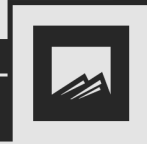


R E D R O C K S

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*A 35-DAY DEVOTIONAL TO HELP
YOU GET STARTED!*



WEEK 1: Studying

WEEK 2: Meditating

WEEK 3: Praying

WEEK 4: Fasting

WEEK 5: Inviting

WELCOME




This is your Starter Pack! We designed this book to help you take the next step in your faith. Whether you've been following Jesus for years or are ready to take your first step, today is the perfect day to start.

Many Christians want to make prayer, fasting, and reading their Bible a regular part of their routine but have no idea where to begin. Others have been practicing the spiritual disciplines for so long that it's starting to feel repetitive. Either way, this book is your guide to help you have a real, living, thriving, life-changing relationship with God.

The commitment for getting through this book is ten minutes a day. Each day there is a reading, a response to help you connect with God and apply what you learned, and then a few questions to help you reflect on the process. Although developing a relationship with God is a lifelong journey, taking a few minutes each day is a great way to begin. The first day may feel underwhelming, but if you keep going, you'll be blown away by what God can do in your life in such a short time. Today is your day to start. Trust us. You'll be glad you did!

WEEK 1:
STUDYING
SCRIPTURE





The starting point for following Jesus is diving into Scripture, and the first step for studying the Bible effectively is understanding the big story. The Bible is not one book. It is a library of 66 books written by 40 authors over the course of about 1,500 years. This library of books tells one unified story about a loving God who went to great lengths to have a relationship with us. It's a story of God's faithfulness in the midst of our constant rebellion.

This week, we are going to look at seven of the major landmarks in this story. By the end of it, you'll have a much better understanding of the story of God.

Set aside ten minutes each day to go through these devotions. Remember, at first, it may feel forced, but stick with it and enjoy the process. Soon it will become one of your favorite parts of the day!

DAY 1

CREATION

READ

Genesis 1-2

The first page of the Bible tells the incredible story of God creating the heavens and the earth. God began speaking, and all of creation started to take shape. This first chapter has a very noticeable pattern:

And God said...
And it was so.
And God saw that it was good.

The pattern repeats for days 1-5, but then on day six, the structure suddenly changes. This is intentional. The author is telling us to pay attention because whatever happens on day six is extra important. What does God create on day six? Genesis 1:27 tells us:

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

God created you and me to
continue carrying out his creation!

DAY 2

THE FALL

READ

Genesis 3

Genesis 3 is the moment everything fell apart. Adam and Eve decided they wanted to ignore God's instructions and live their way. Ever since that moment, humans have had to struggle with their desire to decide for themselves what is right and wrong.

This is the moment it became clear that humans can't follow God on their own. The rest of the Old Testament is example after example of this pattern. Despite our best efforts, humans constantly and continually fall short of the glory of God. By the end of the Old Testament, it's clear that we need help—we need a Savior.

RESPOND

Adam and Eve's mistake was thinking they knew better than God. But if we are honest, we make that same mistake all the time. What is one way (big or small) you are currently resisting God's plan for your life and trying to do it your way? Take two minutes to confess that to God.

REFLECT

Why do you think God put the tree in the Garden in the first place?

What does this story teach us about human nature?

DAY 3

THE SAVIOR

READ

John 1

Sin separated us from God. And when it became clear that we would not be able to bridge the gap with our good behavior, God decided to come to us. He stepped out of Heaven and made his dwelling place with us to show us how to be human. And then he laid down his life for all of us.

During his ministry, Jesus had twelve disciples. One of them was a man named John. He followed Jesus everywhere he went. Toward the end of his life, he sat down to write out his Gospel—the story of Jesus. The Gospel of John is packed full of some really big statements, like this one you just read: *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us”* (John 1:14).

RESPOND

Memorize John 1:14.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

You may find it helpful to write this verse out on a piece of paper a few times and then repeat it out loud. Memorize it in your mind until it sinks into your heart.

REFLECT

What does John 1 teach us about the character and nature of God?

John 1:5 says, *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* What do you think John means by that?

DAY 4

THE SACRIFICE

READ

Matthew 26-27

Today's chapters may have been difficult to read. After living a sinless life for 33 years, Jesus got sentenced to death on the cross. In the Old Testament, faithful Jewish men and women would atone for their sins by sacrificing animals. However, those sacrifices wouldn't last—they were a temporary solution.

