



THE WORKBOOK

Essentials

A four-week guide to following Jesus.

LOVE CHURCH SAN DIEGO

LOVE GOD · LOVE PEOPLE · LOVE CHURCH

CONTENTS

What's Inside

Welcome & How to Use This Workbook	3
Your Coach & Your Group	4
Week 1 · Know God	5
Week 2 · Find Purpose	9
Week 3 · Grow Strong	15
Week 4 · Make a Difference	21
What Do I Do Now?	24
Helps · Who I Am in Christ	25
Helps · Getting Started in the Bible	26
Helps · Your First 30 Days	27

START HERE

Welcome

Have you recently given your life to Jesus? We could not be more excited for you. It's the best decision you will ever make. And if you've been following Jesus for years, welcome back to the foundation. Essentials is a simple, four-week starting point we built with you in mind. Over four live sessions you'll learn how to know God, discover the purpose He made you for, grow in everyday rhythms with Him, and keep going alongside others.

We do this because following Jesus was never meant to be figured out alone, and the first steps shape everything that follows. Essentials is the on-ramp to our discipleship pathway: Love God, Love People, Love Church. It moves you from a decision to follow Jesus into real relationships and a clear next step like baptism, a Love Group, or serving on a team. And you won't walk it by yourself: a coach comes alongside you through every session. This is a safe place, and every question is welcome.

How to use this workbook

- **Follow along live.** Each week is taught live, in the room — this workbook is your companion for notes, reflection, and next steps, not a video companion.
- **Write as you go.** The reflection spaces are for your honest thoughts, not right answers.
- **Bring your questions.** Jot them down as they come and talk them through with your coach.
- **Take one step at the end of each session.** Small and consistent beats big and occasional.

A Note on This Edition

This month, Essentials is fully digital — there's no printed copy yet, so keep this open on your phone or tablet during class. Groups also form on their own each week (no assigned tables), so if you're looking for people to connect with, just find an open seat and jump in.

The pathway at a glance

Love God**SUNDAYS**

Worship, the Word, and the presence of God together.

Love People**GROUPS**

Real relationships where you're known and you grow.

Love Church**SERVING**

Belong to the family and give your life away.

Essentials helps you take your first steps into all three.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Your Coach & Your Group

A coach is someone from Love Church who walks with you through Essentials, cheering you on, answering your questions, and helping you take each next step. Fill this in so you always know who's in your corner.

My Coach

Name

Best way to reach them

We meet / Where

My Group

Group / class

People I'm getting to know

Session Schedule

- **1** — Know God
- **2** — Find Purpose
- **3** — Grow Strong
- **4** — Make a Difference

WEEK 1

Know God

It all begins with knowing who God is and what He has done for you.

Following Jesus doesn't start with trying harder. It starts with knowing how deeply you are loved. Before you ever did anything right or wrong, God set His love on you. The whole story of the Bible is a good Father making a way to be with the people He made.

One God, three persons: the Trinity

When we say “God,” we mean something beautiful and a little mysterious. The Bible teaches that there is one God who exists eternally as three persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. Not three gods, and not one person wearing three masks, but one God in three persons, perfect in love and unity. You don't have to fully explain it to believe it.

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” — **Matthew 28:19**

The good news, simply

The word gospel simply means “good news,” and it really is the best news in the world. You can remember the heart of it one letter at a time.

The G.O.S.P.E.L.

- **G** — God created us to be with Him.
- **O** — Our sins separate us from God.
- **S** — Sins cannot be removed by good deeds or trying harder.
- **P** — Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again.
- **E** — Everyone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life.
- **L** — Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever.

Why we needed rescuing

God made us for relationship with Him, but all of us have gone our own way and lived for ourselves. The Bible calls that sin, and it isn't only the big, obvious things. At its root, sin is a heart that says, “I'll be in charge.” It separates us from a holy God, and no amount of good behavior can erase it or bridge the gap on its own.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” — **Romans 3:23**

What Jesus did

Here is where the good news breaks in. God did not leave us stuck. Jesus, fully God and fully man, lived the perfect life we never could, then took our place on the cross and paid the price for our sin. Three days later He rose from the grave, defeating sin and death so we could be forgiven and brought home. This is the heart of the gospel: not us climbing up to God, but God coming down to us.

