
A Pastor's Guide to

MENTORING NEW BELIEVERS

Campbellsville
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Online Programs



CONTENTS

**THE STARTING POINT: WHAT IT MEANS
TO BE A NEW BELIEVER..... 4**

**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR
MENTORING NEW BELIEVERS5**

Make Personal Connections 5

Learn More About Their Faith Background..... 6

**IDENTIFYING GOALS FOR
SPIRITUAL GROWTH: 3 BASICS
FOR NEW CHRISTIANS7**

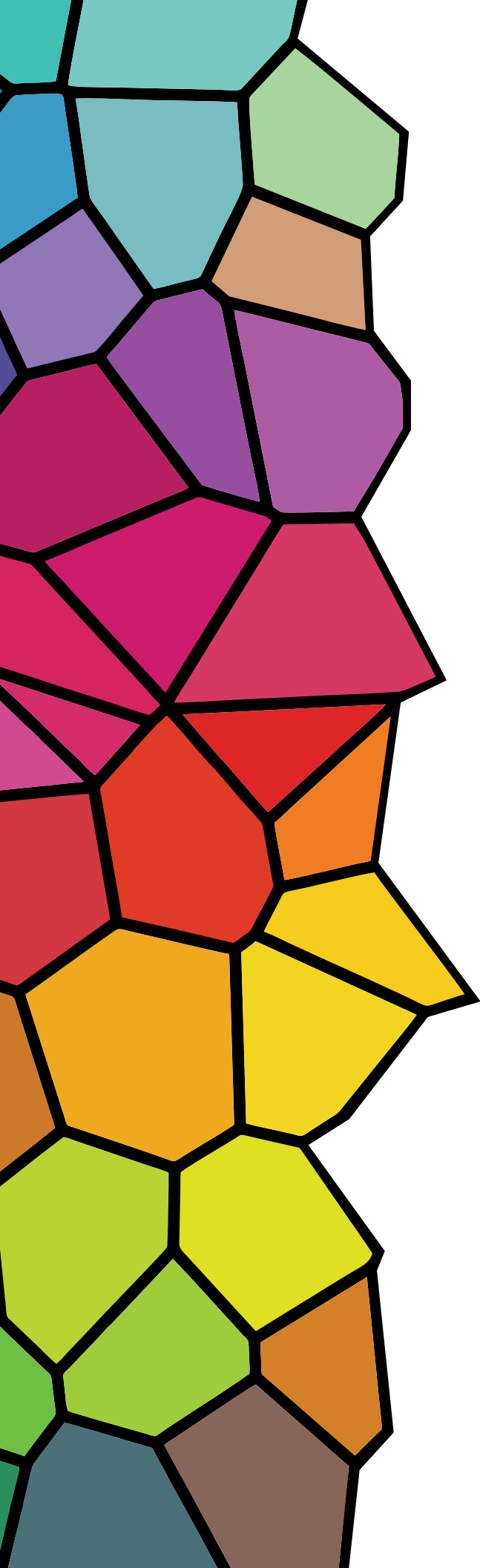
1. Reading the Bible..... 8

2. Prayer..... 9

3. Community..... 10

**MENTORING NEW BELIEVERS WHO
MENTOR NEW BELIEVERS..... 12**





A Pastor's Guide to

MENTORING NEW BELIEVERS

The opportunity to mentor new believers arises after one of the most joyous moments in a person's life. When someone comes to Christ, it's cause for celebration — throughout heaven and earth — as the Word of God makes abundantly clear.

