

Commitment means making a plan and putting it into practice.



DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

This month is all about commitment which is making a plan and putting it into practice. Long distance runners know this. They understand you can't run a marathon without training. You can't go from sitting on the couch one minute to running 26.2 miles without any preparation. It takes practice.

Faith, following Jesus every day, kind of works the same way. If we want to grow a stronger faith, a faith that actually makes a difference, we need a plan. And once we have a plan, we need to actually execute or practice that plan.

Today's verse reminds us to run, or to keep practicing our faith, with the end in mind. Just like runners keep going toward the finish line, we need to keep going, to keep practicing what matters most.

DAY 2

Read Proverbs 16:3

To practice something means to perform an activity or exercise a skill repeatedly in order to improve. In the space below, write down a few things you practice in order to get better:

Circle one of your examples from above. When do you practice what you've circled? How often? Have you ever thought about making a practice plan?

We practice to get better at all kinds of things. The same is true of our faith! We can grow closer to God with practice. But it starts with a plan. It starts with a commitment. **This month, we'll take a look at four practical ways we can grow in our faith as we HEAR from God, PRAY to God, TALK about God, and LIVE for God.**

Write the words of today's verse on separate cards. If you have a set of stairs in your home or apartment complex, place a card on each step in order of the verse. Then practice repeating the verse as you hop from step to step. If you don't have access to stairs, spread the cards out on the floor and repeat the verse as you hop.





DAY 3

Read Matthew 22:37-38

Jesus said that loving God is the first and most important commandment. It's the number one thing you can do. In fact, you could say that loving God is the greatest thing you can do. How do you show God you love Him? By obeying Him. When we obey God, it's like saying, "God, I trust that your way is best."

What is one thing you know God wants you to do that's hard? Maybe it's telling the truth. Maybe it's being kind to your sister. Maybe it's listening instead of interrupting. Write your answer on a piece of paper, fold it in half and write today's date on the outside. Hold it in your hand as you pray and ask God to help you show Him how much you love Him by doing what He's asked.

Place this folded piece of paper in a balled-up pair of socks. The next time you open that pair of socks and read your note, ask yourself, "How am I doing with this? Am I obeying God and showing Him that I love and trust Him?"

Keep practicing what matters most.

DAY 4

Read Matthew 22:39-40

Jesus followed up on the first and greatest command with a second that is just as important. Love others. How? As you would love yourself. We show God we love Him by loving others. But that takes a lot of practice. And truthfully, we won't always get it right.

It is easier to love others, though, when we remember just how much we are loved. God loves you, always, even when you mess up. He always forgives, He's always patient and kind. He is always there to listen when we need help.

Fill in the answers below. Then copy each letter to the same numbered square to complete the phrase at the bottom.

Short for Abraham (also our 16th President)

to make musical sound with your voice

1 2 3

12 7 9 5

2 + 2 =

the back part of your foot

4 10 13 11

6 3 3 8

Of great weight; difficult To move

6 3 1 14 15

Jesus said, " 8 10 14 3 15 10 13 11

9 3 7 5 6 2 10 11 1 12

15 10 13 11 12 3 8 4

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DAY 1

Read Matthew 7:24-25

What happens if you build an elaborate castle near the edge of the water at the beach? Yep, the tide will take that beautiful creation down in no time.

God has given us His word (the Bible) to show us how much He loves us. When we read it and follow what it says, we will be like a wise man who built his house on a firm foundation. Jesus spoke these words to remind us that it's not enough just to hear them. **A wise man follows through in obedience.**

Think about your caregivers. When they ask you to do something, is it enough simply to listen? NO! When your mom asks you to clean up your room, it doesn't matter if you hear her, it matters if you get busy cleaning up!

Find a smooth rock outside and write Matthew 7:24-25 on one side. On the other, write OBEY. Place your rock next to your bed as a reminder to practice hearing from God this week and then following through with what He teaches you in obedience so you will be wise.

DAY 2

Read Matthew 7:26-27

Yesterday we learned that when we read God's word and put it into practice, we will be wise! But the opposite is true. If we read God's word and then turn around and do our own thing, God says we will be like fools!

God wants us to build our lives on the Rock, on Jesus! But it's more than just trusting Jesus as our Savior. Being a follower of Jesus requires us to actually follow Jesus. To do life the way He tells us to live.

Look up the following verses. On a separate piece of paper, write down what Jesus is asking you to do in your own words.

- Matthew 5:43-44
- Matthew 6:1-4
- Matthew 7:1-2

Pick one of the sentences you've written and ask God to help you do what **He says this week so you can be wise instead of foolish!**



DAY 3

Read Hebrews 4:12

Do you know what a double-edged sword is? It's a sword that cuts both ways. Romans used these weapons in battle. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that God's word is alive, that means it's constantly moving and active. When we read God's word, it has the power to cut right into our hearts, showing us what's really inside of us. It helps to point out any wrong thoughts or attitudes. When you spend time reading God's word, it can help you see the things you need to change.

With help from an adult, grab a piece of cardboard, some foil and a sharpie or permanent marker. Ask an adult to cut the cardboard into the shape of a sword. Cover your cardboard sword in foil. Write out HEBREWS 4:12 on the side of your sword with the marker.