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." — Romans 5:8

How to respond: turn and trust

The gospel calls for a response, not a performance. Two simple words capture it: repent and believe. To repent is to turn from running your own life. To believe is to trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You don't clean yourself up first; you come as you are, and He does the changing from the inside out.

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." — Romans 10:9

A gift, not a wage

You can't earn what's already been given. Grace means God's love isn't a reward for good behavior. It's a gift you receive. That changes everything about how you walk with Him: not striving to be accepted, but living from acceptance.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." — John 3:16

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." — Ephesians 2:8–9

You are made new

When you say yes to Jesus, you don't just get a fresh start. You get a new identity. Forgiven. Adopted as God's child. Made new. Your past doesn't define you anymore; His love does.

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." — 2 Corinthians 5:17

Meet the Holy Spirit

You don't follow Jesus on your own strength. When you trust Christ, God gives you His Holy Spirit, His very presence living in you. The Spirit comforts you, guides you, reminds you who you are, convicts you in love, and gives you power to live this new life.

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever... He dwells with you and will be in you." — John 14:16–17

Begin Here · A Prayer to Say Yes

Maybe you've never actually said yes to Jesus. You can, right now during class. There are no magic words. Just pray something like this, silently or out loud, and mean it:

"Jesus, thank You for loving me. I'm sorry for going my own way. I believe You died and rose again for me. Today I turn to You. Be my Savior, my Lord, and my friend. Fill me with Your Spirit and help me follow You. Amen."

If you prayed that for the first time, tell your coach tonight — during connect time, not after you get home. We want to celebrate with you!

How do I know it's real? (Assurance)

Your relationship with God doesn't rest on how you feel on a given day. It rests on what Jesus has done and what God has promised. Feelings come and go; His Word stands.

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." — 1 John 5:13

Reflect

1. When did you first hear about Jesus, and what made you want to follow Him?
2. Which part of the G.O.S.P.E.L. is easiest to believe right now? Which is hardest?
3. What does it mean for you that God's love is a gift you can't earn or lose?
4. Any questions from tonight's teaching you want to bring to your coach?

Respond

Two questions to turn tonight's reflection into a real next step this week.

1. Is there a next step God's inviting you to take this week — telling someone, getting baptized? What's actually stopping you?
2. Who is one person you can tell about your decision to follow Jesus this week?

Take a Step

Tell someone (your coach, a friend, your group) about your decision to follow Jesus. And if you haven't been baptized yet, that's the next way to declare your new life. We'd love to celebrate it with you.

Notes

WEEK 2

Find Purpose

You were created on purpose, for a purpose, and the mission is bigger than you.

A lot of people spend their whole lives asking, “Why am I here?” The gospel answers that question. You're not an accident or an afterthought. You are God's handiwork, made with intention and given good things to do.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” — Ephesians 2:10

Identity comes before activity

Purpose doesn't start with what you do. It starts with who you are. You are loved, chosen, and sent. When you know whose you are, what you're here to do gets a lot clearer.

Two sides of your purpose

God shapes your purpose in two ways that work together. First, who He made you to be: the unique gifts He's given you, used to serve others and honor Him. Second, what He sends you to do: share His love and the good news of Jesus. Tonight we'll explore both — your gifts and your voice.

Discover Your Spiritual Gifts

When you trust Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives you spiritual gifts: God-given abilities to serve others and build up the church. They aren't for showing off, and they aren't the same for everyone. Discovering your gifts and putting them to work is one of the clearest ways to live your purpose and bring God glory.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” — 1 Corinthians 12:4–7

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.” — 1 Peter 4:10

The 18 Spiritual Gifts

Here are eighteen gifts the Bible describes. Read through them during class to understand what each one is, then take the short test on the next page to discover which may be yours.

