## **GROUV** EXPERIENCE THE FRUITFUL LIFE

A & CROSSROADS JOURNEY

GROW was made by the folks at Crossroads Church, a nationwide community founded in Cincinnati, Ohio. Read articles, watch videos, get connected, or just lurk at crossroads.net.





#### Matthew 11:28-30

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

#### -Jesus

The Message Translation

This Journey Guide belongs to:

## Growth

## God wants you to grow.

You may sense there's more to life than you currently see. Perhaps you take Jesus at his word when he says those who follow him will do "greater things" than he did.\*

But, let's be honest, finding that elusive growth is not easy. It often seems like one step forward, one big fall backwards onto your tookis.

#### \*see John 14:12

#### Here's some good news:

Growth didn't stop when you could finally ride a real roller coaster. Spiritual growth is not only possible, but encouraged, and even promised in the Bible...for those who get serious about it.

At Crossroads, we got serious about the question, "What does it take to grow?" We enlisted a collection of pastors, theologians, nerds, geeks, thinkers, dreamers, dog lovers, and dog haters to determine an answer to that question.

Their work identified seven proven practices that lead to spiritual growth. **Seven practices** that, throughout history, have taken followers of Jesus further than they ever thought possible. (Seriously, we studied this. Check out the research here).

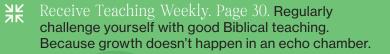


## The Seven Proven Practices

There are seven proven practices that, if you incorporate them into your life, will supercharge your growth.

This journey will focus on helping you implement the first five, or at least start the process. The sixth and seventh proven practices are included for reference but are not part of this journey.

These are simple concepts with powerful results. Followers of Jesus have found strength in these practices for two thousand years, but many have also struggled to make them stick. The goal of this journey is to help you find unique ways to make these practices a reality in your life, so you can grow closer to Jesus. Connect with God Daily. Page 08. Like Jesus, carve out time every day to hear from the Creator of the Universe. He just might have a great plan for your life.



Share Your Story. Page 44. Tell others what God has done/is doing in your life in a way that they will receive it. The best way to remember something is to tell it to someone else.

Get Baptized. Page 66. Follow Jesus' example and command to be baptized in water. It's a one-time thing with a lifelong impact.

Join Community. Page 80. Surround yourself with other believers who can support you, challenge you, and maybe go on a crazy adventure together.



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Live Generously.\* Honor God first with the resources he has blessed you with. Show God you're serious about His ways and His Kingdom.

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Serve Others.<sup>\*</sup> Use your time and skills to advance God's Kingdom and do some good in the world. Change your life by changing someone else's life.

\*THESE PRACTICES ARE SUPER GREAT, BUT AREN'T INCLUDED IN THIS JOURNEY

## How The Journey Works

- O1. Watch the weekend teaching (either online or in-room): This is where you will learn all about one of the proven practices. And there will likely be some jokes. Hopefully good ones.
- O2. Do the challenges in this guide: This guide is full of experiments so you can find ways to implement each practice. We're all different, so what works for that guy over there isn't the same for everyone. This guide will help you figure out what works best for you.
- O3. Meet with your group: You'll debrief what worked (and what didn't). And hopefully have some fun. Also, if your group lasts until the last week of the journey, there's a surprise waiting for you. (HINT, WINK, NUDGE, DO IT)
- O4. Fill out the poster: Booger-glued (yes, that's a real thing) to the back inside cover of this guide is a poster. It's a tool for you to fill out and tape up to help you to continue to grow. More info on the last page.

## THE BIBLE CHALLENGE

## The Bible Challenge

This year (2022), Crossroads is doing the Bible Challenge where we choose a book of the Bible and make it our focus for an entire series. For the GROW JOURNEY, we are doing the Gospel of Matthew, one of the authorized biographies of Jesus. This book is full of some of Jesus' central teachings about how to be part of and advance the Kingdom of God. And there are many keys in those teachings as to how to grow closer to Jesus. Look for examples from Matthew throughout this guide. AND! To stay caught up in the Bible Challenge, download our app to receive weekly teaching and ways to spend time with God.



**PROVEN PRACTICE ONE** 

# Connect with God daily

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## For any relationship to grow, communication is critical.

