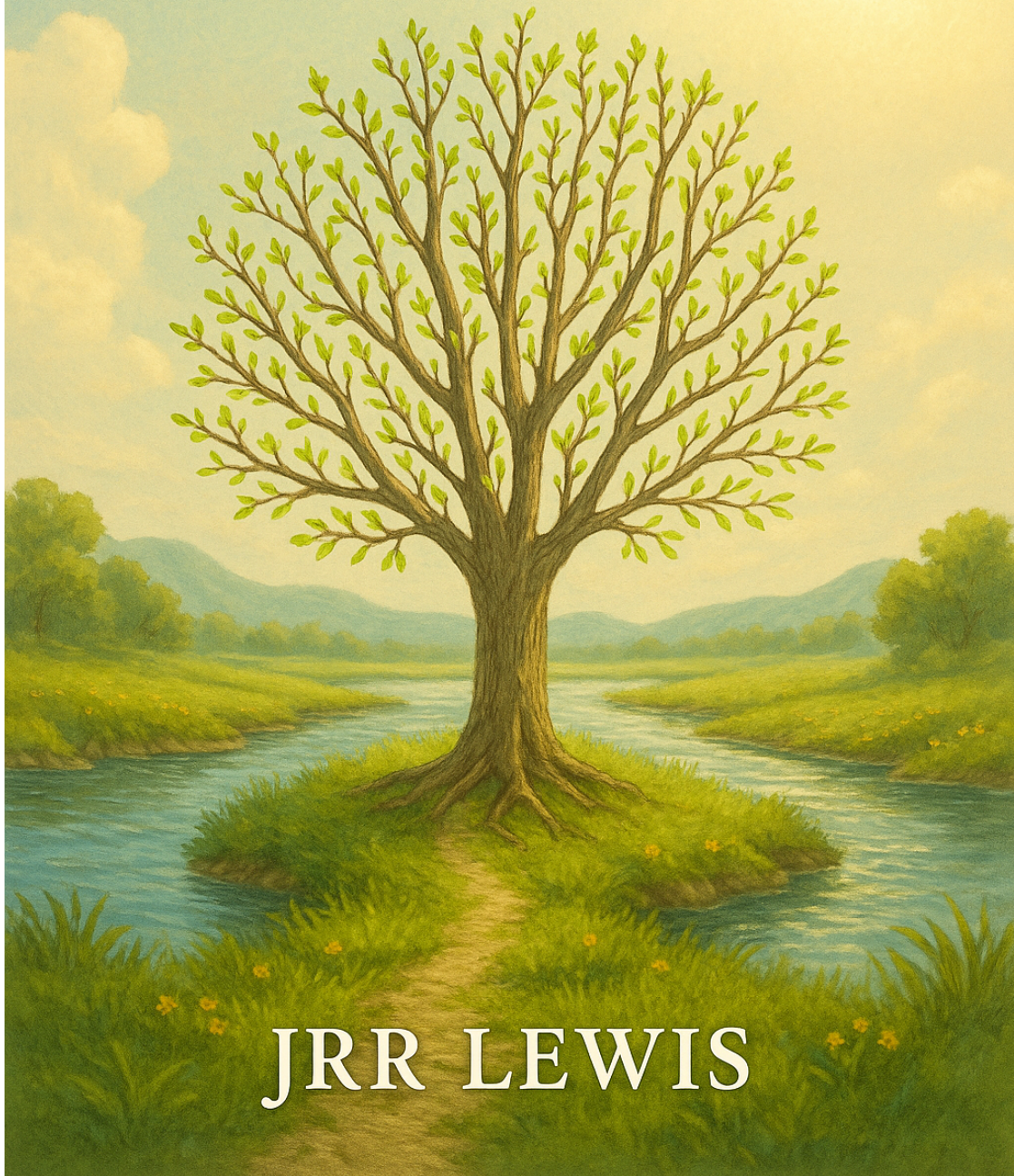


CHRISTIANITY

A New Life in Christ



JRR LEWIS

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Introduction — A New Life, A New Road

You've just stepped into the greatest change you will ever experience.
Your past is forgiven.
Your future is secure.
Your present is brand new.

But now what?

Maybe you've prayed the prayer, walked the aisle, or simply called out to God in the quiet of your room.
You know you belong to Him.
But you may also feel unsure of what comes next.

This book is here to walk you through the early steps of your new life in Christ.

Not just the "what" of your faith, but the "how" of living it.
We'll talk about:

- What salvation truly means
- How God begins to shape you into the likeness of Jesus
- The role of the Holy Spirit
- How to live in God's Kingdom while still navigating this world
- How to resist sin and grow spiritual fruit
- The importance of prayer, Scripture, and community
- Your mission to share Christ with others
- And how to finish the race strong, with your eyes on eternity

The story you've entered is bigger than you.