As tough as these two chapters are, they are vital to the story. This is the moment God made the ultimate sacrifice for us once and for all. While reflecting on this moment, Paul later wrote, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

DAY 5

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE CHURCH

READ

Matthew 28 and Acts 2

Matthew 28 is the climax of the entire Bible. Jesus went to the cross, but he didn't stay there. He defeated sin and death and walked out of the tomb. Then he gathered his disciples and gave them a really big job, a job that we are still working on 2,000 years later. He called them to go and make disciples!

The Church is God's plan for carrying out our commission. Acts 2 is the story of where and how the church began. After an amazing day of ministry, the followers of Jesus began to set up some structure to help the movement flourish.

RESPOND

Reread Acts 2:46

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

Identify three people in your life who you would consider a part of your community. People you meet together with and share meals with. Send all three of them a quick text and thank them for being in your life. (If you can't identify three, it's a great time to join a Group).

REFLECT

What are some words you would use to describe the early church?

What do you think it means to “make disciples”?

DAY 6

THE HOLY SPIRIT

READ

Galatians 5

As the early believers continued to head out into the world to tell people about Jesus and build the church, the Holy Spirit continued to inspire and empower them.

One of the roles of The Holy Spirit is to make us more like Jesus. In Paul's letter to the church in Galatia, he goes to great lengths to remind them how important it is to walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh. When we follow the flesh, the result is jealousy and frustration. However, when we surrender to what the Spirit is doing in our lives each day, the result is love, joy, peace, and all the things we are desperately searching for.

DAY 7

THE END

READ

Revelation 21-22


The final two chapters of the Bible bring us back to the first two. Remember, in Genesis 1 and 2, Adam and Eve were in a Garden, in perfect communion with God. Now, at the very end of the story, that Garden has become a city, and once again, God is dwelling with his people.

“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).

The end of the story is really good news! It’s a reminder that no matter how bad things get, God will ultimately win in the end!

WEEK 2:
MEDITATING
ON
SCRIPTURE





Studying Scripture is important, but we also have to spend time meditating on it. Meditating on Scripture means fixing our attention on it and thinking deeply about it. It's more about quality than it is about quantity, and it allows God's truth to make the journey from our head and into our hearts. Once that happens, we'll notice our lives transforming in real and tangible ways. It allows the truth in God's Word to become a part of who we are.

This week, we are going to spend five minutes every day meditating on a different verse in the Bible. This may be a little difficult for you at first, but it will get easier throughout the week, so keep going!

DAY 8

DAY AND NIGHT

READ

Psalm 1

Scholars call Psalm 1 the introduction to all the Psalms because it teaches us how we are supposed to approach all 150 of them. In it, David invites us to meditate on Scripture day and night. We may not be to David's level yet, but today, we can start with five minutes.

According to this Psalm, people who meditate on Scripture will be blessed, pure, stable, and full of delight. So, take the next five minutes to read, study, and think about the first two verses of Psalm 1.

RESPOND

Spend the next five minutes meditating on the first two verses of Psalm 1. If this is your first time meditating on Scripture, just start by setting a timer and reading the verses really slowly over and over again.

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)

REFLECT

How was that experience? Did you find it difficult to stay focused for five minutes? Why or why not?

Did you notice anything about the passage in the final few minutes that you didn't notice in the first few?

DAY 9

THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS

READ

Philippians 4

Paul was a big proponent of meditating on Scripture. In his letter to the church in Philippi, one of the last pieces of instructions he gives them is to think about (meditate on) the right things. The more time we spend filling our minds with holy things, the less we will find ourselves drifting back toward unholy things.

RESPOND

Take five minutes and meditate on Philippians 4:8. Like yesterday, you can start by simply reading the verse over and over again. After a few minutes, see if you can make the shift from reading the verse to applying it. In other words, begin to fill your mind with things that are true, noble, right, etc.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

REFLECT

What is one thing that stuck out to you while meditating on this passage?

Go through the list and name one thing that is true, another thing that is noble, one that is right, one that is pure, lovely, and admirable.