## A relationship with God is no different.



And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. The following pages include exercises for building a connection with God. Before you meet with your group, choose and complete as many as you want, but at least two from different sections. Make notes of what works and what doesn't.

01-05	
The Naturali	<i>st.</i> Exercises for the nature lover
The Sensate.	A focus on all five senses
The Tradition	nalist. A lover of hymnals, pews, and stained glass
<i>The Ascetic.</i>	A focus on simplicity and solitude
<i>The Activist.</i>	Finding connection through intense engagement
The Caregive	r. Connecting with God by considering others
31-35 The Enthusia	<i>Exploring mystery, celebration, and joy</i>
<sup>36-40</sup> The Intellecti	<i>ual.</i> For the deep thinker

#### When will I experiment with the practice this week?

- MORNING
- AFTERNOON
- EVENING
- O DON'T PUT ME IN A BOX, I'LL GET TO IT WHEN I GET TO IT.

#### Which exercises will I try?

Flip through and choose OR pick five numbers between 1-40 at random.

#### What will I cut out to make room for growth? Sleep, Netflix, Socializing, Social Media, Oculus Poker, etc.

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THIS SYMBOL MEANS THAT EXERCISE CAN BE DONE IN THE CROSSROADS APP. GET IT HERE :





### **THE NATURALIST**

*Exercises for the nature lover.* 



- O1. Open Matthew and read any section. Go on a nature walk and meditate on what you read. What do you think God wants you to do? (Bonus challenge, do that thing today.)
- O2. Step outside and observe a bird, any bird will do. Listen for its song. Consider its flight. Quietly observe for at least five minutes. Then open your Bible and read Matthew 6:25-27. Ask God; "What do you want me to know?" Write down anything you hear.
- O3. 'And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.' Matthew 14:23 Simply spend time outside at sunrise or sunset. Consider the sky and the clouds. If you can get to a location with a great view, do that. **Rest in that space for at least 20 minutes. Have a conversation with God.** □
- O4. Explore a new area in nature. Someplace you've never been. A new trail, or an entirely new park. As you hike, notice the biodiversity of life. When you find an especially beautiful spot, stop and spend a few minutes reflecting on God's creation. What stands out? Did God impress anything on you? If so, what?
- O5. Set your alarm clock for 3am. Wake up and walk □ outside for 15 minutes. In the quiet of the night, ask God if he has something he wants to tell you. Write it down. Then go back to sleep.



(88)

06. Find a quiet place where you can be totally alone. Light a candle. Listen to a worship song loudly. (Need a place to find great music? Search "Crossroads Music" on YouTube or Spotify.) Do you think God was trying to say something? Write down anything you heard/ thought/felt.

- O7. God is a creator and we're made in his image. Create a work of art. Paint, sketch, or sculpt something. No one has to see your final product, so relax and have fun. As you create, meditate on what it means to be made in the image of an artist. □
- O8. Have a dance party. Seriously, even if you're a dude. King David was one of the Bible's most manly men and even he wasn't too proud to dance before the Lord (2 Samuel 6:14). So pop and lock or Griddy your way across a room. Jot down anything God may have said.
- O9. Read the entire chapter of Matthew 9. Read it as if you are an eyewitness to the events taking place. With the fullness of your imagination, try reading it as if you are physically there. Listen for the sounds. Smell the smells. Feel the hot air of Israel. How do you feel? What are you thinking about Jesus? What do you want to ask him? How are the people around you in the story feeling? What emotions are you feeling? Then, come back to your day and consider what God might be teaching you. Write that down.
- 10. **Relish in an amazing meal.** Whether you cook something new or try a food you've never had, consider how what you're eating reflects the diversity of our creative God and his abundant goodness. What stands out from tasting this new thing?

