



COVENANT CHURCH

What's Next?

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Main Idea – God has designed spiritual steps for a meaningful life. Those steps begin with committing to an intimate relationship with Him, and then with other believers, and finally with making a difference in someone else's life through Jesus.

Don't settle into a survival mode

- An important job of a pastor is to guide believers on a spiritual path God has determined for them.
- Pastors lead people through spiritual steps.
- To begin – or resume - your journey, you must first identify where you are currently at spiritually. Many of us may be in the same place we have been for a long time; in a type of spiritual survival mode.
- Even in a desert, there are seeds below the surface ready to sprout flowers.
- God created you to flourish with life. However, you have to be planted in the right environment to fulfill your potential. **Psalm 92:13 – Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. (NKJV)**
- As long as you live, you should be in forward movement on your spiritual path. Even the Apostle Paul recognized he had not finished his path when he was writing his letter to the Philippian Christians. **Philippians 3:12 – Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. (NKJV)**
- If you commit to a personal relationship with God, He will show you your path. **Psalm 16:11 – You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (NKJV)**

Paul knew the steps

- When he wrote to the Ephesians, Paul identified four steps on the spiritual pathway to significance. **Ephesians 1: 17-18 – I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may *know him* better. I pray that the *eyes of your heart may be enlightened* in order that you may know the *hope to which he has called you*, the riches of his glorious *inheritance in his holy people* (NIV)**
1. Know Him better - the Greek word for “know” in that verse is *ginosko*. Ginosko can

be defined as “to know, especially through a personal experience.” This is a deep, personal, relationship of spiritual intimacy.

2. Have your heart’s eyes enlightened. Life’s events can tarnish your heart’s perceptions. Through your relationships with God, and other believers, you will be able to clear up and clean up what your heart is perceiving.
3. Know the hope to which God has called you. Your hope is not dependent on your circumstances, but rather on your potential. Your hope and your calling are interconnected; they co-exist together at the same place at the same time.
4. Find your inheritance. Your inheritance is the new people with whom you will come into relationship. Through you, God will bring hope and joy to others. (When you worship in church, you are doing so not only to praise God but also to inspire others to better know Him.)

The four steps restated

1. Know God. Your relationship with God should not be as a casual acquaintance, but as an intimate shared experience. *This is a one-on-one relationship with God.* Jesus will not have much time for those who do not take seriously this relationship. **Matthew 7: 21-23 – “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ (NIV)**
2. Find freedom. God created a system for you to experience healing and meaningfulness through other people. *This is a one-on-one relationship with other believers.* Don’t simply attend church, but take the steps necessary to get to know other people. Individual growth comes from being part of a group. **James 5:16 – Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (NIV)**
3. Discover purpose. Even though life has its problems, God’s purpose for you will still appear. Fix your heart’s eyes on that promise. **2 Corinthians 4: 7-10 – But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (NKJV)**
4. Make a difference. You don’t exist for yourself; you exist for others.
 - a. Don’t simply attend church; *be* the church.

- b. Don't just watch the game; *get in* the game.
- c. The stop light has turned green. Move! Go! Put your foot on the gas! Do something!
- d. Church is about relationships, not religion.

Reflective Questions for What's Next?

1. The Apostle Paul is one of the Bible's superstars. What encouragement could you bring to others by sharing how even Paul felt his life's spiritual journey was not fully realized? (See Philippians 3:12 above). How could you use that verse – or other verses - to encourage someone who felt stuck in a spiritual survival mode?
2. Why are one-on-one relationships with God, and one-on-one relationships with other believers, equally important for life's spiritual journey to move forward? What is God's objective, do you suppose, for you to have both types of relationships?
3. What is a next step you will take this week to move forward on your personal spiritual path?