It began in a perfect garden, where humanity walked with God in harmony.

It will end in another garden—perfected forever, free from pain, sorrow, and sin.

And in between, you have been called to walk with God, love people, and live as a light in a dark world.

This won't be easy.

Jesus promised that following Him would involve sacrifice and opposition. But He also promised His presence, His Spirit, and His strength every step of the way.

“The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:24

You're not walking this road alone.

The same God who saved you will guide you.

The same Spirit who drew you will shape you.

The same Savior who died for you will one day welcome you home.

As you read, keep your Bible open, your heart soft, and your mind willing to be changed.

This is just the beginning.

The finish line is glorious.

And everything between now and then is an opportunity to know Jesus better.

Chapter 1 — The Story You’ve Just Stepped Into

In the beginning...

You weren’t there, but your story started here.

God made the heavens and the earth.

And He planted a garden.

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” — Genesis 2:15

Man’s first breath came from God’s own Spirit.

His first home was perfect.

His first job was meaningful.

His first relationship was unbroken.

Then came the fracture.

One lie.

One act of distrust.

One bite.

The world broke.

“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” — Romans 5:12

Since that day, every person has lived outside the garden—born into a world where pain, fear, and death are normal.

But they’re not natural.

Not the way it was meant to be.

God had a plan.

From the moment of the fall, He promised restoration.

A serpent-crusher would come.

A Redeemer.

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” — Luke 19:10

At the cross, Jesus took our place.
At the empty tomb, He broke our chains.
And one day, He will bring His people into a new garden—more beautiful than Eden, and this time, unbreakable.

Why this matters to you

When you accepted Christ, you didn't just "get forgiven."
You were reconnected to the story's Author.
You were given a new citizenship in His coming Kingdom.
You now live between two gardens—one in the past, one in the future—and you walk toward that final, perfect home.

What this means for your life

- Your past is not the end of your story.
- Your present has purpose—working with God in His Kingdom now.
- Your future is certain—eternal life in His presence.

Reflection Questions

1. When you think of the Garden of Eden, what do you picture?
2. How does knowing you're part of God's restoration plan change your view of daily life?
3. Do you see your salvation as a one-time event or the beginning of a journey?

Prayer

Father, thank You for inviting me into Your story.
I was lost, but You came looking for me.
I was broken, but You made me new.
Help me live as a citizen of Your Kingdom even while I walk in this world.

Keep my eyes fixed on the garden to come.
Amen.

Chapter 2 — What Salvation Really Means

You may already know the steps.

Someone shared the gospel.

You believed in Jesus.

You prayed.

But what actually happened in that moment?

1. You were rescued.

Salvation isn't self-improvement.

It's rescue from certain death.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” — Romans 6:23

You were drowning, and Jesus pulled you out.

You were guilty, and He took your sentence.

2. You were covered by the blood.

Rescue came at a cost—Jesus' life for yours.

“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” — Hebrews 9:22

In the Old Testament, lambs were sacrificed to cover sin for a time.

At the cross, Jesus—the perfect Lamb of God—offered Himself once for all.

“The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.” — 1 John 1:7

Now, when God looks at you, He no longer sees your sin—He sees the righteousness of His Son.

Your record is clean forever.

3. You were made new.

Salvation is not a clean slate—it's a new creation.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!” — 2 Corinthians 5:17

Your past is forgiven.
Your heart is changed.
You are now alive to God.

4. You were adopted.

Salvation is family language.
You belong now.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” — 1 John 3:1

No more wandering.
No more being an outsider.
You’re home.

5. You were transferred.

You switched kingdoms.

“He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” — Colossians 1:13

You’re still on earth, but you live under heaven’s rule now.
Your allegiance has shifted.

Why this matters to you

Salvation is not a “get out of hell free” card.
It’s the beginning of a lifelong walk with Jesus.
You didn’t just avoid judgment—you entered a Kingdom, a family, and a mission.

What this means for your life

- You don't have to earn God's favor—you already have it in Christ.
- You live from grace, not for it.
- You have a new purpose—to follow and reflect Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you think of your salvation as a past event, a present reality, or both?
2. Which part of salvation (rescue, covered by the blood, new creation, adoption, transfer) means the most to you right now?
3. How does knowing your sins are gone forever affect the way you approach God?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for rescuing me when I couldn't save myself.
Thank You for shedding Your blood so my sin could be gone forever.
Thank You for making me new, for adopting me into Your family, and for bringing me into Your Kingdom.
Teach me to live as Your child every day.
Amen.

Chapter 3 — Assurance in Christ

Salvation changes everything.