DAY 10

RENEW YOUR MIND

READ

Romans 12

The world gives us plenty of reasons to worry. If you turn on the news for ten minutes, the amount of concerning information is almost overwhelming. Since we are living in this world, it is really easy to conform to its patterns. But we don't have to. Scripture invites us to a different way of living.

This is where meditating on Scripture gets incredibly practical. Taking time to think deeply about the truths in God's Word isn't just something we do to check a box; it literally transforms our lives. In his letter to the church in Rome, Paul says it this way, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"* (Romans 12:2).

RESPOND

Read this verse over and over again for five minutes. As you go, observe the thoughts that pop up in your head. If any of them are worldly, replace them with a new thought that lines up with God's plan for your life.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

REFLECT

What thoughts popped into your head as you meditated on Romans 12:2? Where do you think those thoughts came from?

What is one pattern of the world that you tend to conform to? Why do you think that is?

DAY 11

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

READ

Colossians 3

Sometimes the greatest distance is the chasm between our mind and our heart. It's one thing to understand a concept intellectually, but it's another thing to let that truth sink into our hearts and become a part of who we are.

One of the best ways to assist in that process is to practice memorizing Scripture. These days, our phones remember everything for us, so memorization is becoming a lost art. But this was a really important practice for Jesus (which came in handy when Satan tried to tempt him in the wilderness). As followers of Jesus, memorizing Scripture should be important to us as well.

RESPOND

Take a few minutes to memorize Colossians 3:16. You may find it helpful to speak the verse out loud or write it down a few times. It's only a few words, but don't rush this process. Let the verse imprint itself on your long-term memory.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly
- Colossians 3:16

REFLECT

What do you think it means to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly?

How was that process? Does memorization come easy to you, or does it take some work?

DAY 12

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE (PART 2)

READ

Colossians 3

To follow Jesus effectively, we don't need a new revelation every day—the secret is consistency. So today, we are going to practice memorizing Scripture again, but this time we are going to take it to the next level. Yesterday, you memorized the first half of Colossians 3:16. However, the rest of verse 16 and all of verse 17 are really important as well.

If you can memorize both verses and carry them around with you all day, you'll notice they change the way you tackle your daily to-do list.

RESPOND

See if you can memorize the rest of verse 16 and all of verse 17:

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in Word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- Colossians 3:16-17

REFLECT

What stuck out to you while you were memorizing this passage? What do you think Paul is trying to communicate to us?

What do you think it means to “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus”?

DAY 13

TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE

READ

2 Corinthians 10

If you haven't noticed by now, Paul took his thought life very seriously. He understood how important it is to combat the lies of the world with the truth of God. In his second letter to the church in Corinth, he warned his friends to "take every thought captive" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

At first, "captive" may feel like too strong of a word. But when you begin to understand just how big of a battlefield the mind really is, you realize that language is right on par. We have to go to war against our negative thoughts by reminding ourselves what God really thinks about us.

RESPOND

Choose one of these truths about God and decide to combat every negative thought you have today by reminding your soul who God is.

The LORD is my protector

- Psalm 18:2

God is love

- 1 John 4:16

The Lord is my strength and my shield

- Psalm 28:7

REFLECT

Which of those three verses resonated with you the most today? Why do you think that is?

What is the most common toxic thought you have about yourself or this world? Where do you think that thought came from?

DAY 14

PERSPECTIVE

READ

Genesis 15

When God gives Abraham a seemingly impossible task, he panics and starts to doubt that he will be able to pull it off. Watch how God responds:

“He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be” (Genesis 15:5).

God knew Abraham needed some perspective. He needed to get outside of his tent, look up into the sky, and remember how big and vast God’s creation is. Sometimes all we need is a little bit of perspective.

RESPOND

Today's response requires some physical movement. Get up and go somewhere where you can be in God's creation. If it's nighttime, head outside and look up to the stars. If not, find somewhere outside and spend five minutes meditating on Genesis 15:5.

He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be" (Genesis 15:5).


REFLECT

Did you notice anything different about meditating on Scripture while being surrounded by God's creation? If so, what did you notice?

How are you feeling now that you've gained a little perspective? Did it change the way you see your current circumstances?

WEEK 3:
PRAYING





Prayer is simply talking to God, and it may be the most underutilized weapon we have as Christians. All throughout Scripture, the Creator of the Universe invites us to talk to him and ask him for things, and yet we get so busy in life that we rarely ever stop and take him up on the offer.