Administration Organizing people, plans, and resources to accomplish God's work with excellence. *1 Cor 12:28*

Apostleship Pioneering new ministries or works and carrying the gospel into new places. *Eph 4:11*

Discernment Recognizing truth from error, and what is of God versus what is not. *1 Cor 12:10; 1 John 4:1*

Evangelism Sharing the gospel naturally and helping others meet Jesus. *Eph 4:11; Acts 8:26–40*

Exhortation Coming alongside people to comfort, challenge, and build them up. *Rom 12:8; Acts 11:23*

Faith Trusting God with bold confidence for what others call impossible. *1 Cor 12:9; Heb 11:1*

- Giving** Joyfully and generously sharing resources to advance God's work. *Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 9:7*
- Healing** Being used by God to bring physical, emotional, or spiritual healing. *1 Cor 12:9, 28*
- Helps** Supporting others behind the scenes so the body of Christ can thrive. *1 Cor 12:28; Rom 16:1–2*
- Hospitality** Making people feel welcomed, valued, and at home. *1 Peter 4:9; Rom 12:13*
- Knowledge** Grasping and applying the deep truths of God and His Word. *1 Cor 12:8; Col 2:2–3*
- Leadership** Casting vision and guiding people toward God's purposes. *Rom 12:8; 1 Tim 5:17*
- Mercy** Showing deep compassion and practical care for those who are hurting. *Rom 12:8; Luke 10:33–35*
- Prophecy** Boldly speaking God's truth to encourage, correct, and call people back to Him. *Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 14:3*
- Serving** Meeting practical needs with a willing, joyful heart. *Rom 12:7; 1 Peter 4:11*
- Tongues** Praying or speaking in a Spirit-given language for worship and edification. *1 Cor 12:10; 14:2*
- Teaching** Studying and clearly explaining God's Word, and shepherding people's growth. *Rom 12:7; Eph 4:11*
- Wisdom** Applying God's truth skillfully to real-life situations. *1 Cor 12:8; James 1:5*

Spiritual Gifts Test

For each statement, write a score from 0 (not like me) to 3 (very like me) in the blank. Add the three scores under each gift for your total. Your highest totals point to your top gifts.

Gift	Rate each 0 (not like me) – 3 (very like me)	Total
Administration <i>1 Cor 12:28</i>	I organize people and details well to reach a goal. I create order out of chaos and keep things on track. I enjoy coordinating the moving parts of a project.	
Apostleship <i>Eph 4:11</i>	I love starting new things more than maintaining old ones. I'm energized by reaching new people or places with the gospel. I adapt easily to new settings and challenges for the mission.	
Discernment <i>1 Cor 12:10; 1 John 4:1</i>	I can sense when something is spiritually off or untrue. I can tell what is of God and what isn't. I notice the real motives beneath the surface.	
Evangelism <i>Eph 4:11; Acts 8:26–40</i>	It feels natural to talk about Jesus with people who don't know Him. I look for chances to share the gospel. I'm burdened for people who don't yet follow Jesus.	
Exhortation <i>Rom 12:8; Acts 11:23</i>	People feel encouraged and built up after talking with me. I can both comfort people and challenge them to grow. I naturally come alongside others to cheer them on.	
Faith <i>1 Cor 12:9; Heb 11:1</i>	I trust God boldly for things others call impossible. I stay confident in God's promises when times are hard. I believe God will do big things, and I act on it.	
Giving <i>Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 9:7</i>	I find real joy in giving generously to God's work.	