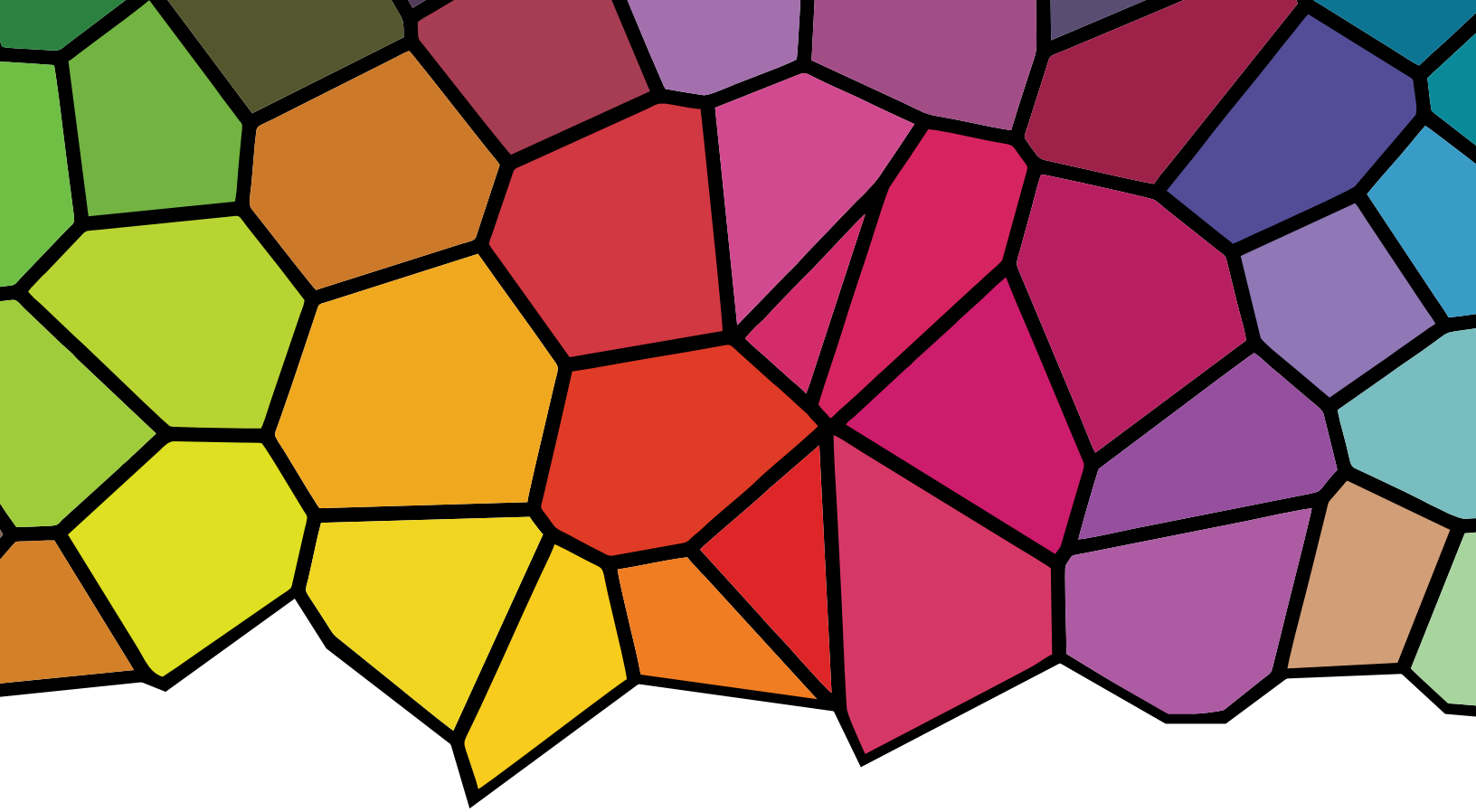
In the first of three consecutive parables from Jesus on the topic, a shepherd leaves his flock of 99 to find the lost one. "Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep'" Jesus said. "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." (Luke 15:6-7, New International Version).

The next parable examines a woman who has 10 silver coins but loses one. She looks carefully for the coin, and when she has found it, asks her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her, just as the shepherd did in the first parable. "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10), Jesus said.

It's interesting that the final parable in the chapter doesn't end in a similar fashion. The prodigal son returns from squandering his father's inheritance, and he's met with open arms by his father, but not the older, obedient brother. Jesus doesn't provide an obvious ending to the conflict. Instead, He offered the father's simple, powerful explanation to the older: "But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." (Luke 15:32).

