

A GUIDE FOR NEW FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

YOUR FIRST *Seven Days*



WALKING WITH
JESUS EVERY DAY

Welcome

You just made the most important decision of your life. You decided to follow Jesus.

Maybe you feel excited. Maybe you have a lot of questions. Maybe you are not even sure what comes next. That is okay.

Following Jesus is not about having everything figured out. It is about beginning a relationship with Him and learning to walk with Him one day at a time.

At Church in the Garden, our mission is simple: Walking with Jesus every day.

Not just on Sundays. Not just when life gets hard. Not just when we need something from God. Every day.

Over the next seven days, we want to help you begin building simple rhythms that will help you know Jesus, grow in your faith, and live out what He is doing in your life. We call that:

KNOW. GROW. GO.

Know Jesus.

Grow in your relationship with Him and with others.

Go live out your faith and bring the hope of Jesus wherever you go.

This is not a checklist you finish. It is a rhythm you can live for the rest of your life.

Welcome to the beginning of your walk with Jesus.

PAUL & LYNSEY L'ECUYER

Lead Pastors

Church in the Garden

KNOW *Jesus*

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 (NLT)

Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3–4 (NLT)

JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Following Jesus begins with Jesus. At Church in the Garden, we say Jesus is our message because Christianity is not primarily about becoming a better person, following more rules, or attending more church services.

It is about Jesus. Jesus loves you. Jesus gave His life for you. Jesus rose again. And because of what He has done, you can be forgiven and receive a completely new life.

Your past does not get the final word. Your mistakes do not define you. Your shame does not own you. Jesus offers forgiveness, grace, mercy, freedom, and new life.

When you decided to follow Jesus, you were not simply adding something religious to your life. You were beginning a relationship with the One who created you, loves you, and gave Himself for you.

And this relationship is not meant to happen only once a week. Jesus wants to walk with you every day. He wants to be part of your relationships, decisions, work, family, struggles, dreams, victories, and ordinary moments.

You will not follow Him perfectly. None of us do. When you mess up, do not run away from Jesus. Run back to Him. His grace keeps inviting you closer. Walking with Jesus is not what helps us get to something better.

Walking with Jesus is the goal.

PRAY

Jesus, thank You for loving me and giving Your life for me. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me a new beginning. Help me leave my old life behind and learn what it means to follow You. I do not have everything figured out, but I want to know You and walk with You every day. Lead me, change me, and help me become the person You created me to be. Amen.

YOUR NEXT STEP

One of the first steps Jesus gives His followers is water baptism. Baptism does not save you. Jesus saves you. Baptism is a public expression of the decision you have already made to follow Jesus. It represents your old life being buried and your new life with Jesus beginning.

Jesus Himself was baptized, and followers of Jesus have been taking this step ever since. If you have decided to follow Jesus but have never been baptized, tell someone at Church in the Garden that you are ready. We would love to walk with you as you take that step.

TALK WITH *God*

“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.”

1 PETER 5:7 (NLT)

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

JOHN 10:27 (NLT)

PRAYER IS A CONVERSATION

The word prayer can sound intimidating. It does not have to be. Prayer is simply talking with God. Think about any healthy relationship in your life. Relationships grow through communication. You talk. You listen. You share what is happening. You spend time together.

Your relationship with God grows the same way. You do not need impressive words. You do not need to sound spiritual. You do not need to pray for an hour. Start where you are.

Talk to God about what you are excited about. Tell Him what is worrying you. Tell Him what you are afraid of. Ask Him questions. Thank Him for what is good. Ask Him for help. God already knows what is happening in your life, but He wants a relationship with you.

Prayer is also more than talking. It includes listening.

At Church in the Garden, we say Presence is our pursuit. We want prayer to be our first response, not our last resort. We believe the Holy Spirit is present and wants to lead us.

Sometimes God will bring a Scripture to your mind. Sometimes He will convict you about something. Sometimes you may sense encouragement or direction. Sometimes you may simply sit quietly in His presence.

You are learning to recognize His voice. And the more you walk with Him, the more familiar His voice becomes.

PRAY

God, thank You that I can talk with You. Thank You for caring about every part of my life. Help me learn to recognize Your voice. Teach me to listen to You and trust Your direction. Holy Spirit, guide me today. I want Your presence to be part of every area of my life. Amen.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Spend five minutes with God today.

Minute 1: Thank Him. Thank God for what is good in your life.

Minute 2: Surrender. Ask God to help you follow His way instead of your own.