Gift	Rate each 0 (not like me) – 3 (very like me)	Total
	I look for ways to use my resources to meet needs. I'd rather give than spend on myself.	
Healing <i>1 Cor 12:9, 28</i>	I believe God still heals, and I pray expectantly for it. I feel compassion to pray over people's pain. I've seen God bring healing as I prayed for others.	_____
Helps <i>1 Cor 12:28; Rom 16:1–2</i>	I love supporting others behind the scenes. I quietly take care of tasks that need doing. I feel fulfilled making someone else's work easier.	_____
Hospitality <i>1 Peter 4:9; Rom 12:13</i>	I love making people feel welcomed and at home. I enjoy opening my home or space to others. People feel comfortable and cared for around me.	_____
Knowledge <i>1 Cor 12:8; Col 2:2–3</i>	I love understanding the deep truths of Scripture. I enjoy studying and getting the facts right. I can connect and remember biblical truth.	_____
Leadership <i>Rom 12:8; 1 Tim 5:17</i>	Others tend to follow my lead and trust my direction. I can cast a vision and move people toward it. I naturally take responsibility to guide a group.	_____
Mercy <i>Rom 12:8; Luke 10:33–35</i>	I'm drawn to people who are hurting. I'm patient and gentle with those who struggle. I want to be present with people in their pain.	_____
Prophecy <i>Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 14:3</i>	I care about truth and am not afraid to speak it. I feel compelled to call people back to God. I can sense what God wants to say to encourage or correct.	_____
Serving <i>Rom 12:7; 1 Peter 4:11</i>	I meet practical needs with a joyful heart. I'd rather do something hands-on than just talk. I see needs and jump in without being asked.	_____
Tongues <i>1 Cor 12:10; 14:2</i>	I have prayed in a Spirit-given language. I'm drawn to worship beyond ordinary words. I sense the Spirit praying through me when words run out.	_____
Teaching <i>Rom 12:7; Eph 4:11</i>	I love explaining God's Word so others understand it. I care about people growing, not just learning facts. It bothers me when Scripture is taught inaccurately.	_____
Wisdom <i>1 Cor 12:8; James 1:5</i>	People come to me for godly advice in hard situations. I apply biblical truth to real-life decisions. I help others see a wise next step.	_____

My top 2–3 gifts (highest totals):

One place I could use them to serve at Love Church:

This is a starting point, not a label. Gifts grow as you use them. Talk with your coach about a Dream Team where your top gifts could serve.

What Is Evangelism?

Evangelism is simply sharing the good news of Jesus with others. It's not a sales pitch, an argument to win, or something only pastors do. Someone once described it as one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. You don't need all the answers, and you don't have to freak out. You just get to introduce people to the One who changed your life.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... And behold, I am with you always." —

Matthew 28:19–20

PRAY. CARE. SHARE.

- **Pray** — Ask God for boldness, and for the people on your heart, by name.
- **Care** — Build real relationships and listen well. People are most open to the gospel from someone who genuinely loves them.
- **Share** — Tell your story, point to Jesus using the G.O.S.P.E.L. from Week 1, then leave the results to God.

Turn everyday conversations into gospel conversations

You don't have to force it. Stay curious about people and watch for open doors. A few easy on-ramps:

- "What's your spiritual background?" or "Where are you on your spiritual journey?"
- "Can I share what God has been doing in my life?"
- When a need comes up: "Can I pray for you about that?"
- "Would you want to come to church with me this weekend?"

"In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect." — 1 Peter 3:15

*Want to go deeper? Two great reads: *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out* by Alvin Reid, and *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* by Jimmy Scroggins & Steve Wright, which teaches the simple "3 Circles" tool for drawing out the gospel in any conversation.*

Write Your Story

Your testimony is your most natural tool. Tell it in three simple parts, real and short. You could share this in two minutes.

Before — what was my life like before Jesus (or before I took Him seriously)?

How — how did I meet Jesus? What drew me in?

Now — what's different about my life with Jesus today?

Who are 1–2 people in your life who need to experience the love of God? Write their names and pray for them this week.

Reflect

1. Which of the 18 gifts do you think might be yours, even a guess?
2. What's one part of your own story (before / how / now) you feel ready to share?

Respond

Two questions to turn tonight's reflection into a real next step this week.

1. Who are 1-2 people in your life who need to experience God's love? Commit to praying for them by name this week.
2. What's one concrete step toward serving with your gifts — texting a coach, showing up to a Dream Team info night?

Take a Step

Do two things this week: share a piece of your story with one person (or invite them to church), and talk with your coach about a Dream Team where your top gifts could serve.

Notes

WEEK 3

Grow Strong

Growth isn't about performance. It's about presence.

We live in a world that's busy, distracted, and tired, and it's easy to feel spiritually dry, not because we've stopped believing, but because we've stopped spending time with God. The habits that keep us close to Him are what we call spiritual rhythms. They aren't religious checklists; they're relational invitations.

This isn't about trying harder. It's about coming closer. Just like your body needs food, water, and rest, your soul needs time with God. Start where you are and grow one step at a time. We don't expect perfection; we just want consistency.

"Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the law of the Lord... He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season." — Psalm 1:1-3

What we're growing toward: holiness

Growing strong has a direction. The Bible calls it holiness, which simply means being set apart for God and becoming more like Jesus. It isn't perfectionism, and it isn't earning God's love (you already have that). Holiness is what happens as the Holy Spirit changes you from the inside out, and you say yes to Him and no to sin, a little more each day.

"As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct... 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" — 1 Peter 1:15-16

This is good news, not heavy news. Sin always over-promises and under-delivers; holiness leads to real freedom, peace, and joy. And you don't pursue it by willpower or on your own. You walk with the Spirit, stay close in community, and keep short accounts with God when you fall.

"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." — Galatians 5:16

Walking in Freedom

Holiness grows in freedom, and freedom comes through grace, not willpower. Sin loses its grip when we stop hiding and start bringing things into the light. Two habits keep us free: keeping short accounts with God (confession) and releasing others (forgiveness).

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." — 1 John 1:9

Confession isn't God shaming you; it's you agreeing with God and receiving His mercy. Secrecy keeps us stuck; honesty sets us free. Bring it to God, and when it helps, to a trusted person too.

"Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." — James 5:16

Forgiving someone doesn't mean what they did was okay, and it doesn't always mean reconciliation. It means releasing them to God so bitterness doesn't poison you. You can choose it today, even if the feelings follow later.

"Bearing with one another and... forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." — **Colossians 3:13**

A Freedom Exercise · Just Between You and God

Something I need to confess and bring into the light:

Someone I choose to forgive today (pray and release them to God):

A pattern I want freedom from, and one step toward it:

There's no shame here. If something feels too heavy to carry alone, tell your coach. Walking it out with someone you trust is often where the deepest freedom comes.

The Eight Rhythms

Below are eight rhythms that keep us close to God. Don't try all eight at once. As we go through these live, notice which one God is nudging you toward, and pick one to practice this week.

1 · Read the Bible

God's Word is our anchor, not just a book of rules, but the voice of a loving Father. Start with at least one verse a day. The goal isn't volume; it's connection.

SOAP · A Simple Way to Read

- **Scripture** — Write out a verse that stands out. Slowing down helps it sink in.
- **Observation** — Who's speaking? To whom? What's happening?
- **Application** — What is God saying to me, and how do I live it today?
- **Prayer** — Talk to God about what you just read.

2 · Prayer

Prayer is the heartbeat of your relationship with God, not fancy words, just honest conversation. It's our first response, not our last resort.

P.R.A.Y. · A Way to Talk with God

- **Praise** — Thank God. Tell Him what you love about Him.
- **Repent** — Be honest about where you've missed it. He already knows, and He loves you.
- **Ask** — Bring your whole life to Him. Nothing is too small or too big.
- **Yield** — Surrender your day and your plans. Pause and listen.

3 • Worship & Wonder

Worship is more than music; it's your heart's response to who God is. It happens in a song, on a walk, and in everyday moments when you notice God and say, "You're here."

| *"Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true and proper worship."* — **Romans 12:1**

4 • Sabbath & Stillness

God invites you to stop, to rest, delight, and reconnect. Sabbath says your identity isn't in what you produce, but in being a child of God.

| *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* — **Matthew 11:28**

5 • Journal & Reflect

Sometimes God speaks and we just don't slow down to hear it. Journaling gives you space to notice what He's doing, remember answered prayers, and process honestly.

| *"I will remember the deeds of the Lord."* — **Psalms 77:11**

6 • Fasting & Focus

Fasting is saying no to something (often food) for a set time in order to say a deeper yes to God. It's not about being hungry; it's about being hungry for Him.

| *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* — **Matthew 4:4**

7 • Community & Accountability

You weren't meant to grow alone. We grow best together, with people who know us, pray for us, and tell us the truth in love.

| *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."* — **Proverbs 27:17**

8 • Giving Generously

Generosity keeps your heart soft and your hands open. We give because God gave first, trusting Him as our provider and partnering with what He's doing.