Each parable reinforces how God the Father embraces the lost. It speaks to His deep, perfect love and the redemption available through Jesus' sacrifice (Colossians 1:13-14).

As you're mentoring new believers, never forget the joy that comes from people being saved. It should be a focal point in your heart and in your conversations with others, as you provide guidance in the faith. Some other basics for new Christians should be a priority for you during the mentoring process, which should focus on both practical and spiritual areas of growth.



THE STARTING POINT:

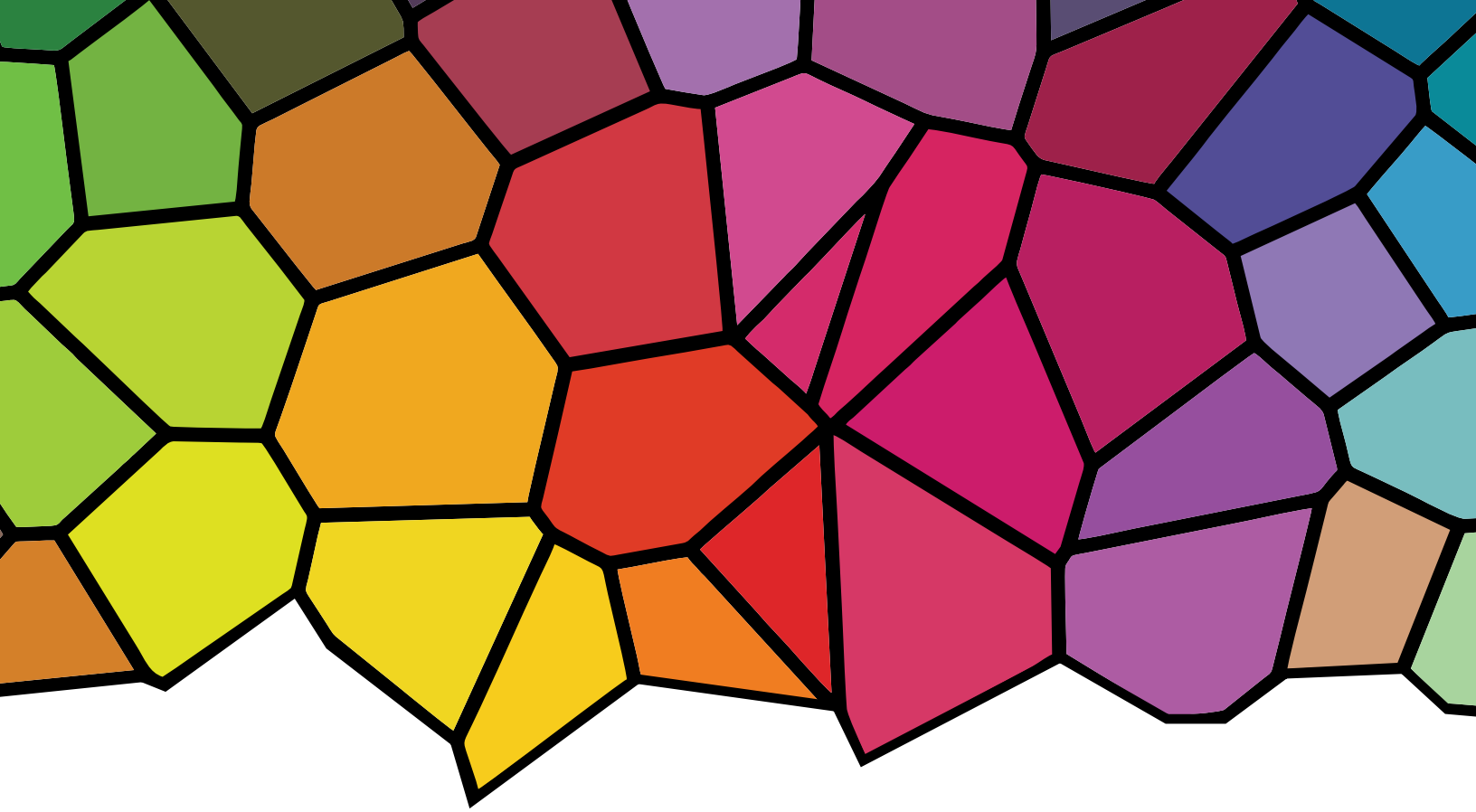
What It Means to be a New Believer

You may very well have a hand in helping people get saved, but in many cases, you'll meet people after they commit their lives to Christ. With that in mind, it'll be important to clarify what it means to be a new believer.

One distinction is what it means to "believe." It's not a passive idea, in the sense that someone has the knowledge that God exists. As James wrote, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder" (James 2:19). What separates demons from Christians in their "belief" is the acceptance and genuine faith that true believers have.

Deep, authentic faith is central to how someone is considered to be saved. "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved," (Romans 10:9) Paul said. The mouth offers an outward expression of what lies deep in the heart, which, biblically, refers to the center of a person and his or her spiritual life.

You can take some time exploring the very basics with new believers, like what it means to have faith in Jesus and what the Bible says about new believers. Receiving the free gift of salvation and recognizing one's new identity in Christ is essential to spiritual growth.



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MENTORING NEW BELIEVERS

Before you establish spiritual goals with new believers, you'll need to be aware of how you can best connect and relate to people. You could spend plenty of time preparing some of the best material for mentoring new believers through a basic understanding of the Bible and spiritual life, but would miss a point. Mentoring is a relationship. It shouldn't come across as scripted, nor should some type of class or curriculum take its place.