#### THE TRADITIONALIST A lover of hymnals, pews, and stained glass.



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11. Rewrite Psalm 23 in your own words. Relax, there

- 1. Rewrite Psain 23 in your own words. Relax, there is no wrong way to do this. What did God speak to you in this exercise?
- 12. Open the Crossroads App. **Read the day's scripture** and create a journal entry. Read at least two other public journal entries and consider what God might be saying to this community.
- 13. Read Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord's Prayer) while □ on your knees. Slowly and meticulously make each and every statement personal and meaningful for your current situation. For example, consider these questions: How is God like a father to you? How do you keep his name holy and set apart? What would it look like for you to live fully submitted in *HI*S Kingdom? What feels like "daily bread" that you need today? Where do you need forgiveness? Who do you need to forgive? Where are you currently tempted and need strength? Where can you repent and turn from "evil"?
- 14. Deeply consider your emotions. What is weighing on you right now? Jot down at least five different emotions you have surrounding that situation. Now ask God to speak into each and every feeling you've captured. What do you think He has to say? Write it out.
- **15. Spend time reading Matthew 6:16-18.** Spend part □ of or the entire day fasting from food. Every time you feel hungry, ask God to be with you. Record how it goes.

THE ASCETIC A focus on simplicity and solitude.



- 16 "Be still and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10. Set a □ timer for 20 minutes and sit in complete silence. With eyes closed, count to 10 in your head. Consider that if God speaks to you, he'll use that same voice. Now pay attention to your thoughts. Ask God to direct them. When the timer goes off, write down anything you think you heard.
- 17. Imagine yourself in a place that you love. Maybe the □ home you grew up in, your favorite place outside, etc. Then, just imagine that Jesus himself steps into that place. Ask him something. See what happens. Jot down some notes.
- 18. You'll need a quiet place, paper, and two different color □ pens. Simply write out a conversation with God. Put your thoughts in one ink color and anything you think God might be saying in a different ink color. It's your own screenplay. Don't overthink it, just let the ink flow.
- 19. Look at your calendar, your daily to-do list, or your □ class schedule. Now pray for each and every part of your day. Set a reminder to reflect on this exercise this evening. Did you experience God in a different way? How?
- 20. Ask God to show you something that you can give away today. What is taking up space that you could do without that might be a blessing to someone else? Give it away. Record what you did, how you felt, and how the recipient reacted.

### THE ACTIVIST

Finding connection through intense engagement.



- 21. God can handle your disappointment, your lack of faith, your honest questions, and your anger (*this is most of what the Psalms are after all*). Bring the full fury of your rage to God. Vent to Him. Unload. Then sit in perfect silence for five minutes and see if He says something. Write down anything you think you might be hearing.
- 22. Open the book of Matthew and start reading. Pay attention to your spirit. When you feel like God is telling you to do something, stop and do it ASAP. No excuses. DO IT. Make a note of what you did and how it went.
- 23. "Comparison is the thief of joy." *Teddy Roosevelt* □ "Contribution is the antidote to comparison" *Unknown* Consider how you can contribute today. Where might God want you to help, encourage, or otherwise contribute? Write down some ideas and then do it. Record how it goes.
- 24. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says to pray for our leaders. Ask God to show you the leaders from all categories of your life. Government leaders. Teachers. Parents. Bosses. Mentors. For each category, spend time specifically praying for the people God revealed. Were there any themes? Do you think God is asking you to do anything for any of those leaders?
- 25. **Today, seek out the outcast.** Someone who seems □ lonely or down. Sit next to them, introduce yourself, pray for them. Ask them something about themself. What is something they love or are excited about? Encourage them. Then jot down how it goes.

## THE CAREGIVER

Connecting with God by considering others.



(83)

- 26. "Intercession" is just a churchy word that means praying for someone else. Ask God to bring one person to mind. Pray for them. Write out your thoughts if that helps. Lean in. Intercede like you've never interceded before. Maybe pray on your knees. When you're done, consider sending them a text of encouragement. Nothing weird, just tell them you were thinking of them.
- 27. Open the Crossroads App and complete the "Pray for Others" prompt. In response, consider adding your own prayer request to the community.
- 28. Plan to spend time with one other person you trust and ask them what God is teaching them. This could be a coffee date or a text thread. What might God be trying to teach you through your friend?
- 29. Make a "paste list". A paste list is a list of people □ close to you that you pray for while you're brushing your teeth...with toothpaste. Tape it on your bathroom mirror. Who did you choose and why? Is God asking you to do more than simply pray?
- 30. At the end of your day ask God to bring to mind ONE interaction you had with another person. Something you said, or something that was said to you. Reflect on why that moment stands out. Is God getting your attention for a reason? Are you being asked to follow up? To forgive? To repent? To intercede? Spend time writing down any thoughts that come to mind.