Talking to God can feel strange at times, and it can be difficult to know where to start. So this week, we are going to learn how to communicate with God together.

DAY 15

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

READ

James 4

The first thing you have to know about prayer is that it actually works. In some mysterious way, prayer actually changes things. This is one of the reasons taking the time to pray is so important. Jesus says it this way, “And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith” (Matthew 21:22).

Jesus had a brother named James who said something similar, “You do not have because you do not ask God” (James 4:2). God tells us to pray because when we do, it actually changes things.

RESPOND

Since our prayers change circumstances, take five minutes to pray for these three things right now:

1. Pray that God would bless your family.
2. Pray that God would bring peace and prosperity to your city.
3. Pray that God would bring unity to our world.

REFLECT

Do you believe that prayer actually changes things? Why or why not?

How do you feel after spending five minutes praying for others?

DAY 16

PRAYER CHANGES YOU

READ

1 John 5

Prayer doesn't just change our circumstances; it also changes us. The truth is we all have a lot of things and emotions that we haven't processed. They are in the dark, and if you think about it, only unhealthy things grow in the dark.

When we take the time to pray, we are allowing God to shine a bright light on all the things we are feeling and going through—just taking the time to sit and talk to God about how we are feeling and what we are going through changes us.

Every time we sit down to pray, we stand up differently because prayer changes us!

RESPOND

At the end of his letter, John reminds us, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (1 John 5:14). Since God is listening to you right now, take five minutes and tell him how you are really feeling.

REFLECT

How did knowing that God is truly listening to you change the way you prayed?

How do you feel after processing your emotions and current life circumstances with God for five minutes?

DAY 17

PRAYER BRINGS YOU CLOSER TO GOD

READ

Luke 17

Prayer doesn't just change our circumstances; it also brings us closer to God. This is part of the brilliance of God's design. He created a way for us to spend time with him because he desires for us to have a relationship with him. Every good parent understands this. We want what is best for our kids, but we also love it when they come to us and ask us for help.

One of the best ways to let prayer change us is to talk to God about all the things we are thankful for.

RESPOND

Make a list of ten things you are thankful for, and then spend the next five minutes thanking God for each of them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

REFLECT

How did knowing that God is truly listening to you change the way you prayed?

How do you think our gratitude makes God feel?

DAY 18

PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER

READ

Matthew 6

Praying the Scriptures is one of the easiest and most effective ways to communicate with God. Since prayer is talking to God, and Scripture is the Word of God, we may as well talk to God about his Word.

One example of this is the Lord's Prayer. In Matthew 6, Jesus is in the middle of The Sermon on The Mount, and he gives everyone a really practical model for prayer.

RESPOND

Spend five minutes slowly praying through the Lord's Prayer. Don't just read it; stop after each line and think deeply about what you are really asking God for.

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.*

REFLECT

How was that experience? Did you notice anything new about this prayer that you've never seen before?

What do you think it means to pray for "our daily bread"? That line means something different for everyone each day. What does daily bread mean for you today?

DAY 19

LISTENING

READ

Exodus 14

Prayer is supposed to be a dialogue, a conversation. But so often, we treat it as a one-way street. We do all the talking. Did you know sitting in silence and learning to listen to God's voice is a form of prayer? That's what we are going to do today.

Silence isn't easy. As soon as you start, you'll have a hundred different thoughts running through your head. But the most important thing is showing up and trying. Don't judge yourself or wonder if you did a good enough job. The win is showing up!

RESPOND

Read the following verse as many times as you need to, and then attempt to spend five minutes being still and listening.

Exodus 14:14

The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.

REFLECT

How was that experience? Were you able to sit still for five minutes? If so, try bumping up the time to ten minutes next time. If not, why do you think that was so difficult?

What emotions did you experience as you attempted to sit still?

DAY 20

BREATH PRAYER

READ

Isaiah 42

Breath is essential to life, and according to Scripture, every breath is given to us by God. “God, the LORD, created the heavens and stretched them out. He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath to everyone, life to everyone who walks the earth” (Isaiah 42:5).

We take about 20,000 breaths every single day. Breath prayer is the practice of using those breaths to remember the one who gave them to us.