Make Personal Connections

You need to connect to new believers personally. Or, more accurately, you should make sure that new believers take part in a mentoring relationship where they connect with someone personally. It doesn't necessarily have to be you; you could oversee and support the mentoring process after an initial conversation with new believers. In larger churches, you might need to rely on church and lay leaders to offer that deep connection.

The reasoning for connecting to people should be obvious. Mentoring new believers is the natural follow-up to seeing someone saved by faith in Christ. And what's more important than helping people follow Christ and serve him? What's more important than helping people understand His love and the gift He offers in this life and in eternity? It's difficult to overestimate the significance of both of those things, so devoting individual time and attention to people in these stages is vital.

Connect to new believers by meeting with them one-on-one. It'll give you a chance to engage with them and to kick-start the mentoring relationship, whether it's with you or with another person. You should also explore

other ways to further that connection. You might invite new believers to social events, follow up with them after a worship service or send them a text or email every now and then to see how they're doing.

Welcome new believers to the body of Christ by making them feel like they're part of it. Then you'll be better able to learn more about them to provide spiritual guidance.

Learn More About Their Faith Background

As you connect to new believers personally, an obvious topic of conversation will be their faith background. It's important to address in this guide because of how this discussion will help you with mentoring new believers.

Take some time to learn more about their history. Do they have a background in church as a child or adult? Or are they completely new to everything? Answers to those types of questions will help you guide them to next steps in their faith journey. For instance, you might learn how some new believers are interested in joining the church or getting baptized. You'll also get insight into people's perspectives on faith, church and life in general, which will be helpful to the mentoring relationship.