But what happens when your feelings change?

What if you don't feel saved tomorrow?

What if you sin again?

You need to know—your salvation is secure, not because of you, but because of Him.

1. You're held in His hand.

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." — **John 10:28**

Jesus doesn't hand out temporary life.

When He saves you, you are His forever.

2. Your standing is based on His work, not yours.

"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." — **Ephesians 2:8–9**

You didn't earn salvation, so you can't lose it by failing to earn it tomorrow. Grace is God's gift, not your wage.

3. The blood still speaks.

Your assurance rests on the same truth that saved you—Jesus' blood covers all your sin.

"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." — **Hebrews 10:17**

When you stumble, you run back to Him, not away.

The price has already been paid in full.

4. The Spirit testifies.

The Holy Spirit inside you confirms you belong to God.

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” —
Romans 8:16

Some days the Spirit will comfort you.

Other days He will convict you.

Both are signs that you are His.

Why this matters to you

Doubt will come.

The enemy will whisper, “God can’t really love you.”

But assurance is not a feeling—it’s a fact written in blood and sealed by the Spirit.

What this means for your life

- You can live boldly, knowing you are secure.
- You can confess sin quickly, without fear of rejection.
- You can persevere when life gets hard, knowing the outcome is sure.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you base your assurance more on feelings or on God’s promises?
2. How does the truth of God’s unchanging grip affect your daily choices?
3. What lies about your salvation do you need to replace with Scripture?

Prayer

Father, thank You that my salvation doesn’t depend on my perfection but on Jesus’ finished work.

Thank You that no one can take me from Your hand.

When doubt comes, remind me of Your promises and silence the enemy's lies.

Amen.

Chapter 4 — Sanctification: Becoming Like Jesus

Salvation is the starting line.

Sanctification is the race.

It's the lifelong process of becoming who God has already declared you to be
—holy, set apart, His.

1. God's work and your walk.

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

God is the one who changes you.

But you cooperate.

You walk in step with His Spirit.

2. The Spirit's shaping.

The Holy Spirit is not just your comforter—He's your sculptor.

"We...are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." — **2 Corinthians 3:18**

He chips away what doesn't look like Jesus.

He builds what does.

3. Progress, not perfection.

You won't be instantly sinless.

But over time, you will sin less.

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified." — **1 Thessalonians 4:3**

Growth is measured in years, not days.

Don't quit because you stumble—learn to get up quicker.

4. The role of obedience.

Sanctification isn't just avoiding sin—it's actively doing good.

“Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says.” — James 1:22

You grow by acting on truth, not just hearing it.

5. The promise of completion.

One day, the process will end—in glory.

“When Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”
— **1 John 3:2**

Sanctification ends when you stand face to face with Jesus.

Why this matters to you

You are not stuck where you started.

God is not done with you.

Every trial, every correction, every act of obedience is part of your transformation.

What this means for your life

- Be patient with God's timing—and with yourself.
- Lean on the Spirit for strength and conviction.
- Celebrate progress, even small steps.

Reflection Questions

1. Where have you seen God change you since coming to Christ?
2. Which areas do you resist letting Him shape?
3. How can you cooperate more fully with the Spirit's work?

Prayer

Lord, thank You that You're not finished with me yet.

Keep shaping me into the likeness of Jesus.

Give me the courage to obey You and the humility to receive Your correction.

Make me patient with the process and faithful to the end.

Amen.

Chapter 5 — Your New Identity in Christ

You're not who you were.

When you came to Christ, your old identity died.

God didn't just improve you—He remade you.

1. You are a new creation.

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" — 2 Corinthians 5:17

Your past does not define you.

Your failures do not own you.

Your name is now written in heaven.

2. You are a child of God.

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" — 1 John 3:1

This is not a title you earn—it's a position you're given.

You belong to the King's family.

You have His name, His Spirit, and His care.

3. You are righteous in Christ.

"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." — 2 Corinthians 5:21

God doesn't see your sin anymore—He sees the perfect righteousness of His Son covering you.

That's why you can approach Him boldly.

4. You are His workmanship.

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." — Ephesians 2:10

You were designed with intention.

Your gifts, your story, your opportunities—they're not random.

They're part of His plan.

5. You are an ambassador.

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us." — **2 Corinthians 5:20**

You represent heaven in a foreign land.

Your life is meant to show others what your King is like.

Why this matters to you

The enemy will try to drag you back to your old identity.

He will whisper, "You're still the same."

God says, "You are mine."

You live out your new life best when you remember who you are.