#### THE ENTHUSIAST Exploring mystery, celebration, and joy.



- 31. Set a timer on your phone to go off every hour today. □ Every time that timer dings, take one minute, look around, and think of something specific you're thankful for. Towards the end of the day, consider what God might have been showing you. Make some notes.
- 32. Recreation is just re-creation. It re-creates us. What □ do you LOVE to do? Do that today. Whether it's a bike ride, fishing with buddies, or quietly reading a book at a coffee shop, consider whatever you do as a deep act of worship. How does it feel to worship that way?
- 33. Sometimes we just need adventure. Something that □ radically shakes us out of our ruts and routines. Jot down a few things that seem scary and out of your comfort zone, but give you a tinge of excitement, and then GO DO THAT THING. Jump in a river. Pray for a stranger. Shout sing while rollerblade dancing. You do you. How did God meet you in that unknown?
- 34. Today, simply be prepared to say something nice □ to a stranger. You might have to go out of your way to find a stranger, but listen for God's prompting and then act. What happened? What did you hear? What did you do?
- 35. Talk to God about the things you are thankful for. □ Go into the Crossroads App and do the "Practice Gratitude" exercise on the home screen. What do you want to tell God about your life?



### THE INTELLECTUAL

For the deep thinker.



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- **36. Read Matthew 6:9-13** (*The Lord's Prayer*) **and write down 15 observations.** The first few will come easy, but gold is mined a little deeper.
- 37. Make a list of 100 things you are thankful for. ONE. □ HUNDRED. James 1:17 says that everything good comes from God. If James 1:17 is true, how does it shift your perspective of God?
- 38. Read Matthew 4:2-4 in at least three different Bible translations. (*NKJV*, *NIV*, and *MSG* for example.) Then Google "Matthew 4:2-4 Commentary" and do a little research. What might God be trying to say to you specifically?
- 39. Go to the explore tab in the Crossroads App and □ read or listen to something. What might God be saying to you?
- 40. Ask God to show you a topic he might be trying to get your attention on. Greed. Lust. Pride. Unforgiveness. Anger. Then Google what the Bible has to say about that topic and explore it in depth. What did you learn? What do you think God is telling you?

**Thoughts/reflections:** 

### Which connection type (*naturalist*, *sensate*, *etc*) was most natural for you?

What new practice will you establish to meet with God more regularly in that way?

EXAMPLES:

I'll start every Wednesday, rain or shine, with a 30-minute walk on the trails of my local park.

I'll commit to reading and journaling 3 times a week in the Crossroads App.

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PROVEN PRACTICE TWO

# Receive Teaching Weekly





Regular Biblical teaching is good for our souls.

- It redefines what's important.
- It challenges us to consider outages we might normally overlook.
- It reminds us who God is, and what he's like. Because we're forgetful.
- AND, we get regular teaching because God always wants to show us something new.

Jesus was a teacher. He taught all the time. Probably the most famous teaching happens in the book of Matthew, chapters 5-7, called the Sermon on the Mount.

#### The Sermon on the Mount begins like this:

#### **Matthew** 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, *saying*:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

#### In this section you'll...

- 1. Discover your learning style.
- 2. Learn something new about the Sermon on the Mount.
- 3. Outline your learning so you can teach\* what you've learned.

DON'T WORRY, YOU WON'T BE ASKED TO GIVE A LECTURE OR ANYTHING, OFTEN THE BEST WAY TO LEARN IS TO TAKE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED AND EXPLAINIT TO SOMEONE ELSE.

#### When will I carve out an hour to learn something new?

Wh	at is my learning s	tyle	e? Who could I teach what I learn?
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0	SAT		
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0	THURS	0	EVENING
0	WED	0	AFTERNOON
0	TUE	0	NOON
0	MON	0	MORNING

	O MY GROUP
	O MY BFF
○ VISUAL	• MY FAMILY
○ YOU CAN'T DEFINE ME	$\odot$ THAT ONE NEIGHBOR KID
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#### What will I cut out to make room for learning?

(Instagram which I'm sick of anyway, nap time, binging Full House again, working late, crushing the neighbor kid in tetherball again, etc.)