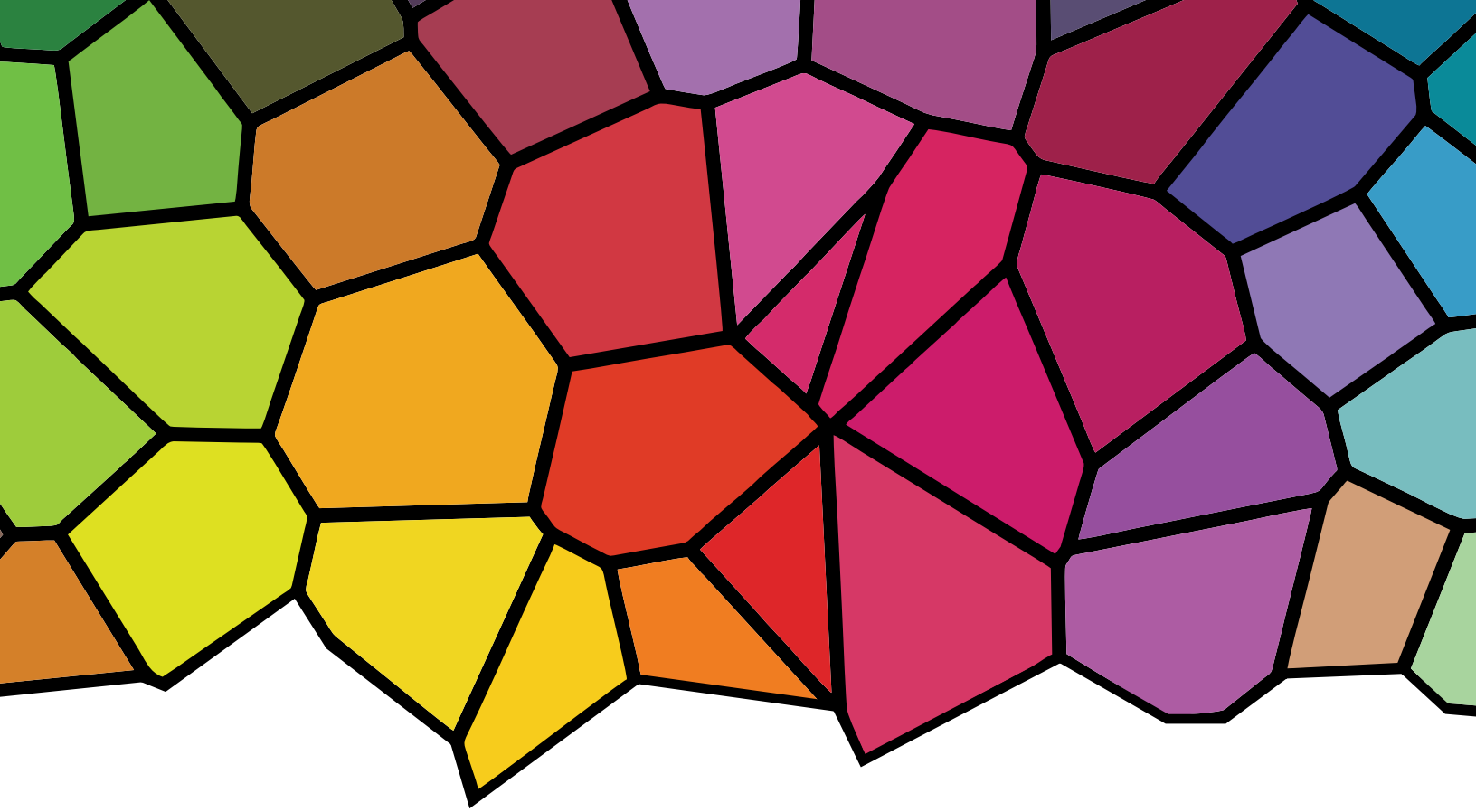
As you ask questions about people's faith background and current walk with Christ, make sure you prompt them to ask questions. Do they have difficulties with certain aspects of the faith or the Bible? Do they want to know anything specific about the church?

What you learn from these types of questions and discussions can help you support and mentor new believers. You'll be able to personalize certain recommendations based on the individual. For example, if you chat with people who thrive or struggle with reading in their spare time, you might recommend reading several chapters a day or spending time with an audio Bible in the car, respectively.

Overall, having deep, back-and-forth conversations with new believers can give you the opportunity to meet them where they're at to maximize the mentoring relationship. Even immediately, you'll gain valuable information to guide spiritually young Christians to effective ways of maturing their faith.



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IDENTIFYING GOALS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH: 3 BASICS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

“Where do I start?” “How do I continue growing in Christ?” “What’s next?”