Practice hearing from God.



DAY 4

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Second Timothy was written by the missionary Paul to his student, Timothy. Paul wrote to encourage him and make sure he was prepared to teach others to follow God. Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him the scriptures as a child. Paul is reminding him to stay true to what he's learned.

God-breathed means this is the very word of God.

It's useful for teaching us what's _____.

E U T R

It's useful for correcting our _____.

I A S M K T E S

It's useful for training us to do what is _____.

G H T I R

Each time you read God's word, you can look to answer these three questions.

- ➔ What is true?
- ➔ What does God say I should do?
- ➔ What does God say I shouldn't do?

Thank God for giving you His word to show you what's true, what you should do and what you shouldn't do.

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DAY 1

Read Luke 11:2

One of the ways we can grow in our faith is to practice praying or talking to God. Jesus actually gave us a model prayer to follow. You can read it in Luke 11. From the start of His prayer, Jesus reminds us who we are talking to! This is the God of all creation. The one who made you and sent His only Son, Jesus, so you could have a relationship with Him now and forever. God is holy. That means He is worthy of all honor and praise.

But God is also available to us. While you might go days without thinking about God, God is always thinking about you. In a very busy and loud world where it's hard sometimes to get someone else's attention, God is never distracted. He is always ready to listen when you pray.

Practice praying to God right now. Write down some things you know to be true about God in the space below. Then, turn off all distractions—silence your phone or video game, take off your headphones and focus, knowing that God is completely focused on listening to you too.

DAY 2

Read Luke 11:3

One of the most amazing things about God is that while He is big enough to be in charge of all creation, He is personal enough to know you inside and out. He even knows how many hairs are on your head! And He wants to hear from you.

Did you know that you can ask God to provide what you need? It's true! You can ask God to take care of you, each day. But there's a difference between praying for what you want (like a hoverboard) and what you need (like food or shelter).

Play some quiet music and grab a piece of paper and some colored pencils or markers. Write "God Is" in the center of the page and complete that statement any way you choose. As the music plays, write or draw pictures of things you need (both things you can hold in your hand, like food or shelter and things you can't, like wisdom to make a tough decision or help with a bad attitude). **Then connect each request to the "God Is" statement in the center with different colors and types of lines to create a prayer web.**



DAY 3

Read Luke 11:4

We all mess up. Nobody that you see in the world around you is perfect including you. That's why we need to seek forgiveness and ask for help to do what is right.

But why? Why do we need to ask for forgiveness? Doesn't God promise to always love us?

The answer is yes! Nothing can make God love you less. But the reason you still need to be honest (to confess) what you've done and ask for forgiveness is the same reason your Mom or Dad ask you to say you're sorry to your brother or sister. Because you've hurt that relationship. Sure, you'll still be brothers or sisters but you won't be as close. Admitting when we're wrong and asking God to forgive us brings us closer to God.

So if there someone you've hurt? Is there someone you need to say, "I'm sorry" to? **If so, stop everything you're doing and go make it right. Then tell God you're sorry too.**

Practice praying to God.



DAY 4

Read Ephesians 6:18

One of the amazing truths about following God is that He is always there, ready to listen and help. And while we cannot see Him, we can trust that He hears us and that He will answer us. So how do we pray "at all times" like today's verse reminds us?

Maybe it's as simple as making a plan, a plan that already fits into our daily routine. Here are just a few ideas:

- ➔ Rise and shine prayers: Right after your alarm goes off and before your feet hit the floor, pray for guidance. "God, lead me to follow you today."
- ➔ Clean up prayers: As you take shower and get clean on the outside, ask God to help you clean up your inside as He forgives you. "God, forgive me today for _____."
- ➔ Ride along prayers: On the way to school, ask God to help you make wise choices and go His way today. "God, show me the right way to go."
- ➔ Goodnight, sleep tight prayers: As you lay your head down to catch some "zzz's," thank God for watching over you and for all the blessings He brought your way that day. "God, thank you for today."

What are some other "routine" prayers you might pray?

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DAY 1

Read 1 Timothy 4:10-11

What was the last awesome thing that happened to you? Maybe you got something cool for your birthday! Maybe your grandmother was sick but now she's better. Maybe you had pizza and ice cream in the cafeteria for lunch!

When something awesome happens, we want to talk about it! It's fun to share exciting news with our friends and family. Guess what? We have the greatest, most amazing, most life changing news ever! Jesus came to make a way for us to have a relationship with God, forever! When we put our trust in Him, He promises that relationship starts right now, here on earth. That's literally the best news ever. As our verse reminds us, Jesus is the Savior of all people.

Part of our job as Jesus followers is to share this good news, to talk about Jesus. Now that might seem a little awkward. I mean, it's one thing to tell your friend that there's pizza in the cafeteria. Talking about Jesus feels like a whole other thing.

Did you know that you can ask God to help you? It's true. As you pray today, ask God to help you see opportunities to bring Jesus into the conversation. Ask Him to show you the people He wants you to talk to about Him and the courage to speak up.

