

Series: Little Steps That Make A Huge Difference In A Christian's Life! July 20, 2025

Title: Allow A Relationship With God!

Best Explanation of the Message: (Really Go After A Relationship With God!)

1. REJOICE! (Rejoice, Celebrate, Be Thankful, Lavish In God's Love, & Worship)

Philippians 4:4–9 (NLT) ⁴ Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! ⁵ Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

⁸ And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

⁹ Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Psalms 16:11 (NLT) ¹¹ You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.

Be Thankful!

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV) ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:3–5 (NLT) ³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. ⁵ And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

→ Even in problems – celebrate - rejoice

Worship!

How do we worship?

John 4:23–24 (NLT) ²³ But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

When?

Hebrews 13:15 (NLT) ¹⁵ Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.

Colossians 3:15–16 (NLT) ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

Celebrate!

Decide To Celebrate!

Psalms 118:24 (NLT) ²⁴ This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

→ Decide to be glad

Rejoice in God's Love Over You!

Romans 5:8 (NLT) ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

John 3:16–17 (NLT) ¹⁶ “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

1 John 4:16 (NLT) ¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

Romans 8:38–39 (NLT) ³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. SURRENDER!

Matthew 16:24–26 (NLT) ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. ²⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?

Luke 14:25–33 (NLT) *The Cost of Being a Disciple* ²⁵ A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, ²⁶ “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ “But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? ²⁹ Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. ³⁰ They would say, ‘There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!’ ³¹ “Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? ³² And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. ³³ So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

Galatians 2:20–21 (NLT) ²⁰ My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

What if people surrendered to Jesus instead of fighting His will? You surrendered? You died to self? Quit fighting? Quit Fighting!

Isaiah 45:9 (NLT) ⁹ “What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator. Does a clay pot argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying, ‘Stop, you’re doing it wrong!’ Does the pot exclaim, How clumsy can you be?”

Matthew 7:21–23 (NLT) *True Disciples* ²¹ “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²² On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ ²³ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

→ The call on our life is to be truly surrendered to Christ!

3. LISTEN TO GOD – what’s God seem to be impressing upon you in prayer, in worship, from scripture, from the ministry of others, and as you listen?

Matthew 7:24–27 (NLT) *Building on a Solid Foundation*

²⁴ “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.

Proverbs 2:1–4 (NLT) *The Benefits of Wisdom* ¹ My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. ² Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. ³ Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. ⁴ Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures.

John 10:27 (NLT) ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Isaiah 55:2–3 (NLT) ² Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. ³ “Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.

Psalms 46:10a (NLT) ¹⁰ “Be still, and know that I am God!

4. ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT! – Saying Yes To Holy Spirit

2 Timothy 3:1–5 (NLT) *The Dangers of the Last Days* You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They

will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵ They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

Do not Blaspheme the Holy Spirit

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is described in the Bible as an unforgivable sin. Specifically, Matthew 12:31-32 and Mark 3:29 highlight this concept, emphasizing that while other sins and blasphemies can be forgiven, speaking against the Holy Spirit is an exception.

Key points about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit:

- Definition:

It's not simply saying something bad about the Holy Spirit, but rather a deliberate and persistent rejection of the Holy Spirit's work, particularly in attributing His work to Satan or evil.

- Unforgivable:

The Bible states that this sin is unforgivable, implying a state of hardened unbelief where one rejects the very source of forgiveness.

Matthew 12:31–32 (NLT) ³¹ “So I tell you, every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven—except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven. ³² Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.

Mark 3:28–30 (NLT) ²⁸ “I tell you the truth, all sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, ²⁹ but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This is a sin with eternal consequences.” ³⁰ He told them this because they were saying, “He’s possessed by an evil spirit.”

Listen Carefully to the Holy Spirit

Several scriptures encourage believers to listen to and be led by the Holy Spirit, emphasizing His role as a guide, teacher, and intercessor.

John 16:13–15 (NLT) ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’

John 14:26 (NLT) ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

1 Corinthians 6:19 (NLT) ¹⁹ Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself,

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Prayer and Discussion Questions For This Week:

- Do you sometimes choose to celebrate and you do it no matter what's going on in life?
- Could you choose to celebrate God, His blessings, and His promises more? Should you more?
- Do you worship from your heart? Do you choose to rejoice?
- Do you choose to actively think about what you should be thankful for?
- If you "died-to-self", and surrendered to God, would you be more free in your heart?
- If you chose to spend more time listening and expecting to hear God, would you be different?
- If you "allowed" the work the Holy Spirit wants to do in you, would you have more strength?