Those types of questions are incredibly common for newer Christians. After all, even spiritually mature Christians have them from time to time. And one of the beautiful parts of this is how the fundamental aspects of spiritual growth don’t change, regardless of your spiritual maturity.

Here are some of the basics for new Christians you can stress throughout the mentoring process. Make sure you’re on the same page with people as you start meeting with them. And then, as the relationship progresses, you can follow up with them on the same topics to see how they’re doing and offer more advice or perspective.

1. Reading the Bible



All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Paul’s characterization of the Bible showcases its power. Scripture is foremost from God, and it is responsible for showing people what teaching is right and wrong, growing in godly behavior and preparing them for ministry.

In this passage, Paul exhorted Timothy in his ministry at Ephesus. Paul had already written that Timothy would suffer persecution and battle false teaching, like Paul had. Yet, the author and mentor advised his fellow missionary to press on: “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

The Bible penetrates the heart and soul of any believer, guiding the children of God in righteousness. As the writer of Hebrews put it, “The Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Jesus often referred to Scripture as well. A notable series of events took place when He was tempted by Satan after fasting for 40 days and 40 nights. In each instance, Jesus rebuked Satan with Scripture, and the first time, He referred to a verse in Deuteronomy that highlights the place that the Bible should have in believers’ lives: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

It should be clear that one of your biggest priorities while mentoring new believers should be encouraging them to embrace the Bible. Reading the Word of God daily can do wonders for anyone’s spiritual life. The time commitment is more than reasonable for what most people would consider an “ambitious” plan. On the other side of the spectrum, even, the time commitment is minimal.



30 MINUTES A DAY

Most people can complete the Bible in less than three months, based on an average reading speed of 300 words per minute.



BIBLE IN A YEAR

Reading the entire Bible in one year takes less than four chapters a day, which can be completed in 10 minutes



ONE CHAPTER A DAY

The average chapter of the Bible is just more than 600 words, so this takes a few minutes. Even the longest chapter in the Bible (Psalm 119) takes less than 10 minutes

It's also a good idea for new (and experienced) believers to use a study Bible for help understanding what they're reading. There are plenty of great options here, including traditional study Bibles and free digital ones, like the [Faithlife Study Bible](#). Digital Bibles are popular too, spanning free apps and websites like [YouVersion](#) and [BibleGateway](#).

Some people may express hesitation to read. It often takes the form of not being much of a reader or being so busy that it's easy to forget to make time for the Bible. In that case, you might recommend listening to the Bible, which can be more accessible for some people. Audio Bibles are so popular that they're integrated into most Bible apps now.

2. Prayer



Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

When Paul wrote that Christians in Thessalonica should pray without ceasing, it wasn't a call to fill every literal moment of the day with prayer. It was a call to turn to prayer in all situations. Prayer should be a default way of responding to every moment, and it should be a natural part of life in general.

Elsewhere in Scripture, Paul referred to prayer as a way to fight anxiety (Philippians 4:6) and spiritual battles (Ephesians 6:18). These threads expand on the power of having direct communication with God and how prayer impacts large and small events alike, as well as believers' spiritual lives.

After covering the basics of what prayer is and how it's impactful, you'll want to spend plenty of time mentoring new believers in how to incorporate prayer into daily life. For instance, a lot of people pray before meals and when they go to bed at night, but that's hardly where it should end. People can and should pray throughout their day, for any reason. Prayer reflects and drives people's relationship with God, and prayers can cover anything from God's glory and world events to simple requests and thoughts.

A prayer list is a simple and effective tool that you can recommend. By listing prayer requests and areas, new believers can remember what's most important to bring to God at any given time. You can also recommend prayer categories. Those categories can include areas like thanksgiving, personal godliness, family, leaders, friends and so forth. One popular way to integrate prayer categories is by assigning one to each day of the week (e.g., Monday is for thanksgiving, Tuesday is personal godliness, etc.).