DAY 2

Read 1 Timothy 4:13

All month long, we've been talking about commitment; making a plan and putting it into practice. When it comes to growing our faith, we've looked at some specific practices to help us along the way. This week is all about talking. We can grow in our faith when we talk about God with our friends. One big way this happens is at church within your small group!

When you look up verses, when you play fun games, when you repeat the bottom line, when you work with a friend to put the memory verse words in order, your faith is growing. You're becoming stronger as you learn to follow Jesus. That's why small groups are so important.

Can you name some of the kids in your group at church? Do you know your leader's name? If not, make a plan this week to pay attention. Try to learn one new thing about someone in your group and about your group leader. **Spend some time thanking God for your church and the friends and leaders you see each week!**



DAY 3

Read Matthew 16:15-16

You'll face lots of big questions as you grow up. Questions like:

- What will I be when I grow up?
- Where will I live?

But the number one most important question is this: Who do you say that Jesus is? Your answer to this question determines everything. Is Jesus just a nice guy who did some nice things and taught some nice lessons thousands of years ago? Or is Jesus who Peter recognized Him to be, the Son of the living God, the one who came to make a way for us to have a relationship with God forever?

One of the best ways you can grow in your faith is by talking about what you believe with others. So this week at church, tell your small group leader about this verse. Ask your leader how he or she would answer it and start a discussion in your small group. Remember, there may be kids in your group who are just beginning to learn about Jesus! This could be an awesome opportunity to share with them what you know.

Practice talking about God.

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DAY 4

Read Matthew 28:19-20

When you're with your friends, what kind of things do you talk about?

- Video games
- School or homework
- Birthdays

We talk about all kinds of things with our friends because the best kind of friends are the ones who we can just be ourselves with! The kind of friends that will listen when we're frustrated, celebrate when we've done a great job and encourage when we're down.

Jesus gave His followers one big important command: to tell others about Him. But that command wasn't just for those Jesus followers we read about in Matthew. We are called today in 2021 to talk to our friends about Him too.

Sharing what you believe is one big way to practice your faith. And who knows, you might be the first person to tell someone about Jesus!

Who can you tell? **Ask God to help you have the courage to begin a conversation about faith.** Talk to your parents about inviting that friend to church and then lunch afterwards so you can talk about what you learned.

PARENT CUE

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DAY 1

Read Ephesians 5:1-2

Fill in the blanks with your name below. Then read this verse aloud along with the blanks.

“ _____, you are a child that God dearly loves.

So follow His example.

Lead a life of love, just as Christ did.

He loved you, _____.

He gave himself up for you.

He was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.” Ephesians 5:1

(That last sentence might see a bit confusing. It’s a reminder that Jesus took our place by taking the punishment for the wrong things we do when we died on the cross. **And He rose again so that we could have a relationship with God forever when we put our trust in Him.**)

DAY 2

Read 1 Timothy 4:12

Name some things you cannot wait to do when you are older. Say them out loud or write them in the space below.

ART: Provide a box for kids to write their answers in.

Maybe you’re thinking, man, I cannot wait to drive. I cannot wait to finish school! I cannot wait until I have my own refrigerator that I can fill up with my favorite ice cream that no one else eats except me!

While you might have to wait for the stuff you’ve listed above, there is one big thing you don’t have to wait for. When it comes to following God, you can start right now. You can set an example for others, even as an 8- or 9-year-old. You can choose to do the right thing, even when it’s hard. You can tell the truth. You can be kind even when the other person is unkind. You can listen and help. There are so many ways you can practice living for God, right now.

Ask God to help you today to make choices that honor Him. Remember that others (even those who are older) are watching your example as you practice living for God!



DAY 3

Read 1 Timothy 4:8

Set a timer for one minute. Complete the following tasks, resetting the timer for one minute for each one:

- ➔ Sit ups
- ➔ Squats
- ➔ Star jumps
- ➔ Push ups
- ➔ Jogging in place

Are you tired? What might happen if you kept doing that routine, day after day, week after week, increasing the time by one minute each week? Would you get stronger? Absolutely!

Today's verse reminds us that training the body has value but being godly is even better! We've been learning all month long that we can grow in our faith (and become godlier, more like Jesus) when **we practice hearing from God, praying to God, talking about God** and living for God. And when we live for God, it will make a difference right now and forever in heaven.

Practice living for God.



DAY 4

Read Mark 12:43-44

When is a little actually a lot?

Imagine standing with Jesus across from the spot where everyone dropped off their offering. You watch as several rich men drop in large sums with lots of showing off. Then a poor widow (a woman whose husband has died) walks up and quietly places two small coins in the box.

Who gave more? Which amount cost more?

The widow, of course. Those two small coins cost the widow far more than the large amount the wealthy men gave. The rich men gave out of all their extra. They still had plenty leftover, so it wasn't a sacrifice for them. But this widow, by giving all she had, showed that she trusted God to take care of her.

You might not think you have that much to give. But you do. Because this isn't just about money. Every time you are generous, every time you share, every time you listen or go out of your way to help, you are living for God.

As you practice living for God this week, ask yourself: **Is this honoring God?**

Remember, every little choice you make to live for God, points others to know Him too!