What this means for your life

- Stop introducing yourself to yourself as who you used to be.
- Speak God's truth over your life, not the enemy's lies.
- Live like a child of the King, not a slave to sin.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of these new identities do you struggle to believe is true about you?
2. How would your daily life look different if you fully believed it?
3. What step can you take today to live more like the person God says you are?

Prayer

Father, thank You for making me new.

Thank You for calling me Your child, covering me with Your righteousness,
and giving me purpose.

When I forget who I am, remind me whose I am.

Help me live in a way that honors Your name.

Amen.

Chapter 6 — The Role of the Holy Spirit

Jesus didn't leave you alone.

When He returned to the Father, He sent the Spirit—your constant Helper, Teacher, and Guide.

1. The Spirit lives in you.

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” — 1 Corinthians 6:19

God's presence isn't in a building—it's in you.
You carry Him everywhere you go.

2. The Spirit teaches you.

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” — John 14:26

He helps you understand Scripture.
He brings truth to mind when you need it most.

3. The Spirit convicts you.

“When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.” — John 16:8

Conviction is not condemnation.
Conviction says, “This is wrong—turn back to God.”
It's a sign you belong to Him.

4. The Spirit produces fruit in you.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” — Galatians 5:22–23

You can't fake fruit forever.
The Spirit grows it from the inside out.

5. The Spirit empowers you.

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...” — Acts 1:8

He gives you boldness to speak.

Strength to serve.

Endurance to keep going.

Why this matters to you

The Christian life is impossible in your own strength.

The Spirit is God’s power in you to live the life you were called to.

What this means for your life

- You don’t have to guess what God wants—ask the Spirit to lead you.
- You don’t fight sin alone—the Spirit fights with you.
- You don’t serve in your own power—you serve in His.

Reflection Questions

1. Which role of the Spirit (Teacher, Convictor, Fruit-Grower, Empowerer) do you notice most in your life right now?
2. How can you be more aware of His presence in your daily routine?
3. Where are you still trying to live in your own strength instead of His?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for living in me.

Teach me, guide me, convict me, and empower me.

Grow Your fruit in me so my life reflects Jesus.

Help me depend on Your strength, not my own.
Amen.

Chapter 7 — Living in Two Kingdoms

You have a new address.

You still live on earth, but your citizenship is in heaven.

You walk in two worlds at once.

1. You are a citizen of heaven.

“Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.” — Philippians 3:20

Earth is your assignment, not your home.

You’re an ambassador from a far better country.

2. You are still in the world.

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” — John 17:15

Jesus didn’t remove you from the broken world—He sent you into it.

You live among those who don’t know Him yet.

3. You live by different values.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2

The Kingdom of God runs on love, humility, service, and truth.

The world runs on power, pride, greed, and self.

You have to choose daily which one shapes you.

4. You’re in a spiritual battle.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” — Ephesians 6:12

There's a clash between kingdoms.
You feel it in temptation, in pressure, in pushback from the world.
That's normal for a citizen of heaven.

5. You have a mission here.

"You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." — **Matthew 5:14,16**

You're not here to blend in—you're here to stand out for God's glory.

Why this matters to you

If you forget your true citizenship, you'll live like this world is all there is.
If you ignore your earthly assignment, you'll miss the reason God left you here.

What this means for your life

- Live with heaven's values in earth's chaos.
- Represent your King well in all you do.
- Remember—your mission is here, your home is there.

Reflection Questions

1. Which kingdom's values are most influencing you right now?
2. How can you keep your eyes on your heavenly home while serving faithfully on earth?
3. What specific ways can you "shine" for Christ in your current setting?

Prayer

Father, thank You for making me a citizen of heaven.

Help me live in this world with heaven's priorities.
Protect me from the enemy's schemes, and make me faithful in the mission
You've given me.
Amen.

Chapter 8 — The Road to Sin

Sin is never random.

It has a starting point, a path, and a destination.

James shows the steps so you can stop it before it's too late.

1. The Glance

It often starts with seeing—something that sparks desire.

Eve “*saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye.*” — **Genesis 3:6**

The glance itself isn't sin.

But it's the door temptation walks through.

2. Desire

“*Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.*” — **James 1:14**

Desire can be good when aimed at God's will.

But when it locks onto what He forbids, it becomes dangerous.

3. Enticement

Temptation moves in closer.

It whispers lies:

- You deserve this.
- No one will know.
- This will make you happy.

It never tells you the cost.

4. Conception

“Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.” — James 1:15a

Here’s the turning point.

Desire and deception unite, and you choose against God’s way.

5. Birth

Sin is born.

It may look small and harmless at first.

But like a newborn, it will grow.

6. Growth

Sin never stays the size it starts.

It demands more, takes more, and blinds you more.

David’s glance at Bathsheba grew into lust, deception, adultery, and murder.

