

THE CHAPEL



THE WAY

A GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

THE CHAPEL

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WELCOME

God wants to take you on a journey – a pathway, of sorts. He wants to take you from where you are right now to where he wants you to be. Ultimately, God will transform us to look like Jesus; the Apostle John tells us that, “we will be like him” (1 John 3:2). But what about right now? Do we just hit cruise control in this life and coast into eternity? Or, do we live in anticipation of what we will be like in eternity? I think the second option would be more true to God’s plan.

John also wrote this: “Everyone who has this hope [the hope of being like Jesus], will purify himself, just as Jesus is pure” (1 John 3:3). Essentially, we must take ownership of this process, and be intentional about the journey we are on. We can’t be lax or reluctant about it; we must go all in. We must cooperate with God in this process that we call *spiritual formation*.

But we can’t think of cooperating like we normally do. Typically, we think cooperating sounds like this: “All right: I didn’t really want to, but I guess I’ll go along *if I have to*.” Maybe you’ve had a “discussion” with your spouse about what to watch on TV and you’ve thought this to yourself: “I don’t really want to watch this TV show, but I guess I’ll cooperate instead of putting up a fight.” This is not what we mean. Spiritual formation requires that we co-operate with God in the process; that means we believe this: “I will work towards the same goal that God has for me: Christ-likeness.” We can’t do it on our own; we’ve tried and we’ve failed. But, when we commit to work towards the same goal that God has for us, it’s almost like we are walking in step with him.

This brings us back to the analogy of the journey. Jesus said that the road that leads to life is narrow, and sometimes difficult. Few people really find it, in fact. But don’t worry, because the One we are following is familiar with the path. Jesus knows the terrain and he knows what steps to take, because he himself lived a sinless life. “He was tempted in every way that we are, yet he was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). He did this, only to be crucified. He tasted death fully for us so that we could have life forever. He knows the way, because he *is* the Way.

Interestingly, the early Church came to be known as followers of The Way (first in Acts 9:2). This guide will be an aid in guiding you through life as a follower of Jesus. This does not replace the Bible, but instead will consistently point you back to God’s Word. If you don’t know how to navigate along The Way, this tool will guide you in the right direction: to follow Jesus Christ.

FIND MORE ONLINE AT THECHAPEL.COM/THEWAY

REVIEW

Here’s a quick recap for you to refer back to when you need a reminder



Intimacy with God the Father

Spend time every day reading the Bible and praying.



Christlike Relationships

Treat people in the same way that Jesus would, with the love that comes from God. Love them even if (and especially if) they don’t deserve it.



Spiritual Giftedness

We’re all on the same team, and God has wired us each differently so that we can work together as the Body of Christ. Discover how you’re gifted, then use that gifting!



Sharing Your Grace Story

You don’t have to be obnoxious or hold a megaphone on the street. Just be genuine and tell people about what God has done in your life.



Small Group and Service

Get connected to a LifeLINKs small group and find a place to serve.

Just remember: this is a journey that we are all on. We’re not expecting you to be an expert in the Outcomes. You don’t have to prove your worth. We are all following The Way, Jesus, because of God’s grace which none of us deserve. Don’t feel like you have to do this alone, because God designed us to go through life together. So if you don’t know what step to take next, follow us as we follow Jesus.

SHARING YOUR GRACE STORY

Once you start following Jesus, people need to hear your story. If we looked into the New Testament – especially stories that involved lives that Jesus changed – we’d see people who could not help but talk about him. Jesus had changed them forever, and they were compelled to tell people about it.

Don’t worry; we’re not asking you to drive downtown every Friday and scream through a megaphone. But people need to hear a firsthand account of what God has done in your life. We have all experienced the grace of God as his followers, so why wouldn’t we hope others could see God’s grace in their lives as well?



Your objections might sound like this: “I don’t know enough about the Bible,” or, “I don’t want people to think I’m forcing my beliefs on them,” or, “I could never talk about my faith.” Let me encourage you: You don’t have to be a Bible expert to tell others about the changes God has made in your life. You don’t have to be overbearing or oppressive; just be genuine. You don’t have to be ashamed or embarrassed, because Jesus has given you new life, and it’s something you can’t hide. Soon people will notice there’s something different about you – so just tell them! We want to imitate the early believers in this way: “Day after day...they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah” (Acts 5:42).



Where do I start?

Today, begin praying about an opportunity to share your story of God’s grace within the next week. Don’t worry about having a polished story with an accompanying PowerPoint presentation. Just be genuine; tell one person this week about the changes God

GETTING CONNECTED

Now you know a little bit more about what will fuel your spiritual formation. The great thing is, you can do all of this on your own at any time of the day. You don’t need to come to a church building to be in relationship with God. But, just because you can do this on your own, we don’t want you to go through life alone. We invite you to become intricately connected to this local church. We want you to join us as we are all navigating along this path as we follow Jesus Christ. There are two areas we invite you to get connected with.

First, you need to join a small group. Our church is large, and there are lots of people here on Sunday. But, in a small group, you will be connected with 8-10 other Christ-followers who can encourage you and celebrate life with you. Instead of getting lost in a crowd, joining a small group will ensure that someone will always be there for you, through thick and thin. We call our small groups “LifeLINKs” and you can find out more at thechapel.com/lifelinks.

Second, you need to find a place of service. One of our four Outcomes is exercising your Spiritual Giftedness. Once you discover that gifting from God, you need to find an outlet to use your gifting! There are tons of areas for you to serve, and you can find out many of them by checking out thechapel.com/serve.

