

FIRST STEPS

3

*Your personal guide to understanding the
essentials of following Jesus.*

3 | NEW DIRECTION



FIRST STEPS | Book 3 – “New Direction”

Developing Your Love For God

God wants to build a relationship with you that is closer than any other. He is concerned about every aspect of your life. He wants you to know him so well that you will love and trust him without hesitation. Right now, your love for God might feel strong or weak, but he wants your love for him to be based not just on feelings but knowledge. And just as a baby learns to recognize the voice of their caregivers, God wants you to recognize and light up when you hear His voice. That is why the Bible is so important to your life. It is as if God wrote you a “love letter” or has given you a perfect road map for living. It contains everything we need in order to get to know him, to live a blessed life, to avoid unnecessary pain, to handle money well, to prosper in relationships, to make wise choices and on and on. **The Bible calls itself “God’s Word” because it literally is God speaking to us.** It isn’t just what God has said in the past but what God is saying to you and I right now. It is alive, relevant and has the power to change lives.

1. Find the following verses in your Bible. Each of them describes something amazing about the Bible. Then answer “T,” True or “F,” False about the statement next to each verse.

___ Psalm 119:9, 11 | *It helps me stay pure & not sin.*

___ Psalm 119:105 | *It is a light that guides me in a dark world.*

___ Matthew 7:24-27 | *It gives me a solid foundation to build my life upon & weather life’s storms.*

___ Ephesians 6:13, 17 | *It is my spiritual weapon to fight against the Devil and temptation.*

___ 2 Timothy 3:16-17 | *It is useful to teach me and train me to become the person God wants me to become.*

___ Hebrews 4:12-13 | *It is living and active & speaks to my very soul.*

Some mistakenly believe that the Bible is an outdated book, filled with moral fables and long lists of “do’s and don’ts”. What they don’t realize is that the Bible is unlike any other book. Not only is it alive, but God used 40 different authors from different countries and occupations, ranging from kings and doctors to poor farmers & fishermen. They wrote over a period of 1,500 years, in three different languages. They had no phones, internet, or libraries to consult or notes to compare. Yet with all of these variables, the Bible has one great theme and central figure – Jesus. It has stood the test of time and the scrutiny of experts. All of this would be impossible unless the Bible was ultimately written by one author - God himself. No wonder it is the best-selling book of all time!

You Are What You Eat

Maybe you have heard it said that, “You are what you eat” when it comes to physical food? There is some truth to that. But an even greater truth is that **the quality of our Christian life depends upon the spiritual food that we eat and the junk that we avoid.**

2. In Matthew 4:4 what does Jesus say is our spiritual food?

_____ What is his point?

3. What would happen to your physical health if you only ate 1 day a week? How does that same idea apply to your spiritual health?

4. According to Ephesians 4:25 – 5:4, what are at least 4 types of spiritual junk to stay away from?

5. Why would a person want to stay away from these things?

6. We all have a lot of “junk” stored in our minds. The Devil uses that junk to lie to us in order to tempt us to sin or to keep us from becoming the incredible person God created us to become.

Use Romans 12:2 to answer the following questions.

In this verse it says:

- “Do not” do what? _____
What do you think that means?

- “But be” what? _____
What tool have we been talking about that has the power to do that?

- “Then you will be” what? _____
What do you think that means?

We All Need the Benefits of SOAP in Our Life

Food feeds our body, but the Bible feeds our soul. Being fed spiritual food from others (pastors/teachers) is good, but learning to feed ourselves is even better. We expect children to eventually learn to feed themselves which is a sign they are growing up. **Just as we eat daily, we need to get the Bible into our life & develop our relationship with God every day.** A tool that has helped many to do this is a Bible study method called SOAP. SOAP is an acronym that helps you capture the things God has shown you while reading the Bible. Each letter stands for a different word that reminds you how to study the passage you just read.

The letters of SOAP stand for:

S *Scripture* - Write out the one verse from your reading that spoke to you the most.

O *Observation* – Write down some general observations that stand out to you about the things you have read. Keep it simple.

A *Application* – Write down how you will apply God's word to your life today. What difference will it make to you?

P *Prayer* - Write out a simple prayer for the day.

Before you read the Bible, pray & ask God to speak to you and show you what He wants you to see for that day. After you read, be sure to use some S.O.A.P!

Let's give it a try! In your Bible find Psalm 1. First, pray & ask God to speak to you through His Word. Second, read Psalm 1. Third, write your first S.O.A.P. There are no "right" answers or "right" ways. This is you meeting with God to get to know Him better! There is everything "right" about that! Have fun with it!

Psalm 1 S.O.A.P

S

O

A

P

Putting It All Together

If you want to get to know God better, experience His blessings, renew your mind and get strong and healthy spiritually then you will need a plan to get into God's Word daily!

7. Make an appointment with God. What time of day or night would be the best time for you to read & study the Bible on a consistent basis? (Maybe set up a reminder in your phone!) Write down that time here:

8. Figure out a quiet and peaceful place for you to spend time alone with God and His Word. Write down that place here:

9. Collect your resources. It is helpful to have a journal to write down your SOAPs as you study God's word each day. You may use any notebook or journal. Having your own Bible to underline in and make your own is also helpful. If you don't have a Bible, we have free Bibles at Next Steps. There is also a free handy Bible app for phones or computers that can be found at Bible.com. Are you ready? Check off the resources you have:

- Bible
- Journal or Notebook
- Pen & Highlighter
- Tea or Coffee

10. The Bible is a unique book. Most books are read from beginning to end, but since the Bible is really 66 books combined into one, you do not need to start at the beginning. To begin reading the Bible on your own, we suggest starting with one of the following books: The Gospel of John (focuses on the life of Jesus), or James (practical wisdom for life)

Which book of the Bible are you planning to start with? _____

Bible Verses Used in this Lesson

Psalm 119:9 & 11 | How can a young person stay on the path of purity? I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:105 | Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Matthew 7:24-27 | Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew & beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

Ephesians 6:13 & 17 | Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand...Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 | All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12-13 | For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Matthew 4:4 | Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Ephesians 4:25-5:4 | Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Romans 12:2 | 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.

Psalms 1 | 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. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

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