## Discover your learning style

- I CAN'T HELP BUT WRITE.
- ACTUALLY, TALKING WHILE SOMEBODY ELSE USES THE WHITEBOARD IS THE BEST.
- I'D RATHER TALK TO AN EXPERT.
- I PREFER READING ACTUAL BOOKS.
- IPREFER TWITTER.
- I'D RATHER WATCH A VIDEO.
- I ACTUALLY READ INSTRUCTION MANUALS.
- I REMEMBER WHAT SOMEBODY SAID MORE OFTEN.
- I PREFER TIKTOK.
- I'D RATHER READ AN ARTICLE.

- ▲ I REMEMBER MORE BY HEARING SOMEBODY GIVE A LECTURE.
- THOSE IKEA DIRECTIONS WITH ONLY PICTURES ARE SUPER HELPFUL.
- THE MOVIE IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN THE BOOK.
- ▲ IPREFER AUDIOBOOKS.
- ACTUALLY, MAKING A LIST ON A WHITEBOARD IS THE BEST.
- I REMEMBER PICTURES MORE OFTEN.
- ▲ I GET MOST INSPIRED WHEN I TALK TO SOMEBODY.
- I GET MOST INSPIRED WHEN I READ AN ARTICLE.
- ▲ I WANT SOMEBODY TO EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT THE HECK TO DO WITH ALL THESE IKEA PARTS.

Circle all the statements that feel true for you.

- I REMEMBER WORDS MORE OFTEN.
- ▲ I PREFER SPOTIFY.
- I'M PRETTY GOOD WITH A CAMERA, EVEN THE ONE ON MY PHONE.
- I'M GOOD AT EXPRESSING MYSELF WITH PICTURES.
- ILOVE WRITTEN DIRECTIONS.
- I LISTEN TO PODCASTS, EVEN WHEN I'M NOT DRIVING.
- DIAGRAMMING IDEAS ON A WHITEBOARD IS THE BEST.
- I LOVE WHEN SOMEBODY JUST TELLS ME HOW TO GET THERE.

- THOSE IKEA DIRECTIONS WITH ONLY PICTURES ARE TERRIBLE.
- I'M GOOD AT TALKING.
- I GET MOST INSPIRED WHEN I LOOK THROUGH A MAGAZINE.
- l'M A TALKER.
- I'M A NOTE-TAKER.
- I DOODLE A LOT.
- I REMEMBER MORE FROM WATCHING YOUTUBE VIDEOS.
- I REMEMBER MORE BY READING THE ASSIGNMENT.

I LOVE MAPS.

# Add up all the statements you checked by color.

### IF YOUR HIGHEST COLOR WAS BLUE, YOU'RE PROBABLY A VISUAL LEARNER.

You think in images. It's obvious to you that a picture is worth a thousand words.

### IF YOU GOT MORE RED THAN ANYTHING, YOU'RE LIKELY AN AUDITORY LEARNER.

You retain the most when you hear somebody teach it out loud. It's all about hearing a human voice communicate something.

# IF YOU'RE GREEN, YOU MIGHT LEARN BEST THROUGH READING.

When you see it written down, you remember it. You think in pictures too, but all the pictures are made up of groups of letters. Called words.



## Learn something new

Scan this QR code and choose a teaching from the list to **read, watch, or listen** to. Take notes on the following pages in this guide.



## A place to take notes as you learn.

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## <u>Sidebar</u> Additional Teaching

What inspires the teaching team at Crossroads? Scan this code for a diverse list of some of their favorite teachers and teaching content.



## The main point:

The one concept I'll teach someone else/my group.

# Teach Some Stuff

You know you've really learned something when you know it well enough to teach others. Your challenge is to share a nugget of what you learned with someone else *(ie, your journey group)*. You don't have to give a sermon. In fact, please **don't**, because that would be boring and take forever.

FILL OUT THIS FRAMEWORK AND USE IT AS YOUR TEACHING GUIDE.

One thing I learned / one thing that challenged me:

I found it interesting because:

It taught me this about God:

Here's what it means for me, personally:

Here's one way to apply this teaching to my life:

**Okay, now get ready to share that in five minutes or less.** You're gonna do great. And if you're one of those visual learners, bonus points if you bring a prop.



**PROVEN PRACTICE THREE** 

# Share Your Story





You have an interesting story to share. Regardless of your background, your story is powerful because it's true. No one can argue with it.

