heaven in Revelation 21:1-7
- Praise: What is your response to God about each of these promises? (Tell him!)

Day 5 — He Changes Our Lives

- List: Three areas of your life that have changed since you decided to follow Jesus, and the people or things God used to bring about those changes.
- Praise: Thank God for his life-changing power (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Day 6 — He Created an Amazing World

- List: Five aspects of creation you enjoy the most.
- Praise: Go outdoors and thank God for the natural beauty you encounter.

Day 7 — His Awesome Power.

- List: Isaiah 40:10-31
- Praise: Reflect on the size and scope of God's creation and power. Honor Him.

Spiritual Disciplines—Practice Bible Memorization

For the next seven days, work on the following Bible portions. Cut out to carry with you, and to reflect on the meaning of the verses. After considering each portion, try saying it aloud to yourself without looking—then check yourself. Once you are confident that you can quote it, ask a family member to check you. Review and repeat as often as you can! The Psalmist said, “I have hidden Your Word in my heart, so that I will not sin against You.” (Ps. 119:11)

Days
1 & 2

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. - Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

Days
3 & 4

**Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.
- Ephesians 4:32 NLT**

Days
5 & 6

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. - Romans 8:28 NLT

Day 7

Review all three Bible portions and practice quoting them to yourself. When you think you are ready, ask a family member to listen and check you as you quote through all of them!

Spiritual Disciplines—Practice Writing Your Own Psalm

For the next seven days, you'll pick up where the book of Psalms leaves off—writing your own prayers, praises, ideas, frustrations or remembrances to God. You don't have to be a good writer or typist to enjoy this discipline. God is concerned about your heart, not how the words come out on paper. You aren't writing these for other people—remember—these are for God's eyes only (and for you, to remember your prayers years from now).

Next to each daily assignment, you will see a sample Psalm from the Bible you can read to get the idea of what kinds of things you might write about. Don't worry—your Psalms don't have to be as lengthy as the examples from the Bible! Just relax and write or type what your heart wants to say to God.

Day 1: A Psalm of **Confession**. (Psalm 32, 51)

Day 2: A Psalm of **Joyful Praises**. (Psalm 148, 150)

Day 3: A Psalm of **Sorrow & Concern**. (Psalm 12, 14)

Day 4: A Psalm of **Wisdom**. (Psalm 1, 19)

Day 5: A Psalm of **Remembrance**. (Psalm 136)

Day 6: A Psalm of **Faith & Trust**. (Psalm 91, 46)

Day 7: A Psalm of **Thanksgiving**. (Psalm 111)

Spiritual Disciplines—Practice Times of Silence & Reflection

This week, your goal is to learn what it means to be still before God; to learn about Him and reflect quietly on His character and truth. Think of this as Bible-centered “meditation.”

This guide will help you find some structure for the time itself—your goal is to simply repeat the process for seven days and see what things the Lord teaches you.

1. Determine a time & place. In your schedule, you can carve out 15 minutes that can remain uninterrupted by family, phone, or other responsibilities? That may involve selecting a quiet outdoor place, or an out-of-the-way room in your home, or perhaps even your car—and adding “appointment with God” to your calendar. Ask your spouse or a friend for help if kids are a frequent interruption for you.
2. You might begin your quiet time with a verse or two from the Bible to help focus your mind on spiritual things. You also might just praise God for two or three things. However, the goal of this discipline is not for you to talk—it is for your soul to rest and listen.
3. It will probably take about 5 minutes for your mind to calm down. If you are like most people, you aren’t used to being quiet—we almost always have music, work, or something occupying our attention. You might find it very hard to focus without daydreaming—don’t worry, that’s normal!
4. Somewhere in the middle of your quiet time, ask God, “Is there anything you would like me to think about, or things you want to tell me?” Often verses or personal needs will come to mind. Use that as an opportunity to silently pray about those things.
5. Resist the urge to think about all the things you have to do. Some people find it helpful to have a pen and paper ready, so if you think of something to do, you can jot it down quickly and purpose to think more about it *after* your quiet time. Then, you can go back to your purpose of enjoying silence and listening to the Holy Spirit.

If you get stuck, you can always read a Psalm in the Bible to refocus.

Spiritual Disciplines—Practice Praying for Others

For seven days, discover the joy of being a “prayer warrior” for others.

☐ Day 1 - Prayer for Family

Pray for each of your family members today. What needs are they facing, physically, spiritually, and emotionally? What is their relationship with the Lord? Spend a few quality moments praying specifically for their needs, and also asking God how you might encourage them.

☐ Day 2 - Prayer for the Workplace

Wherever you, your spouse, or your parents work, consider what prayer needs might exist in the lives of the people involved. Pray for the business owners, managers, and customers, that God would use the business to bring honor to His name, and to serve people well. Then, pray about your role in the business, and for opportunities to be a positive influence.

☐ Day 3 - Prayer for the Church

Your church and spiritual leaders need prayer. Pray about the upcoming events, services, or future plans of the church. Also take the time to pray for each leader by name, particularly those who work with your family. You might also generally pray for the church’s receptivity to the Bible, its mission in the community, the need for spiritual renewal, etc.

☐ Day 4 - Prayer for Persecuted Christians

Around the world there are millions of Christian brothers and sisters living under persecution because of their faith. (Find specific prayer requests from around the world at www.persecution.com) Today, pray for God’s protection, blessing, boldness and provision for them.

☐ Day 5 - Prayer for Government Leaders

The Bible encourages us to pray for those in authority regularly. Ask God to give them wisdom and joy in their work, and that they would fulfill their duties in a way that honors God’s principles. Also, lift up specific politicians by name by praying for their personal salvation.

☐ Day 6 - Prayer for Your Enemies

Whether or not you have “enemies” *per se*, think of those people you don’t get along with, you have trouble forgiving, or who have wronged you in the past. Ask God for grace to pray, in faith, for His blessing on their lives. You can use Philippians 1:9-11 as an outline for your prayers.

☐ Day 7 - Prayer for Global Missions

The Bible teaches us to pray for those who are sharing the gospel, and to pray for God to send more workers out to help (Luke 10:1-2, Ephesians 6:18-20). Pray for church planters, missionaries, broadcasters, etc. who are spreading the Good News. A good example of this is at www.igworld.org, and your own church probably has some mission activities as well.