7. Death

“...and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” — James 1:15b

Sin kills.

It kills peace, joy, trust, and intimacy with God.

If unrepented, it separates forever.

8. The way back

Sin has a road, but so does grace.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” — 1 John 1:9

The moment you turn, mercy runs to meet you.

Why this matters to you

When you know the road, you can take the first exit before it’s too late.

What this means for your life

- Guard your eyes and heart early.
- Don't entertain what you know will grow.
- Confess quickly—don't let sin take root.

Reflection Questions

1. Which step in James' road to sin is hardest for you to catch in time?
2. What "small" sins in your past grew into something bigger than expected?
3. How can you respond differently the next time temptation knocks?

Prayer

Lord, help me see temptation for what it is before it grows.

Guard my eyes, guard my heart, and guard my steps.

When I stray, lead me quickly to repentance and back to You.

Amen.

Chapter 9 — Fruit of the Spirit

Sin grows death.

The Spirit grows life.

Paul shows the opposite path to James' road to sin—
a life shaped by God's Spirit produces fruit that never rots.

1. Rooted in the Spirit

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”
— **Galatians 5:16**

The fruit you bear depends on the root you grow from.
Stay connected to the Spirit, and the harvest will follow.

2. The Fruit List

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” — **Galatians 5:22–23**

This is not a checklist—it's a single cluster grown by the Spirit.
You don't pick and choose; He grows them all together.

3. How the Spirit Grows Fruit

- Through His Word (John 15:7)
- Through prayer (Philippians 4:6–7)
- Through obedience (John 15:10)
- Through trials (James 1:2–4)

The Spirit uses every season—sun and storm—to grow His life in you.

4. The Everyday Harvest

- **Love** — choosing others' good before your own.
- **Joy** — delight that isn't tied to circumstances.
- **Peace** — calm in the middle of chaos.
- **Forbearance** — patience when you'd rather snap.
- **Kindness** — a soft heart with strong hands.
- **Goodness** — moral integrity that blesses others.
- **Faithfulness** — steady loyalty to God and people.
- **Gentleness** — strength under control.
- **Self-control** — saying no when the flesh says yes.

5. The Contrast

The works of the flesh grow from self and end in death.

The fruit of the Spirit grows from surrender and ends in life.

Why this matters to you

Fruit is proof of life.

If you belong to Christ, the Spirit will grow His character in you.

What this means for your life

- You can't force fruit—it's the Spirit's work.
- But you can cultivate it—stay rooted in Him.
- The more you walk with Him, the more His fruit will be seen in you.

Reflection Questions

1. Which fruit of the Spirit is most visible in your life right now?
2. Which one do you long for God to grow more fully in you?
3. What daily habits keep you connected to the Spirit's life?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for planting Your life in me.

Grow Your fruit until it overflows to everyone around me.

Help me stay rooted in You so my life bears what brings You glory.

Amen.

Chapter 10 — Prayer and the Word: Your Lifelines

You can't grow without connection.

Prayer and God's Word are how you stay alive and healthy in Christ.
They are your oxygen and your food.

1. Prayer — Talking With Your Father

"Pray without ceasing." — **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

Prayer is not a ritual—it's a relationship.

It's speaking honestly to the One who already knows your heart.

It's listening as much as talking.

2. The Word — God Speaking to You

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

The Bible is not just information—it's transformation.

It renews your mind, feeds your soul, and keeps you from sin.

3. Why You Need Both

Prayer without the Word can drift into self-talk.

The Word without prayer can become dry information.

Together, they keep your relationship with God alive, personal, and growing.

4. Practical Ways to Stay Connected

- Start your day with a psalm or a gospel passage.
- Pray Scripture back to God.
- Keep a prayer journal.
- Memorize verses that speak to your struggles.

5. The Spirit's Role

"The Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." — **John 14:26**

The Spirit opens your eyes to Scripture and teaches you how to pray.
You're not doing this alone.

Why this matters to you

Cut off from prayer and the Word, your faith will wither.
Stay connected, and you will grow strong in any season.

What this means for your life

- Make prayer and Bible reading a daily habit, not an occasional emergency.
- Expect God to speak—through His Word, in prayer, by His Spirit.
- Let these lifelines guide every decision, comfort every sorrow, and fuel every act of obedience.

Reflection Questions

1. Which is harder for you right now—prayer or reading the Word? Why?
2. What time of day can you protect to connect with God?
3. What is one Scripture you can memorize this week?

Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking through Your Word and hearing me when I pray.

Teach me to love Your voice and seek You daily.

Keep me connected to You so my faith grows strong and steady.
Amen.

Chapter 11 — Obedience and Surrender

Jesus is not just your Savior—He is your Lord.