RESPOND

Since every breath comes from God, practice using each breath for prayer. With every breath you take for the next five minutes, read Job 33:4.

Inhale: *For the Spirit of God has made me.*

Exhale: *And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*

REFLECT

How did incorporating your breath change the way you prayed? Why do you think that is?

You will be taking breaths all day. What is one practical way you can remind yourself to use a few of them to incorporate prayer throughout the day?

DAY 21

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

READ


Exodus 32

There is nothing wrong with praying for ourselves, but Scripture also invites us to pray for other people. We call this intercession—praying that God would move in people’s lives. It’s important that we do this because we actually have the ability to impact and change the course of other people’s lives by interceding on their behalf.

Exodus 32 is a really powerful story about Moses praying to God for favor for the Israelites. He does this because, as we’ve already talked about, prayer actually works. And praying for other people is one of the best ways to get our eyes off ourselves.

WEEK 4:
FASTING





Fasting is simply withholding from something we normally have so that we can set our attention on God. It's a very common practice in Scripture. Men and women of God frequently abstain from something (usually food) in order to keep their attention on God.

Fasting is completely counterintuitive for us. We are hardwired for survival, so saying no to basic survival needs feels wrong.

Throughout the course of this week, you are going to have several opportunities to fast. If fasting from food is not a wise decision for you, remember you can fast from anything. Fast from social media, coffee, television, or anything else that feels like it may be challenging.

DAY 22

WHY FAST?

READ

Matthew 6

Why would anyone consciously decide to fast if they don't need to? The problem is, humans are prone to seek out comfort, and the more comfortable we are, the less we rely on God. We fast to voluntarily give up some of that comfort, to remind our souls to rely on God.

What's more important than *what* you fast is *how* you fast. While there are lots of different things that you can fast from, the essential thing is that we do our best to do it secretly. Fasting is hard, and it would be easy to try to use it as an opportunity to get pity points from people. But Jesus is clear in Matthew 6 that doing that is missing the point. The goal of fasting is not to *look* spiritual. The goal is to actually *be* spiritual.

RESPOND

Choose one thing right now and decide to fast from it today. Remember that can be a meal, sugar, caffeine, social media, or whatever else feels right.

REFLECT

What words or emotions come to mind when you start thinking about fasting?

Have you ever fasted before? If so, what did you fast from, and how long did you fast? How was the experience?

DAY 23

THE POWER OF FASTING

READ

Mark 9

In the chapter you just read, the disciples try to drive out a demon from a boy, but they aren't able to. When they ask Jesus why, he calmly responds, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29, NKJV).

In other words, something happens when we fast. It adds strength and power to our prayers. But what's also interesting about this passage is that Jesus neither fasts nor prays. He just speaks to the demon, and the demon leaves. Why? Apparently, prayer and fasting were a lifestyle for Jesus. Fasting wasn't a once in a while thing Jesus did so that his prayers would carry more power; it was a continual thing he did to connect with his heavenly Father.

RESPOND

Choose one meal to fast from today and commit to using that time to pray for a breakthrough in your life. Whenever you start to feel weak or find yourself wanting to eat some food, let that be a reminder to you to stop for two minutes and pray for God to work in your life.

REFLECT

What are you fasting from today? Do you feel any different as you fast?

In what ways is fasting changing the way you pray?

DAY 24

FASTING FOR BIG DECISIONS

READ

Acts 13

Do you have any big decisions coming up you want clarity on? Fasting is one of the best ways to hear from God.

In Acts 13, the disciples have a big decision to make. They are trying to figure out the next most effective step for taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth. But instead of trying to come up with the solution on their own strength, they go into a time of prayer and fasting.

“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2).

If you know the rest of the story, you know how good of a decision that was. Saul (later Paul) became one of the most effective church planters the world has ever seen! That’s the power of fasting. It’s a simple and tangible way to make sure we are letting God lead instead of trying to figure out everything on our own.

RESPOND

Choose one thing to fast from today with the intention of hearing from God about whatever big decision you have coming up. Go into the day expecting to hear from God and gain some clarity for your decision.

REFLECT

What is one big decision you have coming up?

What type of fast do you feel like God is calling you to go on to help gain clarity about what you are supposed to do?

