

## 7 Practices to Grow Closer to God

As a pastor I hear from people who want to grow closer to God but don't know where to start.

I get it, trying to grow closer to an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and infinite God can be a little intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. God desires for us to know him and has outlined several simple means by which we can connect with Him and develop a deeper connection.

I have included not only scripture for each practice, but also quotes from faith leaders to help spark your conversation and thoughts along the journey. There are also links to various apps, tools, and helps to help you along in your journey.

### Be Praying

Prayer is our lifeline to God. We can share the concerns, and celebrations of our heart with God and He can bring us peace, direction, and humility as we move ahead. Prayer is more than a one sided conversation though. While we talk to God just as you talk to a friend we also need to give Him time to speak back to us. Prayer is also something that we are to experience in community as well as alone so we can help lift each other's burdens and they can bear ours as well.

**Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.**

**-Colossians 4:2 NIV**

**6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**-Philippians 4:6-7NIV**

*Pray on your own.*

The great people of the earth today are the people who pray, (not) those who talk about prayer...but I mean those who take time and pray.

-S.D.Gordon

Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue; God's voice is its most essential part. Listening to God's voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine.

-Andrew Murray

*Pray together*

Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other's hearts in prayer.

-Charles Finney

*Resource:* <https://abide.is> - This is a great website/app that offers guided prayer, music for reflection, and thoughts on scripture to help you start a great prayer habit.

*Movie - War Room* - This is another from the same folks that brought you *Facing the Giants* and *Courageous*. It is a great family film and will inspire you to believe in the power of prayer and to start praying in your own life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is your biggest obstacle to consistent prayer?
2. When you pray what helps you stay focused? Make a list.
3. What is one thing you need God's help with in my life right now? Who do you feel comfortable sharing that need with?

## **Be Serving**

God has a purpose for our lives. Your life spiritual gifts, personal interests, abilities, personality, and experiences all come together to make you uniquely you, and YOU have a role to serve in the Kingdom of God. All of us have a role to play in the Great Commission, it isn't a matter of a personal specific call on your life, it's just part of the family business! One powerful way to grow closer to God is to use all those things that make you, you, to accomplish the mission of the Church. That is what service is all about!

**Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.**

**-1 Peter 4:10 NIV**

***Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.***

**-1 Corinthians 4:2 NIV**

*"Not called!" did you say?*

*'Not heard the call,' I think you should say.*

Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face — whose mercy you have professed to obey — and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world.

— William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army

*“Prayer in action is love, and love in action is service. Try to give unconditionally whatever a person needs in the moment. The point is to do something, however small, and show you care through your actions by giving your time ... We are all God's children so it is important to share His gifts. Do not worry about why problems exist in the world — just respond to people's needs ... We feel what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but that ocean would be less without that drop.”*

**- Mother Teresa**

Need help finding a place to serve? Contact Alan, 417-991-2911 or [alan@lifepointlebanon.com](mailto:alan@lifepointlebanon.com) and we'll find you a place right away!

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you currently serve here at church? How often?

2. What special gifts and talents do you have that could be used to impact the world for Christ?
3. If money and time were no object, what would you do for Jesus? What can you do even now?

## Be Connecting

We were meant to do life together not alone! Even the Lone Ranger had Tonto, so you shouldn't do life alone either.

**Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.**

**-1 Thessalonians 5:11NIV**

**24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

**-Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV**

"Our love to God is measured by our everyday fellowship with others and the love it displays."

-Andrew Murray

"He (God) usually prefers to work through people rather than perform miracles, so that we will depend on each other for fellowship."

- Rick Warren

Are you Connected to a LifeGroup? Go to <http://www.lifepointlebanon.com/lifegroups/> to find a map with a description of the groups we have right here in Lebanon. You don't even need to attend Sunday morning service to join up with these other believers and be a part. These groups are a great, low pressure place to get some questions answered about God, or to at least get you pointed in a good direction.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who in my life am I able to share the good and the bad times with?
2. Who in my life is currently helping me draw closer to God on a face to face basis?
3. What is my biggest challenge to doing life with other Believers?

## Be Sharing

One of the most amazing things you can experience is the miracle of a God changed life. There is nothing better than ringside seats to life change! But like Paul says in Romans 10:

*"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

**14** *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

**15** *And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

**-Romans 10:13-15 NIV**

One sure fire way to grow closer to God is to develop a passion for his prodigal children and to do everything you can to bring them home.

