

**AVPC**

# **GROWTH CHECK**

**FLOURISHING GUIDE  
(4 WEEKS)**

**HOW TO:**

**FLOURISH**

**AS A DISCIPLE!**

# HOW TO FLOURISH AS A DISCIPLE...

AVPC wants to encourage everyone to *lean* into their faith and *grow* in their spiritual maturity. In short, our prayer is that you would become everything God dreams!

We have created this booklet with 4 weeks of Flourishing Exercises to serve you in this aim. We encourage you to focus on one week at a time and participate in the activities outlined. If possible, share this with someone in your home or community (via the internet/phone, etc.).

May you discover that God has already been preparing you for this special time he wants to *share with you*. You practicing these exercises over the upcoming weeks means you are taking your relationship with Jesus seriously!

May you find your strength and peace in the one who holds *the whole the world in his hands!*

LET US FLOURISH TOGETHER!!!!

**“WITHOUT SOLITUDE IT IS  
VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE A  
SPIRITUAL LIFE . . . WE DO NOT  
TAKE THE SPIRITUAL LIFE  
SERIOUSLY IF WE DO NOT SET  
ASIDE SOME TIME TO BE  
WITH GOD AND LISTEN TO HIM.”**

**~HENRI NOUWEN**

# PREPARATION

Silence is a way of waiting, watching and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in our midst. Solitude gives us the opportunity to rest in God; to let go and surrender and find REST in God's grace.

Enter into a brief time of silence and solitude in order to still your heart and clear your mind so you can become attentive.

# 1. ENGAGING WITH GOD

## THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**

(Matthew 22:34-39)

## WHAT IS A FLOURISHING DISCIPLE?

A flourishing disciple is someone who grows in their love for the Lord through their:

- **Head:** They know more of God through his Word.
- **Heart:** They grow in intimacy with Jesus and in the likeness of Him.
- **Hands:** They live their faith out in their daily lives.

One way to help you grow more into the image of Christ in areas in which you may be lacking is to develop a personal design for discipleship.

There are **four components** of design for discipleship – this week we will work on:

### **#1 Engaging with God.**

The following are *some* examples of ways to *Engage with God* (Spiritually): Prayer / Fasting  
Journaling / Scripture Reading / Meditation  
Scripture Memorization / Singing / Praising God  
Listening to Christian Music

## **YOUR ASSIGNMENT**

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Choose one or two activities from above and write down specifically what you plan on doing (i.e. daily prayer, read a specific book of the Bible). Jot down what you do each day and try to share what you are discovering with someone.

We are praying for you as you journey forward as a flourishing disciple.

**GOD IS INFINITELY PATIENT.  
HE WILL NOT PUSH HIMSELF INTO  
OUR LIVES. HE KNOWS... HE HAS  
GIVEN US OUR FREEDOM.  
BUT IF WE INVITE HIM WITH  
ATTENTION... WITH SILENCE, HE  
WILL SPEAK TO OUR SOULS, NOT  
IN WORDS OR CONCEPTS, BUT IN  
THE MYSTERIOUS WAY THAT LOVE  
EXPRESSES ITSELF -  
BY PRESENCE.**

**~M. BASIL PENNINGTON**

# PREPARATION

Silence is a way of waiting, watching and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in our midst. Solitude gives us the opportunity to rest in God; to let go and surrender and find REST in God's grace. Try to not evaluate this time for what you hear or feel...it's just about making yourself available to God.

Enter into a brief time of silence and solitude in order to still your heart and clear your mind so you can become attentive. Maybe set a short timer (2-5 minutes) and BE STILL...

# 2. ENGAGING WITH KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH

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The New Testament word “disciple” literally means “a learner.” Christians are called to a careful study of the Bible. This will help us acquire the knowledge that we need in order to do what God has call us to do. Jesus said, *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:31–32)

Christians are to study God’s word to learn his revealed knowledge. **If we are to proclaim the message, we must know what that message is.** We owe *it* to each other, we owe *it* to other churches, and we owe *it* to the world to give a clear articulation of our faith.

How do you want to **engage** with scripture to **aid** in your growth?

