

Wednesday:

At Jacob's Well we are passionate about helping you learn to take steps along the journey to know and become like Jesus. We want to help you discover that you have everything you need to pursue God on your own. No matter where you are on your journey, we desire that you would be intrinsically motivated by the Holy Spirit's power to pursue Christ above all else. We encourage you to evaluate where you are emotionally, physically and spiritually while seeking direction from the Holy Spirit. This is one way you can begin to recognize your next steps. Certainly, we all need each other as well, and we are created to journey together, but we realize that it is also a priority for each individual believer to spend one-on-one time with God independently, which includes reading the Bible and praying each day.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. What am I going to do for personal daily devotions this fall, so that God can more deeply work in my life and continue to change me from the inside out?
 - a. Will I use the devotions provided by the church?
 - b. Will I purchase a devotional to use?
 - c. Will I use the study my group is doing for my devotional time?
2. When and where will I have my quiet time each day, so that this time with Him becomes a regular, consistent priority?

If you need guidance on doing a quiet time on your own, here are some simple steps for you to follow.

- Begin your quiet time adoring God, confessing sin, and asking Him to teach you from His Word.
- Go to the Scriptures used in the message from the previous weekend. As you read the verses, remind yourself what the weekend speaker shared about the author, the people who originally received the verse, and the history of the time the Scripture was written. For example, this past weekend Paul worked through Philippians 3:8-11.
 - S - "Is there a **sin** to avoid?"
 - P - "Is there a **promise** to claim?"
 - E - "Is there an **example** to follow?"
 - A - "Is there an **application** for my life?"
 - K - "Is there **knowledge** to gain?"

The following prayer guide can help you to have an effective prayer time. Pray through these areas:

- P - **Praise** (*Thank God for what He's done for you. Give Him glory.*)
- R - **Repent** (*Confess your sin to God and claim forgiveness in Christ. Then, turn away from your sin.*)
- A - **Ask** (*Ask God for the things that are on your heart.*)
- Y - **Yield** (*Give God control of your life by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide you.*)

- Think of a short phrase or even a single word that summarizes what you've learned in your time alone with Him, and meditate on it throughout the day.

As you end your quiet time today, meditate on Philippians 3:12-14. Pray and ask God how He desires for you to pursue Him in your quiet time this fall. What are His plans for you?

Tuesday:

What is currently in my life that I have become used to, but with which I should not be comfortable?

Sometimes we don't even realize who and what we are pursuing. We are not aware that these pursuits are leading us to places we do not want to go and causing us to become people we do not want to be. We grow accustomed to certain people, thought patterns, behaviors, beliefs etc., and we don't fully understand the reality of what these pursuits are bringing to our life.

To wholeheartedly pursue Christ, we spend time with Him each day. We don't spend time with Him to check a task off our checklist. We don't spend time with Him in order to fulfill a religious requirement. We spend time with Him to know and become like Him one step at a time. It is a relationship.

Think of a close, healthy, fulfilling relationship you have in your life right now. How did the relationship grow into what it is? Would the relationship grow if you didn't spend time with the other person? Would the relationship grow if, when you spent time with them, you were only doing so to check a task off your checklist? Would the relationship grow if you didn't trust the other person, or if you chose not to be honest about what was going on in your life? Why or why not?

God loves you with a deep and abiding love. He cares about every area of your life. He wants what is truly best for you, because God is a good, good Father. Do you believe these things to be true? Why or why not?

As you end your quiet time today, write out **Romans 8:38-39**.

Suggested personal prayer: *Heavenly Father, Will You help me see that the pursuit of You is about relationship rather than a pursuit of religious rules? I want to believe that You love me and that You desire a growing relationship with me. Will You work in my heart to help me see Your deep love more fully? Will You open my eyes to see what it means to find fullness of life in You rather than in the things of this world? God, reveal to me the truth of what I have pursued, of what I am pursuing. Open my eyes to any areas of darkness I have allowed into my life, and give me the courage to bring them into Your light. I know that if I confess the truth, bringing my sin into the light, You will work in me (1 John 1:9). Thank you! Jesus, help me to know and become like You. Holy Spirit, help me grasp that as You work to transform me, You, God, will bring greater joy and peace to my life.*

Friday:

****Today's devotion will work well for you as an individual, or for you to complete as an exercise with your small group.***

By now, you should have received an official invitation giving you FREE access to Right Now Media. As a part of Jacob's Well, you have access to this extensive video library for yourself, your family, your kids, or your small group to enjoy. With content all the way from the latest authors and speakers to fun, Bible-based children's shows, Right Now Media is the "Netflix of Video Bible Studies" and it's totally FREE to use!

If you have not yet logged on to Right Now Media you may do so at this link:

<https://www.rightnow.org/Account/Invite/jacobswell>

Watch this video: <https://www.rightnow.org/Content/illustration/98580>

What excites you, challenges you, and concerns you as you watch this video? Why?

As we journey through this life, following our Lord and Savior, Jesus, everything begins to change, and then continues to change with each next step. Read Proverbs 21:21. Our life begins to demonstrate God's wisdom as we choose to follow Him each day.

The Serve and Share commitments illustrate the outward, others-focused expression of the inward change God is making in our life. These two commitments allow the world around us to see the deep transformation God is working in our hearts.

The **Serve** commitment calls us to commit to a lifestyle of serving others by using our strengths.