This section is about crafting that story. Follow the prompts and spend time considering the story you have to tell. It might just be the most powerful thing God will ever ask you to use. Meditate on these verses from the New Testament and answer the prompts for each.

### Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Who in your life could use some "light" right now?

## Revelation 12:11

They triumphed over him [the devil] 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.

How might our "testimony" defeat our enemy?

#### **PLANNING SECTION**

#### When will I carve out an hour to sit down and write my personal story?

- O MONDAY
- TUESDAY
- WEDNESDAY
- THURSDAY
- FRIDAY
- YOU CAN'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO YOU STUPID GUIDE

A safe person I could practice sharing my story with:



# Outline your story.

# Craft your story in the blank pages of this guide.

If you follow Jesus, fill out the "My Jesus Story" section. If you're still figuring out this whole God thing, fill out the "My Story Right Now" section.

Plan on spending a solid hour on this exercise.

# My Jesus Story

# For those who follow Jesus.

01: My	life be	fore J	lesus
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Personal Background

I'm from: Sheboygan

My family life, in one sentence: Solid midwestern values, just do what's right and be kind.

Values instilled when I was young: You can do anything you set your mind to.

*My church experience as a kid was: A weekly obligation. Dress nice and keep quiet.* 

Faith background

*My first memory of church or religion was:* Boring and confusing.

I grew up believing this about God: On His best days God was low-key disappointed with me.

#### 02: How God got my attention

What and/or who spurred your faith journey?: My best friend, a believer, had a life and vibe that was super attractive.

What initial obstacles did you overcome?: I thought being a Christian meant I had to become someone completely different from who I was. I had the impression that Christians were judgmental and close-minded.

#### 03: My decision moment

What was the breaking/decision point?: My life wasn't working. For the first time I prayed a simple honest prayer and I feel like God whispered "trust me". I can't explain it, but it was real.

Where were you, what else was going on?: I was camping with a group of friends.

#### 04: My life after Jesus

What does it mean to "follow God"?:

Mostly it means resting in complete gratitude for the gift that is this life. "Following" is easy when you trust He's really good.

What rhythms/disciplines help you grow?: Running/Walking in nature. Meeting with friends who challenge and encourage.

What tangible impact has God had on your life?: My life is inexplicably more peaceful.

# My Jesus Story

For those who follow Jesus.

## 01: My life before Jesus

Personal Background

I'm from:

My family life, in one sentence:

Values instilled when I was young:

Faith background

My church experience as a kid was:

My first memory of church or religion was:

I grew up believing this about God:

## 02: How God got my attention

What and/or who spurred your faith journey?:

What initial obstacles did you overcome?:

## **03: My decision moment**

What was the breaking/decision point?:

Where were you, what else was going on?:

## 04: My life after Jesus

What does it mean to "follow God"?:

What rhythms/disciplines help you grow?:

What tangible impact has God had on your life?:

## Write your answers here ...

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## My Story Right Now

For those still on the fence about the whole God thing.

a. The biggest struggle in my life right now is...

b. How I got there (decisions I made, things that happened, people who contributed)...

- c. Recent losses...
- d. Recent wins...
- e. My fears of what might come...
- f. My hope of what God will do...

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# Learn how to tell a great story.

Scan to explore the Art of Storytelling series from some fantastic storytellers. Watch a few of their tutorials and consider how you might use their tips to tell your own story.



# Write out your story.

No one wants to hear a 1-hour sermon about your life. Your story should be simple and to the point. Writing it out will force you to keep it short.

Use the notes you took in the previous section and write out a few short paragraphs.





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# Share your story

Use the work from this section to start sharing your story with others. Your group, your BFF, your mom. The more reps you get, the easier and more natural it will become. Start safe, and trust Jesus to lead you into more difficult but fruitful opportunities.

AFTER SHARING STORY

Notes/learning on how to improve my story:

We'd love to read your story, too!

Share it at *crossroads.net/shareyourstory*. It won't go anywhere else without your permission.



**PROVEN PRACTICE FOUR** 

# Get Baptized



Nº4

Baptism is simply a public declaration of an inward decision to follow Jesus. It's like a wedding ceremony, only in water. It's hard to forget the time you got pushed underwater, fully clothed, in front of a room full of people watching you. And, while nothing super crazy (usually) happens that we can observe, you can be certain that something happens in the spiritual world that we can't (usually) see.