Salvation is a gift.

Following Him is a call to surrender.

1. Obedience is love in action.

“If you love me, keep my commands.” — John 14:15

Obedience is not legalism—it’s love.

It’s trusting that His way is always better, even when it’s harder.

2. Surrender is letting go of control.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” — Luke 9:23

You can’t follow Jesus and stay in charge.

Daily surrender is how you make Him Lord, not just in name but in reality.

3. Obedience requires trust.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” — Proverbs 3:5

Sometimes God’s commands won’t make sense to you.

You obey not because you see the full picture but because you trust the One who does.

4. Surrender brings freedom.

The world says freedom is doing whatever you want.

God says freedom is being set free from sin to live for Him.

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” — John 8:32

5. The cost and the reward.

Following Jesus will cost you—your pride, your comfort, sometimes relationships.

But it will never cost you more than it cost Him to save you.

“Whoever loses their life for me will find it.” — Matthew 16:25

Why this matters to you

You can’t grow in Christ without obeying Christ.

You can’t obey Him without surrendering to Him.

What this means for your life

- Say yes to God quickly, even when it’s inconvenient.
- Lay down what you can’t keep to gain what you can’t lose.
- Trust His leadership more than your own instincts.

Reflection Questions

1. What’s the hardest thing for you to surrender to God right now?
2. When has obedience led to unexpected blessing in your life?
3. How can you grow in trusting God’s commands even when you don’t understand them?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I want You to be more than my Savior—I want You to be my Lord.

Teach me to trust Your commands and to surrender my will daily.

Help me obey with love, not fear, and to follow You wherever You lead.

Amen.

Chapter 12 — Community and Church

Faith is personal—but never private.

God designed you to grow in a family, not in isolation.

1. The Church is Christ's body.

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

Every believer has a role.

Every role matters.

No part works well on its own.

2. We grow together.

"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...encouraging one another." — **Hebrews 10:24–25**

You need people who will encourage you when you're weary and challenge you when you drift.

3. We worship together.

"Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together." — **Psalms 34:3**

Worship is multiplied when we lift our voices as one.

It reminds us we're part of something bigger than ourselves.

4. We carry each other's burdens.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." — **Galatians 6:2**

God doesn't ask you to face trials alone.

He surrounds you with brothers and sisters to walk through them with you.

5. We are witnesses together.

A healthy church is a living picture of the gospel.

Our love for one another makes Christ visible to the world.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” — John 13:35

Why this matters to you

You can't grow into the fullness of Christ apart from His body.

The Christian life is a team mission.

What this means for your life

- Commit to a local church—not just attending, but belonging.
- Build relationships that go beyond Sunday morning.
- Serve in ways that strengthen the body and glorify Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. Are you connected to a local church family right now?
2. Who are the believers encouraging you—and who are you encouraging?
3. How can you use your gifts to build up the body of Christ?

Prayer

Father, thank You for placing me in Your family.

Help me love, serve, and encourage my brothers and sisters.

Make me faithful in building up Your church so the world sees Jesus in us.

Amen.

Chapter 13 — Helping the Walking Wounded

Not everyone limps on the outside.

Some wounds are visible.

Most are hidden.

But all need the healing touch of Christ.

1. Jesus sought the broken.

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick...I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” — Mark 2:17

He didn’t wait for the hurting to find Him.

He went to them.

2. We are called to do the same.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2

This isn’t a suggestion—it’s a command.

Love is active, not passive.

3. We meet needs both physical and spiritual.

- Feeding the hungry (Matthew 25:35)
- Comforting the grieving (2 Corinthians 1:4)
- Praying for the sick (James 5:14–15)
- Restoring the fallen (Galatians 6:1)

4. We give what we have.

Peter told the lame man:

“Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you.” — Acts 3:6

You may not have money, but you have time, compassion, truth, and prayer.

5. We point them to Jesus.

We are not the healer—He is.

Our role is to walk with them toward Him.

Why this matters to you

You were once wounded and someone helped you.

Now it's your turn to be that person for someone else.

What this means for your life

- Pay attention—wounds aren't always obvious.
- Be willing to enter someone's messy situation.
- Offer hope in Christ, not just temporary relief.

Reflection Questions

1. Who in your life right now is limping spiritually or emotionally?
2. How can you actively carry part of their burden this week?
3. Do you see helping the wounded as optional or essential to your walk with Christ?

Prayer

Lord, open my eyes to the hurting around me.

Give me courage to step into their pain with compassion.

Use me to point them to the One who heals completely.

Amen.

Chapter 14 — Expecting Hardship

**Following Jesus is worth it—
but it's not easy.**

1. Jesus promised trouble.

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” — John 16:33

Hardship isn't a sign God has abandoned you.
It's proof you're still in a broken world.