PRAYER LIST

By listing prayer requests and areas, new believers can remember what's most important to bring to God at any given time



PRAYER CATEGORIES

Can include areas like thanksgiving, personal godliness, family, leaders, friends and so forth

Other tools can help believers deepen their prayer life. For instance, the popular ACTS model of prayer uses each letter in the term as a sort of formula for prayer: adoration (or worshipping), confession, thanksgiving and supplication (or prayer for one's and others' needs). A lesser-known tool, known as the prayer wheel, integrates 12 categories of prayer for five minutes each to comprise an hour-long prayer session. The Everywhere to Everywhere missional training organization offers [more information](#) on the prayer wheel tool.

Lastly, prayer can combine with Bible study. The popular SOAP Bible study method uses a letter for each part of the process: Scripture (choosing a passage), observation (looking at context and answering basic questions to understand the passage), application (how does this passage impact one's life?) and prayer (applying the passage through prayer). A lot of people like to write their responses out, whether they're one sentence long or several paragraphs for each part.

3. Community



Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

In this passage, Solomon uses a few examples to show the value of companionship. Two people are able to work together, help each other in times of need, stay warm and finally, withstand an attack (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). Three people add even more to the group's power.

In other words, there's strength in numbers, and that's certainly true for spiritual life. The [importance of church community](#) is considerable. Scripture discusses just how important it is for people gather together to hear the Word of God, worship Him and encourage each other. Outside of the walls of the church, the church community can enjoy simply living life together. After all, the church isn't the building but rather the body of Christ.

New and experienced believers alike need relationships with other Christians. They need to participate in corporate worship, small groups and relationships with others to enhance their walk with Christ. For new believers in particular, they can learn so much from more mature Christians in the community who can be there to offer wisdom, provide support and help them understand how their life and gifts serve Christ.

When you're mentoring new believers, encourage them to get involved. Whether it's at Bible studies, small groups or church events, they'll get the formal teaching and fellowship to help them get more comfortable with their new identity in Christ. They'll get to meet people who can encourage and help them.



ENCOURAGE INVOLVEMENT

Through groups new believers will get the formal teaching and fellowship to help them get more comfortable with their new identity in Christ



SMALL GROUPS

Can help in giving back and helping others, as well as seeing what amazing things the church is doing internally and in the local community

Try to challenge each new believer you meet to join a small group and, even if it's once a month, to volunteer in a ministry. Small groups are an obvious way to grow spiritually through teaching and fellowship. Volunteering in a ministry can help new believers get involved in giving back and helping others, as well as seeing what amazing things the church is doing internally and in the local community.

It's interesting how new believers who engage in fellowship receive many more opportunities to be mentored in the process. By connecting to small group and ministry leaders, as well as fellow believers of all ages and levels of spiritual maturity, new believers get the chance to learn from so many people along the way. When you're mentoring new believers by encouraging them to get involved in the church community, you're giving them the opportunity to get mentored by many other people. It won't be long until new believers get a chance to continue the cycle.



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MENTORING NEW BELIEVERS WHO MENTOR NEW BELIEVERS

The process of mentoring new believers is similar to making disciples. When you approach it in the proper way, you'll equip people to impact further generations of new believers and disciples.

As a pastor, you're able to enhance the culture of the church for finding the lost, training them for righteousness and equipping them to help others. It'll require effective teaching and leadership, as well as the right ministries for the process to reach its full potential. You can maximize your skills with an [online Master of Theology](#) degree that offers three concentration areas: biblical studies, pastoral leadership and theological studies. You'll take 18 hours in your emphasis area and then six hours in both of the other areas, for a total of 30 credit hours.

Earn an advanced, well-rounded education that will help you impact people within and beyond your church for God's glory. It can also help you pursue higher leadership positions in the church. The program takes place 100% online, allowing you to study in a convenient format that works with your personal and professional schedule.

Campbellsville University has been ranked as one of the most affordable among Christian colleges and universities in the United States. No GRE is required unless your undergraduate GPA is below 3.0.