| *"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart... for God loves a cheerful giver."* — **2 Corinthians 9:7**

Take a Step • Pick One Rhythm This Week

- Read one verse a day using SOAP
- Pray one minute every hour using P.R.A.Y.
- Worship through a playlist or a walk of wonder
- Take a Sabbath block to rest with God
- Journal using the four prompts

- Try a short fast and pray
- Join a Love Group or set a check-in
- Set up a giving rhythm

Try it now. SOAP one verse (try Psalm 23:1 or John 15:5):

Reflect

1. Which of the 8 rhythms are you already doing? Which one is God nudging you toward?
2. Is there anything you need to confess or release (forgive) that's keeping you stuck?

Respond

Two questions to turn tonight's reflection into a real next step this week.

1. Which ONE rhythm will you commit to this week — and when/where will you actually practice it?
2. Who will you ask to check in with you on that rhythm next week?

Notes

WEEK 4

Make a Difference

You've experienced the love of God. Now you get to give it away.

Essentials was never meant to end with you only learning about Jesus. God fills you so you can pour out. You get to make a difference right where you are: through your serving, your generosity, and your story. And here's the best part, you never do it alone. You do it as part of a family who loves you, prays for you, and walks with you through every season.

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And the Lord added to their number day by day." — Acts 2:42–47

You have a part to play

You're not a spectator in the church. God placed you in His family with a role only you can fill. Remember the gifts you discovered in Week 2? They were given for exactly this: to build up the body and bless the people around you. When you show up and serve, the whole family grows stronger.

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." — 1 Corinthians 12:27

We're not a crowd. We're a family

It's easy to treat church like a podcast: something we consume when it's convenient. But God designed the church to be a body and a family. When we said yes to Jesus, we also said yes to His people. You don't come to church to earn anything; you come to belong, and to help others belong too. That's why Scripture is full of "one anothers": love one another, encourage one another, pray for one another, carry one another's burdens, and forgive one another.

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another." — Hebrews 10:24–25

Three ways to make a difference

SERVE · GIVE · SHARE

- **1** — Join a Dream Team and put your gifts to work. Serving others is one of the truest forms of worship; even Jesus came not to be served, but to serve.
- **2** — Live open-handed with your time, talent, and treasure. Giving the first and best back to God (starting with the tithe) is how we partner with what He's doing and trust Him as our provider.
- **3** — Keep telling your story and pointing people to Jesus. You've been reached; now you get to help reach others. That's how the family keeps growing.

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." — Mark 10:45

Keep going when it's hard

Following Jesus is a marathon, not a sprint. There will be busy seasons, hard days, and times you stumble. The answer isn't to quit or to pretend you're fine. It's grace. When you fall, you don't lose your place in the family; you get back up, bring it honestly to God, and keep walking. Don't drift alone; stay close to God and to His people.

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith." — **Hebrews 12:1-2**

"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." — **Philippians 1:6**

Your Next Steps

First Step · What Is Baptism?

Baptism is how you go public with your faith. Going under the water pictures dying to your old life; coming up pictures your new life in Christ. It doesn't save you (Jesus already did that); it's how you celebrate and declare it. If you've put your trust in Jesus, baptism is your next step — ask your coach tonight about our next baptism date.

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that... we too might walk in newness of life." — **Romans 6:4**

My Next Steps

- Get baptized: declare my new life publicly
- Join a Love Group: do life with a few others
- Join a Dream Team: serve with my gifts
- Start a giving rhythm: live open-handed
- Keep a daily rhythm with God (SOAP / P.R.A.Y.)
- Help someone else take a step (invite a friend to church or Essentials)

Who are 2-3 people who can walk with you in this next season?

What is the one next step you're committing to first?

Notes & questions for my coach:

Reflect

1. Which next step (baptism, Love Group, Dream Team, giving) feels most right for you now?
2. Who are 2-3 people who can walk with you in this next season?

Respond

Two questions to turn tonight's reflection into a real next step this week.

1. What is the ONE next step you're committing to first, and by when?

2. Who will you tell about this decision this week so someone can actually hold you to it?

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

You Were Made for This.