2. The world won't always understand you.

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” — John 15:18

Living by heaven's values will clash with earth's values.
Some will respect it.
Some will resist it.

3. Trials shape your faith.

“Consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” — James 1:2–3

God uses hardship to strengthen you, not destroy you.

4. Persecution is part of the package.

*“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
— 2 Timothy 3:12*

This can range from mockery to loss of job, friends, or even life.
But you are never alone in it.

5. Hardship has an end date.

“Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” — 2 Corinthians 4:17

Pain is temporary.

Glory is forever.

Why this matters to you

If you expect the Christian life to be easy, you'll be shaken when it's not.

If you expect opposition, you'll stand firm when it comes.

What this means for your life

- Don't be surprised when following Jesus costs you.
- See trials as training, not punishment.
- Keep your eyes on the eternal reward.

Reflection Questions

1. How have you experienced pushback for your faith already?
2. Do you see hardship as God's absence or His shaping work?
3. How can you prepare your heart for trials ahead?

Prayer

Lord, help me to follow You with courage, no matter the cost.

When hardship comes, remind me You are with me.

Keep me faithful until the day I see You face to face.

Amen.

Chapter 15 — Spiritual Warfare

You have an enemy now.

The moment you came to Christ, you stepped into a battle—not against people, but against unseen forces.

1. The battle is real.

“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” — Ephesians 6:12

Your fight is not with neighbors, co-workers, or politicians. It's with an enemy who wants to distract, deceive, and destroy you.

2. The enemy's tactics.

- **Deception** — twisting truth (Genesis 3:1)
- **Temptation** — appealing to your desires (James 1:14)
- **Accusation** — reminding you of forgiven sin (Revelation 12:10)
- **Division** — turning believers against each other (1 Corinthians 1:10)

3. Your armor.

“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.” — Ephesians 6:11

- Belt of truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Shoes of the gospel of peace
- Shield of faith
- Helmet of salvation

- Sword of the Spirit (God's Word)

You don't win by strength—you stand in Christ's strength.

4. Prayer is your battle line.

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

— **Ephesians 6:18**

Prayer keeps you connected to your Commander and aware of His strategies.

5. Victory is already secured.

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." — **Romans 16:20**

The war's outcome is decided.

You're fighting from victory, not for it.

Why this matters to you

If you forget you're in a battle, you'll live unprepared.

If you remember it, you'll stay alert, armored, and dependent on Christ.

What this means for your life

- Don't be surprised by spiritual resistance.
- Stay rooted in God's Word and prayer daily.
- Fight with the weapons God provides, not human ones.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the enemy's tactics have you felt most recently?
2. How well are you wearing your spiritual armor right now?

3. What step can you take this week to strengthen your defenses?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for equipping me for the battles I face.

Keep me alert to the enemy's schemes and strong in Your truth.

Help me stand firm, knowing the victory belongs to You.

Amen.

Chapter 16 — The Great Commission: Your Part in God's Plan

You weren't saved to sit still.

Jesus saved you to join His mission—
to take His message to the ends of the earth.

1. The command.

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” — Matthew 28:19–20

This isn't for a select few.
It's for every believer.
If you follow Jesus, this is your assignment.

2. The power.

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.” — Acts 1:8

You don't go in your own strength.
The Spirit equips you to speak, love, and serve in ways you couldn't on your own.

3. The scope.

Your mission field is both across the street and across the world.
It starts with the people in your daily life.
It expands to wherever God sends you.

4. The message.

The gospel is simple:

- We were separated from God by sin.
- Jesus died and rose again to reconcile us to Him.

- By faith in Him, we receive forgiveness and eternal life.

5. The promise.

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” — Matthew 28:20b

You are never alone on this mission.
The One who sends you goes with you.

Why this matters to you

The Great Commission is not optional—it’s central to the Christian life.
You were rescued to become a rescuer.

What this means for your life

- Look for opportunities to share Christ naturally.
- Live in a way that makes the gospel attractive.
- Support missions through prayer, giving, and going.

Reflection Questions

1. Who in your life right now needs to hear about Jesus?
2. What fears hold you back from sharing your faith?
3. How can you take one step this week toward obeying the Great Commission?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for trusting me with Your message.
Fill me with boldness and compassion to share the gospel.
Open doors for me to speak and live in a way that draws others to You.
Amen.

Chapter 17 — Books of the Bible for Your Growth

The Bible is one story —

from the first garden to the last.

But it's a big book.

Where do you start?

1. The Gospels — See Jesus Clearly

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah... and that by believing you may have life in His name.” — John 20:31

Start here.

Watch how Jesus lived, loved, taught, and sacrificed.