Minute 3: Ask. Talk to Him about what you need, what you are worried about, and what you are praying for.

Minute 4: Get right with God and others. Ask God to show you anything you need to confess. Receive His forgiveness. Ask Him to help you forgive anyone you are holding something against.

Minute 5: Listen. Sit quietly. Ask, “God, what do You want me to know today?” You may not hear an audible voice. That is okay. Simply practice being present with God. Try doing this every day this week.

GET ROOTED IN *God's Word*

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives.”

2 TIMOTHY 3:16–17 (NLT)

Just as you received Jesus, continue following Him. Let your roots grow down into Him and build your life on Him.

COLOSSIANS 2:6–7 (NLT)

LET YOUR ROOTS GROW DEEP

Healthy things grow roots. The deeper the roots, the stronger the life. That is true spiritually too. If you want to grow in your relationship with Jesus, one of the most important habits you can develop is spending time in the Bible.

The Bible is God's Word, and it helps us discover who God is, what He has done, what He cares about, and how He designed us to live. The goal is not simply to know more information about God. The goal is to know God.

Scripture helps shape the way we think, the way we respond, the way we treat people, the decisions we make, and the person we are becoming. There will be things in the Bible that you immediately understand. There will also be things you do not understand yet.

Keep reading. Keep asking questions. Keep growing.

At Church in the Garden, Growth is our mindset. We believe everyone can grow, and spiritual growth happens one faithful step at a time.

You do not need to read ten chapters every morning. Start small. Be consistent. Let your roots grow deep.

A SIMPLE WAY TO READ THE BIBLE — TRY THE SOAP METHOD

SCRIPTURE Read a few verses or one chapter.

OBSERVATION Ask, “What stands out to me?” What is happening? What does this teach me about God? What does it teach me about people?

APPLICATION Ask, “What should change because I read this?” Is there something I need to believe? Something I need to stop? Something I need to start? Someone I need to forgive? A step God wants me to take?

PRAYER Talk with God about what you just read.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Start reading the Gospel of John. Read one chapter each day and use the SOAP method. Do not rush. The goal is not finishing. The goal is knowing Jesus.

GROW WITH *People*

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help.”

ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10 (NLT)

As every part of the body does its work, the whole body grows and becomes healthy and full of love.

EPHESIANS 4:15–16 (NLT)

YOU WERE NEVER MEANT TO DO THIS ALONE

Following Jesus is personal, but it was never meant to be private. God created us for relationship. You need people who will encourage you, pray with you, challenge you, laugh with you, walk through hard seasons with you, celebrate with you, and help you become more like Jesus.

And they need you too. At Church in the Garden, People are our priority. Every person matters. Every story matters. Every season matters.

We do not want church to simply be a crowd you stand in. We want it to become a community where you are seen, known, loved, and challenged to grow. That is why Small Groups matter.

Sunday can introduce you to community. Small Groups help you build it. Community is where faith moves from a moment into a lifestyle. You do not need to have everything together before joining a group. Bring your questions. Bring your story. Bring the real you.

Healthy community is not about pretending to be perfect. It is about walking with Jesus alongside other people who are doing the same thing.

PRAY

Jesus, thank You that I do not have to follow You alone. Bring the right people into my life who will help me grow, and help me become that kind of person for someone else. Give me the courage to be known, to ask for help, and to build meaningful relationships. Amen.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Join a Small Group at Church in the Garden. Do not wait until you feel like you know enough. Take the step. Introduce yourself. Show up. Build relationships. Growth happens best when we walk together.

GET *Planted*

“For they are transplanted to the Lord’s own house. They flourish in the courts of our God.”

PSALM 92:13 (NLT)

WE LIVE FROM SUNDAY

There is something powerful about being planted. A plant that is constantly uprooted struggles to grow. But when it is planted in healthy soil, its roots can grow deep and it can begin to flourish. The same thing happens in our faith.

Being consistently connected to a healthy local church gives you an environment where your faith can grow. Sunday matters. We worship Jesus together. We hear God’s Word together. We pray together. We encourage each other. We remember that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

But Sunday is not the finish line. At Church in the Garden, we say: We do not live for Sunday. We live from Sunday. Our goal is not to have one spiritual moment each week and then wait seven days for another one. Sunday helps strengthen us to walk with Jesus Monday through Saturday.