DAY 25

FASTING FOR A RESET

READ

Acts 9

Did you ever play video games as a kid? If you did, you probably remember the reset button. At a young age, every kid figured out that you aren't going to always be at your best. The reset button was your friend. If you had a perfect season going but were about to lose a game, you just hit the reset button before the game saved.

Fasting is sort of like hitting the reset button. Sometimes your soul needs a reset. You need to stop for the sake of getting a brand-new start. You just read about one of the most powerful conversion stories in all of Scripture. The Apostle Paul (who was still Saul at this point) had his life completely reset. Did you notice the role fasting plays in the process (verse 9)?

Whenever you feel down and out, remember fasting is one of the easiest ways to rekindle the fire.

RESPOND

After reading about Paul's reset, what is one thing you need a reset for? Decide what it is, choose what you are going to fast from today, and then spend that time asking God to give you a reset.

REFLECT

How was that experience? Was it difficult to go without a meal?

Did your prayer time feel different at all while fasting? If so, what was different about it?

DAY 26

FASTING AND INTERCEDING

READ

Nehemiah 1

If you remember back to last week, one of the most powerful aspects of prayer is when we learn to get our eyes off ourselves and pray for other people. The same principle applies to fasting. While it's great to fast for things going on in our own life, it's also powerful to use our fast as an opportunity to get our eyes off of ourselves.

Fasting and intercession are a powerful combination. Whenever a friend has something going on in their life or something really heavy is happening in the world, one of the best things we can do is to go into a time of prayer and fasting.

In the book of Nehemiah, we see a great picture of this. Although Nehemiah is no longer living in Israel, his heart breaks when he hears about the tragedy happening there. As a result, he decides to do something about it, and it all starts through prayer and fasting.

RESPOND

Skip one meal today and spend that time praying for the city of Austin (or whatever city you are in). Ask God to bless our city and protect our city. And pray that people who are far from God would be drawn close to him.

REFLECT

Which meal are you going to fast from today?
Are these fasts getting easier or harder as you go throughout the week?

What is one thing you want to see God do in your city?

DAY 27

FASTING FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AGAINST TEMPTATION

READ

Matthew 4

Perhaps the most powerful story of fasting in Scripture is when Jesus went out into the wilderness and abstained from food and water for forty days. At the end of the forty days, Satan met him in the wilderness to tempt him.

It's easy to read that and think how scary it must've been for Jesus to be tempted while he was so weak, but the opposite is actually true. After forty days of fasting, Jesus was physically weak, but he was spiritually strong. Although it may not feel like it in the moment, fasting increases our ability to fight off temptation and be the men and women God wants us to be.

As you may have noticed, Jesus's ministry began right after he got back from the wilderness. This is a very common pattern. If you are feeling led to go into a time of serious fasting, it's probably because God has a big next step coming for you.

RESPOND

Identify one area of your life where you tend to face a lot of temptation. Decide to fast from one thing today and use that extra time to talk to God about that area. It's incredibly healthy to talk through our weaknesses with God. You may feel some conviction, but don't let the enemy twist that into shame. Remember, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

REFLECT

What is one area of your life where you are feeling a lot of temptation?

Have you noticed any extra power to stand strong in that area this week as you have been fasting?

DAY 28

FASTING TOGETHER

READ

Joel 1

In the first chapter of Joel, the prophet urges Israel to:

*Declare a holy fast;
call a sacred assembly.
Summon the elders
and all who live in the land
to the house of the Lord your God,
and cry out to the Lord.*
- Joel 1:14

In this case, this fast is supposed to be done corporately—it's meant to be a sacred assembly. While fasting is typically an individual event, there is also something powerful about coming together as a church or as a movement to fast with one another. Doing this helps us get our eyes off of ourselves and onto the bigger work that we are a part of.

RESPOND

Are you a part of a group, ministry, or outreach team? If so, what would it look like to set up a day for the leaders to all fast together? Have them all skip breakfast and lunch and then come together in the evening to worship, take communion, and then break the fast together with a meal.


REFLECT

How do you feel about today's exercise? Do you have a Group or a team that you feel led to reach out to?

If you don't, it's a great time to jump in and get involved. What is one Group or team you would like to be a part of?

WEEK 5:
INVITING





Jesus once called us “the light of the world.” He went on to say, “A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they set it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house” (Matthew 5:13-14).