DIGGING A WELL



If you’ve been around some people who may identify themselves as “religious,” they probably have a code of conduct or a list of rules to abide by. It doesn’t really matter what religion they adhere to, because the point is that they have a checklist of Do’s and Don’ts that determine their steps. Being a Christian is not about having the best or holiest checklist; in fact, we can do without the checklist altogether. Being a Christian is a lot more like digging a well.

The deeper we dig, the more we are washed over with the grace of God in our lives. Some people only want to go in up to their ankles; that way, they can do their “Sunday/God thing” but still live their old lives Monday through Saturday. Why not dig deep? Why not go all in on this? The more and more that we taste the life-giving waters of Jesus, we will find the behaviors and desires of this world less and less appetizing.



Being a Christian is a lot more like digging a well.

THE OUTCOMES

Let’s use the picture of digging a well to help us understand what we call “The Outcomes.” We believe that the Bible reveals some consequences (in the positive sense of the word) for the person who has been “born from above” and follows Jesus Christ. These Outcomes do not make us more religious or put us on God’s version of the Dean’s List. Instead, the Outcomes put us in a position to be changed by God. Again, remove the idea of a checklist from your mind. These four Outcomes are more like four shovels that we are using to dig our well deeper.

INTIMACY WITH GOD THE FATHER

Admittedly, we all have junk. There are parts of our lives that we're not proud of. Maybe it's an old habit that is still hanging around even after you make the decision to live by faith in Jesus. You can try your hardest, but only God will be able to remove that corner of your life that's still in darkness.



The first Outcome for each believer is Intimacy with God the Father. We do this by spending time reading the Bible

and by praying. You might say, "I've tried reading the Bible before and it just doesn't make sense to me." Or maybe for you, you may be thinking, "I've prayed before it seems like nothing happens when I pray." Let me challenge you in this way: instead of coming with a list of expectations, open the Bible and allow God's truth to just wash over you. Instead of always praying lengthy prayers, or instead of saying the same prayer over and over, spend a few minutes in silence – away from the cell phone, the computer, or the TV.

By doing these things, we grow in our intimacy with God, and we become more comfortable in his presence. While we still acknowledge God's holiness and the reverence that he deserves, we also realize that through Jesus Christ we can have access to the Father at all times (read Hebrews 4:16). It is in these times of intimacy that God will begin to shave away those things that are holding us back from growing in our faith.



Where do I start?

Today, read the Bible for five minutes. If you've never read it before, start in the Gospel of John or in the Book of Proverbs. Your Bible's table of contents will show you where these books are located. Also, pray for five minutes. You don't have to come up with five minutes of dialogue in advance, and you don't even have to pray out loud. Even if the majority are just moments of silence, commit to five minutes today.

CHRISTLIKE RELATIONSHIPS



Jesus wasn't *just* a really good example for us to follow. He wasn't *just* a good teacher. He was God with skin on. Jesus embodied grace and truth (read John 1:14), and treated all people accordingly. He even befriended the people who were social outcasts in his society (tax collectors and prostitutes).

What people in your life do you find difficult to love? Which members of your family would you rather not be related to? Which colleague or coworker makes your blood boil? It may not be surprising (or difficult) for you to understand that you should love the people that you get along with...but what about loving

the people that aren't so easy to love? God wants us to love them as well, because God himself is love (1 John 4:8). In fact, Jesus said that our love for others will be an indication to the world that we are his disciples: "By this all people will know you are my disciples: if you love one another" (John 13:35).



Where do I start?

Today, as you spend time in prayer, ask God to show you one person that you can treat differently – in the way that Jesus would treat them. It may be someone you've known for a while or maybe someone you meet for the first time today. Regardless, ask God to give you the ability to love that person beyond your own ability.

SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS

"Ministry is just for the professionals." If you've ever heard this, or if you've felt like it was true, here's some great news: it's not. Of course, well-trained people and those schooled in the Scriptures are valuable assets. But, God's mission in the world is far too large and the need is far too great for only a select few to be joining him on the mission. We need the whole Church.



Imagine a baseball team. There are nine different positions that have to be filled: centerfield, second base, catcher, pitcher, and others. The manager of the team knows the talents and skills of each team member. He knows who is the best centerfielder, who is the best first baseman, and who is the best pitcher. But what if everyone on his team wanted to play centerfield? Who would fill all the other positions?

The Church is a lot like that in many ways. God has gifted each member of the Church in many different ways. Some are excellent teachers; others are petrified at the thought of public speaking. Some are really handy with a hammer and nail; others should never go near any power tools. We all have different skillsets; if we all tried to play the same position, there would be gaps and unfilled areas of our team. We need to work together.

By comparing the Church to a human body, the Bible helps us understand how God placed us exactly where we need to be. "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ...We have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Like the manager of a team, God knows exactly who is gifted in what area, and although some parts of the mission will be more visible than others, every part is important to the vitality of the Body of Christ.

Two things to remember: (1) you are gifted, and (2) you are needed. Take some time to read the rest of 1 Corinthians 12 and you will see these two points repeated over and over. God has gifted you in some area; we call this "Spiritual Giftedness," because God's Holy



Where do I start?

Today, begin praying about your spiritual giftedness. Ask God to show you exactly where he wants to place you to serve. Call a friend who has been on this journey for a while (maybe it's a small group leader or one of the pastors) and ask them to give you some