If you've decided to follow Jesus, you should seriously consider getting baptized to declare that choice.

Why? Primarily because Jesus told us to.

## Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Follow this simple flow chart and complete the prompts along the way.

# Have you been baptized?



TURN TO PAGE 74

**TURN TO PAGE 70** 



# Was it your choice?



ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW, AND ON PAGE 71

# No

**TURN TO PAGE 72** 

## Why did you decide to get baptized?

Meditate on this verse:

### Galatians 3:26-28

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

# What does it mean to "put on Christ"?

# **Rededicate your baptism by doing one of the following:**

- Tell your baptism story to someone/your small group (see the Sharing Your Story section of this guide for tips)
- Spend time in focused prayer, rededicating yourself to Jesus (*Try praying on your knees or with your hands above your head to symbolize full surrender before God.*)
- S. Fully submerge yourself in water while you consider what the act of baptism symbolizes. (Sometimes the physical world mimics the spiritual world. Baptism symbolizes being spiritually washed clean. So find some water, fully submerge, and ask God to forgive you for something. [BTW, He already has!])

71

## Who decided and why?

# What, if anything, do you remember about the experience?

# What are your biggest roadblocks or questions about getting baptized again?

Reach out to hello@crossroads.net and ask about talking to someone about this decision.

# Do you want to be baptized again, but this time as your choice?

<u>Yes</u> No

**TURN TO PAGE 73** 

COOL! ON TO YOUR GROUP.



# Want to get baptized now?



TURN TO PAGE 75

# Not Sure/No



Sweet!

Scan this QR code for all the details on how to sign up.



# Make a list of some of the things holding you back. This is for you, be as honest as you can.

Meditate on this verse:

#### 1 Peter 3:18-22

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. *Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience*, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

## Consider taking one of these next steps:

- Talk to a trusted friend about deciding to get baptized.
- Talk to your small group about baptism.
- Attend a Baptism Info Session. (see QR code)
- Reach out to hello@crossroads.net and ask about talking to someone about this decision.

# What are your biggest roadblocks to getting baptized?

What questions do you have about baptism?

Bring these questions to your group.

Baptism is a big decision, just spending time reflecting on it is a huge step.

BAPTISM INFO SESSION









**PROVEN PRACTICE FIVE** 

# Join Community





# We're meant to experience life together.

The writers of the New Testament assumed this, because the books were almost exclusively written to GROUPS of people, not individuals. When Jesus teaches us how to pray, he says "OUR Father," not "my Father." In fact, the four gospel books point out the times when Jesus was actually alone, because he was with people nearly all the time.

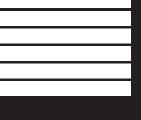
This guide contains two parts for trying this practice. First, several scripture passages about community to reflect on, and then a bunch of ideas for ways to spend time in community.

#### PLANNING SECTION

# What days work best for a group get-together?

- MONDAY
- TUESDAY
- WEDNESDAY
- THURSDAY
- FRIDAY
- LIKE I NEED A CHECK BOX TO PLAN A PARTY, GET OFF ME

# Who do I need to connect with to plan this shindig?



# What the Bible says about community

### Matthew 18:20\*

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

## Acts 2:42-47

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## **John** 15:13\*

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

### Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

## Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

### Ephesians 4:2-4

Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together. You are one body and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope.

### What stood out? Why?

Assume for a moment that God is speaking to you through these passages. What do you think He might be saying?

# Have fun with a group of people

**Brian Tome** "I think the most important spiritual discipline is friendship."

If you're in a group, you've been experimenting with this proven practice the entire journey. Hopefully you've experienced why it's so critical to a life of faith. Having a group of faith-filled people around who really know you is what the Bible calls "the church". And it's not all prayer circles and Kumbaya chants.

Your challenge:

Connect with a group of people (your Journey group) and do something that feels life giving.



Use this list of ideas and conversation prompts to get those brain juices flowing.