In other words, the Gospel message was never meant to stay within the four walls of the church. As followers of Jesus, our job is to do what he did. Namely, take his message to the world and show them this light through both our words and our deeds.

It’s important to have both. When we try to talk to people about Jesus without treating them the way Jesus would, they won’t listen to us. But when we just treat them like Jesus without telling them about the good news, they won’t know any practical next steps to take. However, when we combine the two, we become a light that shines in a dark world. For this final week, we are going to learn how to do that together.

DAY 29

THE GREAT COMMISSION

READ

Matthew 28

We aren't just here on this earth to learn more about God; Jesus gave us a job to do. Right before he ascended back into Heaven, he called his disciples together and said:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

Our job is to go to every nation and not just teach people about Jesus, but help them live like Jesus. We call this the Great Commission, and it's been keeping us busy for the last 2,000 years. If you still have breath in your lungs, then you still have a part to play in this commission.

The Gospel was never meant to be kept quiet. We are supposed to share it with the world.

RESPOND

Before you can effectively disciple someone else, you have to make sure there are some people in your life who are teaching you and showing you how to follow Jesus. Make a list of the people in your life who you would consider spiritual mentors, and then reach out to them and thank them for everything they do for you.

If you don't have anyone, this is a great time to consider joining a Group!

REFLECT

Who are the people in your life who are teaching you how to be more like Jesus? What are some of the things you have learned from them?

Who are three people God may be calling you to disciple? How can you take the lessons you've learned and pass them on to those people?

DAY 30

FIGURE OUT YOUR STORY

READ

Acts 5

It can be really intimidating to tell people about Jesus. Oftentimes, we get scared to talk to people about God because we are worried that we may not know all the answers. Fortunately, our job isn't to know all the answers; our job is to simply point people toward Jesus.

As you saw in Acts 5, one of the most powerful ways to teach people about Jesus is to share your story of what God has done in your life. According to Scripture, there are two things that have the power to overcome the schemes of the enemy. "They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death" (Revelation 12:11).

Do you know your testimony? If not, don't worry, that's what we are going to do today.

RESPOND

Before you can share your story, you first have to know what it is. Grab a journal and a pen, and take some time to work through your own testimony by writing out responses to the following questions.

1. How was your upbringing. What are a few of the significant life events that shaped and molded you?
2. When were you at your darkest point? When were you furthest from God?
3. Have you ever had a big turning point moment? Have you ever had a moment where you realized God is real and loves you? If so, write about it.
4. Describe yourself in five words and explain why you picked each one.
5. Who is God to you? How has your answer to that question changed in the last five years?
6. How would you put all of this together and tell your testimony to someone who doesn't know God?

REFLECT

How was that experience for you? Did you remember anything from your past that you haven't thought about in a long time?

How does reflecting on everything God has done in your life increase your own faith?

DAY 31

SHARE YOUR STORY

READ

John 9

In the chapter you just read, there is a great story about Jesus healing a blind man. However, he healed the man on the Sabbath, which was against the rules in those days. When the Pharisees (the religious leaders) found out about it, they investigated. When they questioned the man who was healed, he finally said: “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (John 9:25).

The man wasn’t worried about having all the right answers for the religious leaders. Instead, he was way more interested in talking about the power of God that he experienced. Jesus changed the trajectory of his life, and he wanted to tell everyone his story!

We should approach sharing our story with the same attitude. Instead of stressing out about how people are going to respond or about whether or not you are going to be able to answer all their questions, just tell them about all the ways Jesus has changed your life!

RESPOND

Take your testimony that you wrote out yesterday and share it with one person today. Don't force it or make it feel uncomfortable; just reach out to someone you know or trust, tell them what you are doing, and ask them if you can practice sharing your story with them.

REFLECT

How does sharing your testimony with the world make you feel? What is one emotion you are feeling right now?

Make a list of a few people you'd like to eventually share your story with. Who are the top three? Start praying that God would open up a door for you to share it with them.

DAY 32

INVITE SOMEONE TO CHURCH

READ

John 1

At Red Rocks, we are passionate about helping people experience God. That's why we put so much work into making our weekend experience an enjoyable, relatable, and powerful time.

One of the easiest ways to make disciples is to invite a friend or family member to come with you to church. If you have to bribe them with breakfast before or lunch after, do it. If they need a ride, offer to pick them up. Just get them to church and then start praying that God would speak to them in a profound way!