Here are some practical steps to take as you seek to move toward a deeper relationship with Jesus through Serve:

1. Discover your spiritual gifts and top StrengthsFinder results by participating in the Discover You Journey: Identify Your Strengths (October 3rd)
2. Grab a Serve Booklet and read about all the different Serve opportunities at Jacob's Well.
3. Sign up for a Serve Tour at the Connections Center.
4. Schedule a time to meet with Laura Garry, our Connections Pastor. She would love to help you take a next step in Serve.

The **Share** commitment calls us to share God's story through our own personal stories of how God has changed us and is changing us from the inside out. We can live out Share every day simply by living the new life we experience in Christ. Here are some practical steps to take as you seek to move toward a deeper relationship with Jesus, and a deeper experience of helping others, through Share:

1. Share God's love with your neighbors through your words and actions. Share your personal story and experiences with them through practical acts of service and kindness.
2. Share God's love with the people in your workplace through your words and actions. <https://www.rightnow.org/Content/VideoElement/100796>
3. Serve/volunteer in the community as a way of showing God's love to those in need. Here is a list of some of our ministry partners to get you started: *Apple Pregnancy Center, Builders for Christ, Fierce Freedom, Good News Jail Ministry, Hope Gospel, Hope Village, International Justice Mission, Justice Run, Lead Team and Teen Challenge.*

Spend time in prayer. How is God working through this series and through these reflective devotions to lead you forward in your relationship with Him? What steps is He leading you to take? Pray and ask Him for the strength and courage to wholeheartedly follow Him, just like we see in the example of the Apostle Paul.



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Monday:

Read Philippians 3:8-11

As you read these verses, how would you describe Paul's relationship with Jesus?

What was Paul living for? Why?

Read Philippians 3:12-14

Paul is not striving for perfection, he is pressing on to a deeper relationship with Christ. At Jacob's Well, our vision statement is: "Wherever we are on our journey, we will take steps together to know and become like Jesus." Like the Apostle Paul, we want to forget what is behind and we want to take steps forward, moving into a deeper relationship with Jesus as we journey through this life with Him as our Lord.

Prayerfully answer these questions:

- 1.) How would I describe my own pursuit of "knowing and becoming like Jesus?"
(e.g. antagonistic, indifferent, stale, inconsistent, intentional, passionate...)
- 2.) What am I "taking hold of?" In other words, what does my life reveal about what I am pursuing?

In this series, Progress Not Perfect, we want to face the reality of who and what we are pursuing. Read again your answers to the questions above. Talk with God in prayer about what is on your mind/heart as you read the Apostle Paul's words in

Philippians 3:8-14. If you are antagonistic, indifferent, stale, or inconsistent in your pursuit of knowing and becoming like Christ Jesus, ask Him to work through the devotions this week to give you intentional steps. Ask Him to create in you a passion and excitement to grow to know and become like Jesus, deepening your relationship with Him. What might it look like for you to connect with others with whom you can share the journey of these types of conversations and next steps?

Who do you imagine you would be if Jesus was completely alive in you? How do you think you would live differently from the way you currently live? In what new ways would you be alive? What would it potentially do in your relationships?

Thursday:

At Jacob's Well, we believe that as part of intentionally living for and pursuing Christ, we live out the **5 Commitments**. The 5 Commitments are a way for us to describe the process of growing and taking steps to know and become like Jesus. The 5 commitments at Jacob's Well are Worship, Grow, Belong, Serve and Share. For the next two days of devotions we will give you some practical steps in these commitments, to help guide you into surrender and following God in the way He is leading in your life.

The **Worship** commitment calls us to love and honor God with our whole lives. Here are some practical steps you can take as you seek to move toward a deeper relationship with Jesus through worship:

1. *Commit to regularly attend the weekend worship services.*
2. *When you attend the service, participate and focus on God.*
3. *Plan to attend the Worship Night scheduled for Friday, September 22nd.*
4. *Listen to worship music outside of the weekend services, taking time to engage in the words.*
5. *Seek to follow Christ throughout your day, expressing thanks for how He is at work in you.*

The **Grow** commitment calls us to be responsible for our own spiritual growth. Give yourself a pat on the back, because doing these devotions is one way to be responsible for your own spiritual growth. Great job! Here are some other practical steps to take as you seek to move toward a deeper relationship with Jesus through the Grow commitment:

1. *Have you made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, choosing Him to be your Lord and Savior? If not, please contact one of the Jacob's Well staff members. We would love to guide you into this step!*
2. *Have you taken the step of baptism? The next baptism class will be October 24th at 6:30pm.*
3. *Wednesday's devotion this week was a guide to help you take a step in daily devotions. Create your devotional plan. Pray for the strength and focus to follow God each and every day.*
4. *Take ownership of your spiritual growth by participating in one of the Journey classes this fall. The following classes are available: Discover You, Parenting Journey and Marriage Journey.*
5. *Whether you are new to faith in Jesus or simply want to rediscover—in a safe and non-legalistic way—the beauty and significance of what it means to be a Christian, attend Alpha, which starts the first Tuesday evening in October.*

The **Belong** commitment calls us to commit to healthy, Christ-centered relationships. Here are some practical steps to take as you seek to move toward a deeper relationship with Jesus through Belong:

1. *Foster more deeply connected relationships within your own family by engaging in your spiritual journeys together and consistently spending time with one another, sharing the details of your lives.*
2. *Sign up for an available group during our Groups Rally during the month of September.*

As you end today's devotion, read and reflect on **Luke 9:23-24**. Pray for God to show you His next step for you. What do you sense He is asking of you?