What happens in the gathering should shape what happens in your home, workplace, school, relationships, and everyday decisions. Church is not simply somewhere you attend. It is a family you grow with. So choose consistency over intensity. Keep showing up. Keep worshiping. Keep learning. Keep building relationships. Keep walking with Jesus. Roots grow slowly, but healthy roots produce lasting fruit.

PRAY

God, thank You for giving me a church family. Help me become planted and consistent. Use this church to help me grow, and show me how I can help others grow too. I do not want my faith to be limited to Sunday. Help me walk with You every day. Amen.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Make gathering with your church family part of your weekly rhythm. Come ready to worship. Come ready to hear from God. Come ready to connect with people. And when Sunday is over, take what God is doing in you into the rest of your week.

USE WHAT GOD *Gave You*

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others.”

MATTHEW 20:28 (NLT)

“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.”

1 PETER 4:10 (NLT)

YOU WERE CREATED TO CONTRIBUTE

God made you intentionally. Your personality, experiences, abilities, passions, and gifts are not accidents. God wants to use your life to make a difference in the lives of other people. Jesus modeled this for us. He did not come demanding that everyone serve Him. He came serving others.

Following Jesus means learning to do the same. Serving is not something reserved for pastors or people who have followed Jesus for twenty years. You can start now. At Church in the Garden, we believe everyone is called, gifted, and needed.

We do not want you to simply attend. We want you to build. When you begin serving, you become part of The Team. The Team is not just filling positions or completing tasks. The Team helps create environments where people can know Jesus, grow in their faith, and go make a difference.

You may not know exactly where you fit yet. That is okay. You do not have to be perfect. You just have to be available. Serving is one of the ways God grows you while using you to help someone else grow.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What do you love doing? What are you naturally good at? What needs do you notice that other people seem to overlook? What kind of people do you feel drawn to help? What has God brought you through that could help someone else? You may be surprised by what God can do through your willingness.

PRAY

Jesus, thank You for the gifts and abilities You have given me. Show me how I can use my life to serve others. Help me see needs and respond with compassion. Give me a servant's heart and help me become someone who builds Your church and brings hope to people. Amen.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Go through Next Steps at Church in the Garden. Learn more about the church. Discover where you can grow. Find a place to serve. Join The Team. Do not just attend. Build.

GO SHARE THE HOPE OF *Jesus*

“You are the light of the world, like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.”

MATTHEW 5:14 (NLT)

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations.”

MATTHEW 28:19 (NLT)

YOUR STORY MATTERS

You have spent the last several days learning some of the foundations of walking with Jesus. Now it is time to go. That does not mean you need to move across the world. Your “go” might begin across the street. At work. At school. At the gym. At your child’s practice. Around your dinner table.

With a friend who is going through a difficult season. Wherever God has placed you, you have an opportunity to reflect Jesus. You do not need a stage. You do not need a theology degree. You do not need to know the answer to every question.

You have a story. You can simply tell someone what Jesus has done in your life. Maybe your story is dramatic. Maybe it is simple. Either way, it matters. Sharing Jesus is not about winning arguments or pressuring people.

People are our priority. We love people because they matter deeply to God. We pray for them. We serve them. We listen to them. We share the hope we have found. And we trust God with the results.

Your job is not to change someone’s heart. Your job is to point them toward Jesus. Jesus is our message.

PRAY

Jesus, thank You for what You have done in my life. Help me notice the people around me who need hope. Give me courage to share my story and wisdom to know when to speak and when to listen. Holy Spirit, give me opportunities to point people toward Jesus through my words and the way I live. Amen.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Think of three people in your life who need the hope of Jesus. Write down their names. Pray for them every day this week. Then ask God for an opportunity to do one simple thing.

Share your story. Encourage them. Pray for them. Serve them. Or invite them to come to Church in the Garden with you. You do not have to make it complicated. Just take the next step.

Only God

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

You finished seven days. But you are just getting started. Following Jesus is not a seven day challenge. It is a new way of life. There will be incredible days. There will be difficult days. There will be moments when you feel close to God and moments when you have questions.

Keep walking. Keep praying. Keep opening God's Word. Keep showing up. Keep growing with people. Keep serving. Keep sharing hope.

KNOW Keep knowing Jesus more deeply.

GROW Keep becoming rooted in Jesus and growing alongside others.

GO Keep living out your faith and bringing the hope of Jesus wherever God sends you.

You never graduate from this. For the rest of our lives, we are learning to do one thing:

Walking With Jesus Every Day

We are honored to walk with you. Welcome to the family. Welcome to Church in the Garden.

