

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

The Beginner's Guide to Connecting with God

WEEK 1

SPENDING TIME WITH GOD IS A WAY TO CONNECT WITH GOD.

“Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior, and my
hope is in you all day long.”

PSALM 25:5 NIV

DAY 1

Do you ever feel like it's hard to connect with God? Well, don't worry, you're not alone! We all struggle to find a way to connect with God from time to time. That's what is so great about this verse! It can actually act as a prayer to God, asking for His help as we grow in our relationship with Him. And the good news is, He promises to guide and teach us when we ask. So the next time you're struggling to connect with God, talk to Him! Ask Him to teach and guide you in the ways you can connect with Him throughout your life.

“We know also that the Son of God
has come and has given us
understanding, so that we may know
him who is true. And we are in him
who is true by being in his Son Jesus
Christ. He is the true God and eternal
life.”

1 JOHN 5:20 NIV

DAY 2

Do you ever think of growing in your faith like studying for a test? Like you have to memorize a bunch of facts to get the right answers? The point of our faith isn't to just learn facts about God. God wants us to get to know Him, just like you would a friend. Getting to know God and experiencing life with Him is one of the best ways to connect with Him. Today, start a list of the things you've learned about God so far in your life. Maybe characteristics He's displayed or experiences you've had with Him. Add to that list any time you learn something new about God. Let it remind you of the awesome God you're getting to know.

“Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.”

PSALM 86:11 NIV

DAY 3

We all have times when we get worried or afraid. Part of the reason we take time to connect with God each day is to remind us that He’s there for us in all of our moments—especially the ones that are difficult! We can rely on God all of the time. He’s with us not just when we pray, or read our Bible, or show up at church. Part of connecting with God is understanding that His presence is always with us. The next time you feel yourself start to worry, take a deep breath and pray this simple prayer: God, thank you for sticking with me. Remember, you can rely on His faithfulness to you no matter what.

“Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”

PROVERBS 30:5 NIV

DAY 4

One of the most difficult parts of faith is having to believe what you can’t always see. That’s where verses like this one come in! This verse gives us a picture of a shield to describe what God is like. Even though we can’t see Him, God is there to protect and take care of us—like a shield! When we trust in Him and believe His promises, we can rest assured that He is there to care for us no matter. We can have faith in what we can’t see! This week, ask a friend, trusted adult, or Small Group Leader something they know to be true of God, even if it’s something they can’t always see.

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”

1 JOHN 4:7 NIV

DAY 5

Did you know that connecting with God is not limited to just things like prayer, or reading the Bible, or going to church? Just like this verse says, love comes from God, and we can connect with God by showing that love to other people. When we practice love by serving or caring for others, we’re actually connecting with God in the process. Practice showing a little love this week! Ask your Small Group Leader or mentor about a service opportunity within your church or community that would allow you to show some love to others. Then, grab a few friends and go try it out!

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WEEK 2

WE CAN ALL FREELY CONNECT WITH GOD.

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

JEREMIAH 33:3 NIV

DAY 1

Does prayer ever feel like a one-way conversation? You try so hard to talk to God, but at times, He doesn't seem to be talking back. We've all felt that way before, but here's some good news: God does speak. Maybe it isn't the way we'd like Him to speak sometimes—through obvious words or clear direction. But God does speak through the verses in the Bible, the care of our community, and the words of other people in your life. As you're learning how to connect with God, ask a trusted friend in your life how they hear from God. Let their experiences give you an idea of how God might want to speak to you, too.

“Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world.”

ISAIAH 12:5 NIV

DAY 2

When was the last time you were so excited about something that you couldn't wait to tell someone about it? Part of connecting with God is telling other people about the awesome things He has done in your life. When you experience a blessing or gift from Him, one of the best things you can do is share it with someone else. Get excited to share what God is doing in your life this week! Is there someone who you think could benefit from hearing about what God has done for you? Make a point to share it with them! As you tell your story, you just might find that you walk away feeling even more connected with God yourself.

“The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”

PSALM 145:18 NIV

DAY 3

There are people in our lives who we just love to be around because being close to them makes us feel loved, special, and cared for. In the same way that we love to be close to others, God loves to be close to us. The Bible says that God is near to everyone who calls on Him—just like we do when we pray. This week, save this verse as a lock screen for your phone, memorize it, or write it down somewhere you’ll see it often. Every time you see it or think of it, pray and thank God for always being near to you. Let it be a reminder that God is with you.

“All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name.”