Inviting someone to church can be scary, but God promises to go with us and comfort us as we go. Few things allow you to experience the presence of God more than inviting someone to church.

RESPOND

Make a list of three people you'd love to see come to church with you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Send them each a separate text. In the text, thank them for being such a good friend, let them know how much you care about them, and then invite them to come to church with you.

REFLECT

How do you think your friends, family, or coworkers are going to respond to your invite?

How does this process make you feel? Nervous? Anxious? Excited?

DAY 33

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

READ

Matthew 22

In Matthew 22, some religious leaders are trying to trap Jesus in his words. To test him, they ask him which of the commandments is the most important. But he passes the test with ease. He responds, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37-40).

That’s a great passage to memorize because Jesus just summed up the entire Bible in a few short verses. Love God and love your neighbor. One of the best ways to be a light is to show your neighbor that you genuinely care about them.

RESPOND

Reach out to one person today and show them God's love in a tangible way. There are all sorts of ways to do this:

- Write someone an encouraging note or send them a text.
- Cut someone's lawn or wash their car.
- Bake someone cookies and leave them on their doorstep.
- Pay for someone's meal at a restaurant.

Get creative with it and have fun! Don't ask or expect anything in return. Just do it because, according to Jesus, that's what we are on this earth to do!

REFLECT

What tangible step are you going to take today to love your neighbor?

How do you honestly feel about this exercise? Are you excited? Nervous? Does it feel like a waste of time? Why do you think that is?

DAY 34

LOVE YOUR ENEMY

READ

Matthew 5

We all like the part about loving our neighbors, but did you know Jesus also calls us to love our enemies? This step is a little harder, but it's one of the most powerful ways we can be a light in our world.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:43-44).

Anyone can love someone who is nice to them, but can you love the person who wronged you? This is one of the best ways to show people the love of Jesus because when you do, they will be so thrown off by your actions that they will demand an explanation! Doing this takes a lot of grace and a lot of forgiveness. It's not easy, and it's not fun, but when we do it, we push back the darkness with our light.

RESPOND

Who is one person in your life you are angry with?
Are you ready to forgive them?

If so, reach out to them today (if it's safe to do so) and let them know that you appreciate them and don't hold anything they did against them anymore. Then figure out a tangible way to love and support them. Once you reach out, take a few minutes and pray that God would continue to bless them and provide for them.

REFLECT

How do you feel about loving your enemy? What emotions is this task stirring up in your soul? Why?

Why do you think it is so difficult to wish people well when they've hurt us? What does that tell us about ourselves? What does it teach us about God?

DAY 35

GO PUBLIC WITH YOUR FAITH

READ

Acts 8

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward transformation. As you enter into the water, you are reminded that Christ was crucified and raised from the dead and that you have died to the old self in order to live for Christ. It is a powerful reminder of God's goodness and grace while serving as a step of obedience to follow Jesus' example.

Baptism is also one of the best ways to let your family and friends know that you've decided to follow Jesus. It's a practical way to be a light in the world because it gives you a great excuse to invite your friends to church. Ask them to join us for baptism weekend, and then let them experience the power of your testimony!

TAKE A STEP

Thanks for joining us for this 35-day journey. You should be proud of yourself. Getting through these five weeks is a huge accomplishment. But this is just the beginning. God is just getting started in your life!

No matter what part of your spiritual journey you are on, the best question you can always be asking yourself is: what is my next step?

Just Getting Started

If you are brand new to following Jesus, and you want to learn more about the basics, Just Getting Started is your next step. Just Getting Started is a page on our website dedicated to teaching you all about the basics. Check it out now at:

Redrocksaustin.com/start

Baptism

Baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It is an outward sign of an inward change; it signifies that our former way of life is put to death and that a new life has begun because of what Jesus did on the cross.

At Red Rocks Austin, Baptism Sundays are some of the biggest parties of the year. Keep your ears open for the next date!

GROW

If you are ready to find out more about Red Rocks Austin and all the ways you can be a leader at our church, GROW is for you. GROW is a guide to help you find out how God uniquely made you and how you can plug into building his Kingdom here at Red Rocks Austin!

You can sign up now at:

Redrocksaustin.com/grow