This is the foundation for everything else.

2. Acts — See the Church Begin

Learn how the first believers followed Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

See faith in action and the gospel spreading like wildfire.

3. Psalms — Learn to Pray and Praise

Psalms teach you how to talk to God honestly —

in joy, grief, fear, and hope.

4. Proverbs — Learn to Live Wisely

Short, memorable truths for everyday decisions.

Practical wisdom for relationships, work, and speech.

5. Letters (Epistles) — Grow in Faith

Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, James, 1 Peter

These explain how to live as a Christian, fight sin, and love others.

6. Genesis — Understand the Beginning

See where the story starts—creation, the fall, God’s promise of redemption.

7. Revelation — Look to the End

Hope for the final victory, the return of Christ, and the new garden to come.

Tips for Reading

- Pray before you read—ask the Spirit to open your eyes.
- Read a little every day rather than a lot once in a while.
- Don’t rush—let the words sink in.
- Use a translation you understand (NIV, ESV, CSB, or The Voice).

Why this matters to you

God’s Word is your guide, your food, your weapon, and your comfort.
If you neglect it, your growth will stall.

What this means for your life

- Make Bible reading a non-negotiable part of your day.
- Don’t just read—apply what you learn.
- Let Scripture shape your decisions, not the other way around.

Reflection Questions

1. Which book of the Bible are you most drawn to right now?
2. When in your day can you consistently set aside time to read?
3. How can you hold yourself accountable to stay in God’s Word?

Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking through Your Word.

Give me a hunger for Scripture and the discipline to stay in it.

Help me understand, obey, and share what I learn.

Amen.

Chapter 18 — Finishing Well

The Christian life is not a sprint—

it's a marathon.

It's not just about starting strong—

it's about crossing the finish line faithful.

1. Keep your eyes on the goal.

“Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...” — Hebrews 12:1–2

Your finish line is not retirement, comfort, or recognition.

It's seeing Jesus face to face.

2. Don't run alone.

“Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.” — Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Surround yourself with others who want to finish well.

Encourage each other when the race gets hard.

3. Lay aside what slows you down.

“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” — Hebrews 12:1

Some things aren't sin, but they still weigh you down.

Let go of whatever keeps you from running freely.

4. Remember the reward.

“Well done, good and faithful servant!... Come and share your master's happiness!” — Matthew 25:23

Faithfulness in this life will be met with joy in the next.

5. The second garden is ahead.

“No longer will there be any curse... They will see His face... And they will reign for ever and ever.” — Revelation 22:3–5

The finish line is a beginning—life with God, forever, in the perfect garden.

Why this matters to you

It’s not enough to start the race—you must finish.

The enemy will try to distract you, the world will try to lure you, and your own flesh will try to quit.

What this means for your life

- Run with your eyes on Jesus, not the crowd.
- Travel light—let go of what slows you.
- Persevere through the hard stretches—glory is ahead.

Reflection Questions

1. What distractions or weights are slowing your race right now?
2. Who is running beside you in this season?
3. How often do you think about the finish line?

Prayer

Lord, help me to run with endurance the race You’ve marked out for me.
Keep my eyes fixed on You until the day I see You face to face.
When I stumble, lift me up; when I grow weary, strengthen me.
Let me finish well and enter the joy of Your presence forever.
Amen.

Epilogue — From Garden to Garden

Your story began before you were born.

In a garden, humanity walked with God in perfect peace.

No pain.

No shame.

No death.

Then came the fracture.

One choice, and the world was broken.

Every life since has been lived east of Eden—

longing for something we can't fully remember,

but were made for all along.

God had a plan.

"He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." — **Ephesians 1:4**

Through Jesus, the broken can be restored.

Through the cross, sin's debt is paid.

Through the resurrection, death is defeated.

Now you walk between two gardens.

You live here in a fallen world,

but your citizenship is in heaven.

You have work to do here—

to live for Christ, love others, and point them toward the hope you've found.

One day, the second garden will come.

"No longer will there be any curse... They will see His face... And they will reign for ever and ever." — **Revelation 22:3–5**

The tree of life will stand again.
Every tear will be wiped away.
And you will be home—forever with your King.

Until then...

Run your race with endurance.
Stay rooted in the Word and prayer.
Wear your armor.
Bear fruit.
Help the wounded.
Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. How has your understanding of the “two gardens” changed since you began this journey?
2. Who can you walk alongside to help them take the same journey?
3. What daily choices can you make to live with the second garden in mind?

Prayer

Father, thank You for saving me and making me part of Your story.
Keep me faithful until the day I see You face to face.
Let my life here point others to the home that is coming—
the garden where You will reign, and we will rejoice forever.
Amen.