PSALM 66:4 NIV

DAY 4

What’s your favorite thing about nature? Maybe a beautiful sunset or a sunny day? A good thunderstorm or a cool breeze? Well, did you know that God made all of those things? It’s true! God made the whole Earth, and not just for pretty colors in the sky or nice weather. He made everything in the world to show us more of who He is! Creation can teach us so much about who God is and help us connect to Him. Wherever you are, go outside today and find at least three things that catch your eye in creation. As you do, remember that God put beautiful things in the world to help point you back to Him every day.

“Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.”

PSALM 96:9 NIV

DAY 5

Worship. It’s a word that people use in church a lot, but it’s actually a pretty cool thing. Worship means showing God that we love and honor Him because of who He is and what He’s done for us. When we worship God through things like singing songs about Him, it can help us connect with Him in a deeper way. Today, find some worship music that you might enjoy. Then take five minutes and try it out. Play the songs, really listen to the words, and worship right there in your room! As you do, think about the things God has done for you, who He is to you, and all that you are trusting and believing Him for in your life.

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WEEK 3

RESTING IS A WAY TO CONNECT WITH GOD.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW 11:29-30 NIV

DAY 1

What exactly does a passage like this mean? Well, a yoke is a wooden frame that's put around the neck of two animals to help them work together. In other words, it helps them share the weight of what they're carrying. This verse reminds us that when we share the weight of the things we're carrying in this world with Jesus, we can move through life a little easier. He will give us rest when we give our worries to Him. Take time today to ask a trusted adult how Jesus has helped them through difficult times. Ask them to pray with you, asking God to help carry your load and give you rest.

“The LORD replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’”

EXODUS 33:14 NIV

DAY 2

Imagine if you could have a doctor, a teacher, or a trusted adult follow you around all the time. You'd always have someone there to help you! The good news is that we are promised so much more than that with God. The Lord will be with us everywhere we go. He'll give us what He knows we need at just the right time. Because His presence is always with us, we can rest in the peace of knowing we can connect with Him anytime, anywhere! Write this verse down in a place you can see it. Look at it every day before you leave the house this week to remind you that God is going with you as you go.

“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.”

PSALM 62:5 NIV

DAY 3

Believe it or not, we were created by God to experience rest in our everyday lives. It's part of His design for us! And He wants us to see the value in pausing to rest in His peace so that we can keep going forward in the work He has for us. God wants us to remember that sometimes, we need to slow down, refocus, and refuel our faith. This week, carve out some time to rest. Disconnect from the world around you, and step away from the things that cause you to feel stress or pressure. Pay attention to the way you feel and just how much your week changes when you give yourself some time to rest!

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

JOHN 14:27 NIV

DAY 4

When we take a look at the things happening in the world around us, it's easy to see all the problems. And sometimes, it's easy to lose hope that things will ever get better. But Jesus leaves us with this hope: He has given us peace! No matter what else is going on around us—no matter how crazy, or sad, or scary life seems—we can still find peace in our souls and hope for our future when we know Jesus. Is there something in your life that is threatening to steal your peace? Ask God to fill you with His peace and provide you with the hope you need to rest in Him.

“He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’”

PSALM 46:10 NIV

DAY 5

How do you know someone loves you? Usually they show you with their actions and tell you with their words, right? Even though we can't physically see or hear Him the same way we do the people in our lives, God wants to show us how much He loves us. And He does that every single day. From the sun and the moon, to the mountains and the lakes, to trusted friends and caring neighbors—He shows His love for us through all that and more! Write down all the things you see in your world that remind you of God's love for you. Then, thank God for connecting with you through the things and people He's put in your life.

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WEEK 4

LEARNING ABOUT GOD IS A WAY TO CONNECT WITH GOD.

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

COLOSSIANS 3:2 NIV

DAY 1

Have you ever tried to walk on a sidewalk with your head down, only looking down at your feet? If you have, then you probably know it's not a great idea! Maybe you ran into more than a few things simply because you were focused on what was happening below instead of what was above or around you. The same is true for our faith! When we keep our eyes above—on God and the things He has for us—we can know we're walking the right path. As you spend time around friends and family today, encourage each other to keep your eyes on what's above—on all God has for your lives!

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.”

ISAIAH 26:3 NIV

DAY 2

Perfect peace. That sounds pretty good! Who wouldn't want to feel complete and total peace in their lives? Peace can look and sound a little different to everyone. But when struggle hits our lives and anxiety builds in our hearts and minds, we all long for the kind of peace the Bible is talking about here. The good news is that this *perfect* peace is available to us because of Jesus. We can all lean in and trust God to bring His perfect peace to the middle of our mess. Is there a part of your life where you could use some of God's peace? Share that with Him. Ask God to give you His peace no matter what comes your way.

“Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

MATTHEW 22:37 NIV

DAY 3

God’s love for us is deeper and wider than we could ever imagine. It’s pretty incredible! But what’s even more incredible is that God allows us to love Him back. Through Jesus, He made a way for us to connect with Him and show Him our love with every part of who we are—all our hearts, all our souls, all our minds. When we focus on loving God in any of those ways, it changes how we live. It helps us stay connected to Him. Try to memorize this verse this week. Let it be a reminder of not just the way God loves us, but the ways in which we can love Him, too.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

ROMANS 5:1 NIV

DAY 4

God knows that we all make mistakes. And sometimes, those mistakes can really shake us up. That’s why He makes such a big deal about creating a way for us to be forgiven and free through our faith in Him. That’s why He sent Jesus! Because of Jesus, we can stand securely in the fact that even though we might mess up or get it wrong sometimes, God still wants to connect with us. With Him, we can always find a fresh start and way forward. Is there a mistake you’re struggling with right now? Something you feel is coming between you and God? Confess it to God in prayer, knowing that He forgives you and wants to stay connected with you no matter what.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:7 NIV

DAY 5

There are so many stories in the Bible about how God brings peace to His people in difficult situations. He showed up for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:16-29) and walked on water during the crazy storm that overwhelmed the disciples (Mark 4:35-41). If God did things like that for His people back then, why wouldn’t He do just the same for us today? Take a look at one of those stories in the Bible and see how God brought peace to His people right where they were. Then, ask God to bring you His same peace in your difficult situations just like He did for those other believers.

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USING YOUR TALENTS AND GIFTS IS A WAY TO CONNECT WITH GOD.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 PETER 4:10 NIV

DAY 1

Think of something that you’re good at and enjoy doing. Are you an artist? Good at basketball? Are you a fast learner? A good helper? Do you love to sing? Did you know that you can use that gift or talent to serve the people around you? Peter encourages us to be a faithful steward of the gifts God has given us. A steward is a manager of something that belongs to someone else. So since God gives us these gifts and talents, we get the chance to be manage them well by using them to serve and love others. What’s one way that you can be intentional about serving someone else with your gift or talent this week?

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

JAMES 1:17 NIV

DAY 2

Has anyone ever told you to count your blessings? Have you ever actually tried it? This passage reminds us that every good and perfect gift is from above. That means that every blessing we have in our lives—the good things, people, experiences, and more—are all gifts from God. And when we express our thanks for the things He’s given us, we are connecting with God in gratitude. Take a minute today to write down a list of the gifts or blessings in your life. As you write each one, thank God for it! Then, put your list somewhere that you can see it to remind you of all God has given you.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

EPHESIANS 2:8 NIV

DAY 3

When we're given a gift, none of us can resist the urge to rip open it and find out what's inside! This verse reminds us of the free gift God has given to all of us: salvation. It's the best gift of all because it allows us to have a relationship with Him. While we can't do anything to earn this gift, we can choose whether or not to receive it. We can choose to accept Jesus into our lives and take the free gifts of grace and faith that He gives. Ask your Small Group Leader, parent, or trusted friend what salvation means to them. Then, consider whether you've accepted this free gift to connect with God in your own life.

“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

JOHN 12:26 NIV

DAY 4

Has anyone ever asked you to do something you know they wouldn't do themselves? If they have, then you probably know how frustrating that is! The best kinds of leaders are the ones who are willing to set the example and pave the way by going before you. When someone does that, aren't you more likely to follow their lead? Jesus is that kind of leader! He calls us to serve and to follow Him, but not before setting the example of serving and following God Himself. Look up Matthew 20:25-28 on your phone or in a Bible. What else does Jesus teach about being both a servant and a leader?

“Do everything in love.”

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14 NIV

DAY 5

Don't you hate having to do things you don't want to do? Maybe chores, homework, extra practices? When we have to do things we really don't like, often we do them with a bad attitude. Even though we're all guilty of it, this verse reminds us to do everything in love. That includes your chores, your homework, interacting with your siblings and friends, listening to your parents, being respectful to your teacher—everything! Because when we do things in love (especially things we don't like to do!), we become a little bit more like Jesus. What is something that you know you have to do but don't want to do? Pray and ask God to help you to do it in love this week.