**But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,  
-1 Peter 3:15 NIV**

**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 NIV**

“We should be more concerned with reaching the lost than pampering the saved.”  
— David McGee

“Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you're not saved yourself, be sure of that!”  
— Charles Haddon Spurgeon

"A congregation that is not deeply and earnestly involved in the worldwide proclamation of the gospel does not understand the nature of salvation."  
— Ted Engstrom, World Vision

Need Help with sharing your faith? One great tool for evangelism is our Unbroken book. This is a book filled with seven stories of life change from right here in our church. It has already made a huge impact in our community and if you would like to have one to give to a friend we would love to put one in your hands. Just contact us at the office 417-991-2911 and we will get you a copy.

Discussion questions:

1. What is the biggest challenge you face in sharing your faith?
2. Who are some people you know who might need Jesus? Make a list of at least 3 and commit to praying for their salvation for the next 3 months.
3. The strongest witness we have is the life we live before other people. Are there things in your life that might hurt your ability to impact someone's life for the Gospel? Take some time to think about how those things impact your witness then pray to God for help in those areas. If you are serious about making a change, talk to 2 other people in confidence to help you keep accountable for improvement here.

## **Be Obeying**

The Gospel is clear, we are saved by grace through faith, not by works, so that no man can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9) But it is also clear that as we walk closer with God and grow deeper in our walk with Him, the desires of our life begin to change. As we learn more about Scripture we learn more and more about the kind of life and attitude that is pleasing to God. It's not enough to know, we need to become the person God has called us to be, and obedience is a huge part of that.

**If you love me, keep my commands.  
-John 14:15 NIV**

## Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?

-Luke 6:46 NIV

**"God isn't looking for people of great faith, but for individuals ready to follow Him"**

— Hudson Taylor

"God gives His Own Self totally to us that we may offer ourselves completely to Him."

- Watchman Nee

Resource: Again LifeGroups are a serious help here, but if you are dealing with any hurt, habit, or hang up Celebrate Recovery could be a powerful ministry for you. It isn't only for addiction, or people recovering from some terrible abuse. It s for normal everyday people who might just be stuck in life and need some specific support to get past what is holding them back. Interested? Give Jeremy Roy a call: 417-991-2911 or [jeremy@lifepointlebanon.com](mailto:jeremy@lifepointlebanon.com)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it so much more appealing to do your own thing than follow the rules sometimes?
2. Are you a rule follower or a rule breaker? How is this helpful or hurtful to you at times? How do you know which rules to follow and which ones you can bend?
3. What is the number one thing that helps you follow God's commands? Why is that so powerful? Is it powerful enough?

## Be Worshiping

Worship is so much more than the singing portion of a church service. It involves the way we think, the attitude we carry, the choices we make, the sacrifices we make, and then list goes on and on. In short, worship is how we live every aspect of our lives.

**I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**

-Romans 12:1 ESV

**14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**

**15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

-Colossians 3:14-17 (NIV)

It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence to men.

-CS Lewis

God must speak to us before we have any liberty to speak to him. He must disclose to us who he is before we can offer him what we are in acceptable worship. The worship of God is always a response to the Word of God. Scripture wonderfully directs and enriches our worship.

-Johnathan Edwards

To gather with God's people in united adoration of the Father is as necessary to the Christian life as prayer.

-Martin Luther

Resources:

Christian Radio has music and teaching that helps us keep focused on God throughout the day here are a few to consider:

**KTTK - 90.7 FM** - Southern Gospel and Christian Country music along with some great teaching and new.

**Spirit FM - 91.7** - Modern Christian music and great Bible teaching

**The Wind - 88.5 FM** - Modern Christian and positive music with great Bible teaching.

LifePoint App - listen to our backlogged services and get caught up on what has been taught here at LifePoint!

Discussion Questions:

1. What has been the most amazing aspect of worship for you?
2. Why is worshiping together so important?
3. What is one way you can make worship more of a central part of your life this week?

## Be Stepping

Stepping out in faith is important for any Christian. You could play it safe and keep things close without taking any risks, but God has more for your life than that! Use wisdom and pray for God's direction, but be sure that you pursue taking a real step of faith sometime soon.

**9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**

**-Joshua 1:9 NIV**

**Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**

**-Matthew 19:26 NIV**

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Christ wants not nibblers of the possible, but grabbers of the impossible."

— C.T. Studd

Resources:

Taking steps of faith are difficult moments for all of us, but it is vital that we take those steps when the time comes. This should be something that you discuss and and ask for prayer about with your life

group and your pastoral staff would love to help you in this as well, go ahead and give us a call:  
417-991-2911

Discussion Question:

1. Does a step of faith have to be a huge step? What is one small step you could take?
2. Have you ever taken a step of faith? What happened? What did you learn?
3. Who do you need to invite with you as you take your next step of faith?