### **Celebration Ideas:**

- 1. Run a 5k together
- 2. Watch the weirdest \* documentary you can find
- 3. Make a documentary in a weekend
- Rent jet skis
- 5. Rent a boat
- 6. Go canoeing/cabrewing
- 7. Go to a soccer game
- 8. Go to a high school football game
- 9. Find the most obscure live sport, and go watch it together
- 10. Go apple picking
- 11. Hold a cheap beer tasting \*
- 12. Or a cheese tasting \*
- 13. Or a salsa tasting
- 14. Shoot, how about a Jell-o tasting
- 15. Go sledding
- Make a photo scavenger hunt
- 17. Eat together at the park
- 18. Eat together in the mall
- 19. Find a 24 hour driving range, and go at midnight
- 20. Host an ice cream social
- 21. Host a cornhole tournament

- 22. Share an all night gaming \* session
- 23. Make Your Own Pizza Party; bonus if it's a contest
- 24. Build a bonfire
- 25. Meet for a Crossroads service and then eat dinner afterward
- 26. Watch all the Harry Potters in one night
- 27. Do karaoke, but with \* mouthfuls of grapes
- 28. Make a Capture the Flag tournament, but do it at night
- 29. Clean out the dirtiest person's car. I mean, really detail that thing. Make it shine inside and out.
- 30. Stream a movie together, \* using Teleparty or something similar
- 31. Help with yardwork or housework
- 32. Help someone with their \* resume or job search
- 33. Try to get your whole group kicked out of an Arby's
- 34. We don't actually recommend that last one
- 35. Paint a room
- 36. Help somebody move
- 37. Work on a car

- Rent the most outrageous costumes you can find, and do a bar or restaurant crawl
- 39. Backyard camping
- 40. Road trip to the nearest city
- 41. Game night \*
- 42. Karaoke contest \*
- 43. Put on a rooftop concert
- 44. Go fishing
- 45. Share an all night gaming \* session
- Go bowling, but wearing road cycling outfits, helmets and all
- 47. Go trick or treating any night but Halloween
- 48. Go to an art museum
- 49. Race ridiculous vehicles
- 50. Go to a sporting event dressed as Peaky Blinders
- 51. Sleepover
- 52. Check out a comedy club
- 53. Anything that requires a helmet
- 54. Do one of those escape rooms
- 55. Actually lock one of your people in a room and see if they can get out (also known as "free escape rooms")

- 56. Celebrate the next person's \* birthday / anniversary / whatever milestone sounds like fun
- \* 57. Hold a joke party. Make a four course meal (salad, appetizer, main dish, dessert), and have everyone bring a joke to share during each course.
  - 58. Do a trivia night (you can find templates at slideswith.com)
  - 59. Don't tell me what to DO, journey guide! You are SO BOSSY. I have my own cool ideas.
  - 60. Hold a virtual tasting event. \* Everybody buy the same five things, taste them at the same time, and compare notes. You can do this with everything from cheeses to cheap beers to cereal to fancy meats.
  - 61. Zoom charades \*
  - 62. Digital Happy Hour (bring a \* drink of choice and funny story to share)
  - 63. Start a fantasy football league \*

# **Conversational Prompts**

OPTIONAL: CUT THESE OUT AND THROW THEM ON THE TABLE OF YOUR NEXT GROUP GET-TOGETHER

What would you do if you had thousand dollars and 24 hours to yourself?		What scares you?					
Encouragement. Nobody ever sa Well, some people do, bi							
What were you like in elementary school?		If you have existing endships in the group, tell					
What's a good story from when you were a kid?		he origin story. How did hese friendships start?					
What's a story about you that the group hasn't heard before?		s the last thing you spent oo much money on?					
What are you stressed about right now?	Wł	nat are you excited about right now?					
How are you different from when this group first met?		What makes you happy?					
What makes you angry?	Who'd you vote for in the last presidential election? ( <i>kidding, do</i> <b>NOT</b> ask that question)						
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What's the final five percent? That is, what's the little thought in the back of your mind that you might not want to share?



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# POSTERINSTRUCTIONS

If you've made it this far,



You completed the Grow Journey. Hopefully it's the start of something new and amazing.

This guide contains one last tool to help you grow. Booger-glued to the back cover (*that's an actual technical printing term, look it up*), you'll find a folded-up poster. Pull it out and fill out the prompts. Then hang it somewhere you'll see it regularly. Let this poster be a condensed version of your growth plan.





A SCROSSROADS JOURNEY