You don't need to do everything at once. You just need to start somewhere. The goal of these four weeks was never to make you a spiritual superhero. It was to help you stay close to Jesus, and to step into the family He's placed you in.

The Invitation

- **1** — Pick one step from your Week 4 list.
- **2** — Put it into practice this week, small and real.
- **3** — Stay consistent long enough to let it shape your heart.

| *"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."* — **James 4:8**

God isn't grading your progress. He's inviting you deeper into relationship. And the best news of all? He's already with you. Let's walk with Him, together.

Get Connected

Talk to your coach about baptism, a Love Group, or a Dream Team, or visit the Discipleship page on our website to take your next step.

HELPS · KEEP THIS CLOSE

Who I Am in Christ

When you forget who you are, or the enemy whispers a lie, come back here and read these out loud. They're true not because you feel them, but because God says so.

I am loved and chosen by God. <i>1 John 3:1; Eph 1:4</i>	I am completely forgiven. <i>1 John 1:9; Col 1:14</i>
I am a child of God. <i>John 1:12; Rom 8:16</i>	I am a new creation. <i>2 Cor 5:17</i>
I am free from condemnation. <i>Romans 8:1</i>	I am God's handiwork, made on purpose. <i>Eph 2:10</i>
I am never alone; His Spirit lives in me. <i>John 14:16–17</i>	I am righteous in Christ. <i>2 Cor 5:21</i>
I am God's friend. <i>John 15:15</i>	Nothing can separate me from His love. <i>Rom 8:38–39</i>
I am complete in Christ. <i>Col 2:10</i>	I am more than a conqueror. <i>Rom 8:37</i>
I belong to God's family. <i>Eph 2:19</i>	I can come to God with confidence. <i>Heb 4:16</i>
I am a citizen of heaven. <i>Phil 3:20</i>	I am being made new every day. <i>2 Cor 4:16</i>

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” — **1 John 3:1**

HELPS

Getting Started in the Bible

The Bible can feel overwhelming at first. Here's a simple on-ramp so you can dive in with confidence.

What it is

The Bible is one big story (all pointing to Jesus) told through 66 books by many authors over many centuries. It has two parts: the Old Testament (before Jesus) and the New Testament (the life of Jesus and the early church).

How to find a verse

A reference like John 3:16 means the book of John, chapter 3, verse 16. Use the table of contents at the front of your Bible to find the book; the big numbers are chapters and the small numbers are verses.

Where to start

Begin in the New Testament, not at page one. (Don't start in Leviticus!)

- John — to meet Jesus and see His love.
- Mark — a fast, action-packed account of Jesus' life.
- Psalms — honest prayers for every emotion.
- Proverbs — practical wisdom for daily life.

Use a translation you understand (we recommend the NLT, NIV, or ESV). A free Bible app like YouVersion has audio and reading plans built in.

What is Communion?

Along with baptism, Communion (the Lord's Supper) is something Jesus gave His church. We take a small piece of bread and a cup together to remember His body broken and His blood shed for us. It isn't magic; it's a moment of remembering, gratitude, and checking our hearts.

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." — **1 Corinthians 11:26**

HELPS · KEEP THE MOMENTUM

Your First 30 Days

The goal now is simple: consistency. Spend a few minutes with God each day for a month and you'll build a rhythm that lasts. Each day, read the passage, pray using P.R.A.Y., and write down one thing you're grateful for.

Each Week, Also

- Be at church on Sunday
- Connect with my coach or group
- Serve or encourage someone

30-Day Reading Plan

Check off each day as you go. This walks you through the Gospel of John, then a few favorites.

1	John 1	2	John 2	17	John 17	18	John 18
3	John 3	4	John 4	19	John 19	20	John 20
5	John 5	6	John 6	21	John 21	22	Psalm 23
7	John 7	8	John 8	23	Psalm 1	24	Psalm 103
9	John 9	10	John 10	25	Romans 8	26	Philippians 4
11	John 11	12	John 12	27	1 John 1	28	Matthew 5
13	John 13	14	John 14	29	Ephesians 1	30	Psalm 91
15	John 15	16	John 16				

When you finish, keep going! Pick a book, a plan in the Bible app, or ask your coach what to read next.