Here are some examples of ways to engage with **knowledge** and **truth**:

Bible Study – Listening to Sermons – Studying in groups through the Bible App – Religious Articles – YouTube – Reference Books – CDs/DVDs – Create Lessons – Blogs – Podcasts

## YOUR ASSIGNMENT

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Choose an activity from below to work on this week or design an activity of your own that will help you grow in knowledge and truth.

- Choose a book of the Bible – read through it, take notes, and write questions in a notebook.
- Make a list of and examine all passages in the Bible about truth
- Read an article about the characteristics of leadership as seen in Jesus.
- Using the internet, create a lesson on a topic of your choice.

These are just some ideas to get you started.

We are praying for **you** as you continue your journey forward as a *flourishing disciple*.

**"WE ARE IN OUR VERY ESSENCE  
A SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY  
GATHERED AROUND THE  
PRESENCE OF CHRIST.  
  
WHAT WE DO FLOWS OUT OF  
WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST."**

**~RUTH HALEY BARTON**

# PREPARATION

We are called first and foremost *to be with Jesus* and by virtue of our relationship with Jesus we come into relationship with each other. Our focus is not so much on our direct relationship with each other, but to be in a life-transforming relationship with Jesus. In turn this will impact our relationships with each other. Our priority is to recognize and respond to the transforming power of Jesus in our midst.

As you enter into a brief time of silence and solitude in order to still your heart and clear your mind remember community begins *with Jesus* and His invitation *to be with HIM*.

# 3. ENGAGING WITH OTHERS

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Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, **into Christ**, from whom the whole body, *joined and held together* by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

(Ephesians 4:19-20)

## BUILT UP IN LOVE...

During the past couple weeks, we have been **engaging with God** and **engaging with knowledge and truth** as we continue our spiritual growth journey.

Our paths may not be exactly the same, but **we all need to grow** in the knowledge of God and spiritual growth takes the discipline of daily Bible study and prayer. It is also very important to learn from one another.

We grow stronger when we are together. That's why we need one another to bear spiritual **fruit** and to spiritually **mature**.

So how can we engage with others during this challenging time?

The following are *some* examples of ways to *Engage with Others* (Relationally): Mentoring / Intercessory Prayer / Group Prayer / Phone Time or FaceTime with family/friends / Virtual Group Study

## YOUR ASSIGNMENT

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This week chose an activity from below to help you engage with others:

- Twice this week, converse with someone about what you are **reading** in the Bible.
- Ask a friend to **pray daily** for your growth in the *knowledge & application* of the Bible.
- Call a church partner to **encourage** and strengthen their spiritual growth!
- Take part in a Prayer Group or Virtual Study.

We are continuing in our prayers for you as you journey forward in becoming a flourishing disciple.

**"SURRENDER IS SOMETHING THAT  
IS DONE TO US, MORE THAN  
SOMETHING WE DO OURSELVES  
... NONE OF US CAN ENGINEER  
OUR OWN TRANSFORMATION –  
OR IT WOULD NOT BE  
TRANSFORMATION AT ALL  
BUT MERELY COSMETIC SURGERY  
TO MAKE US THINK WELL OF  
OURSELVES."**

**~ RICHARD ROHR**

# PREPARATION

In your preparation today, make yourself available to God by stilling your heart and mind by saying the prayer below slowly-several times until you are ready to move into our focus for this week.

“God for me, I call you Father.

God alongside me, I call you Jesus.

God within me, I call you Holy Spirit...

(then close with the following:)

Come and give the grace needed so You can do the work needed in me so I may *flourish* in **faith**, **hope**, and **love** as your precious child.”

# **4. ENGAGING IN REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES**

## **THE APPLICATION PRINCIPLE**

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**I**n the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself.

(James 2:17)

## **APPLYING WHAT YOU ARE LEARNING TO REAL LIFE...**

During the past few weeks, we have been growing by engaging with God, engaging with knowledge and truth, and engaging with others. This week, we will focus on the types of experiences we can have in order to foster growth. The work of nourishing your faith can and should be joyful work. It should be filled with enrichment and celebration.

Faith is an **activity**, something that has to be **applied**.

So how can we engage in real life experiences?

Below are some examples of ways to engage with experiences (experiential):

Learn by Doing / On-line workshop / Simple Obedience / Praying for Others / Fruitfulness in Ministry / Serving Others / Exposure to New Realities

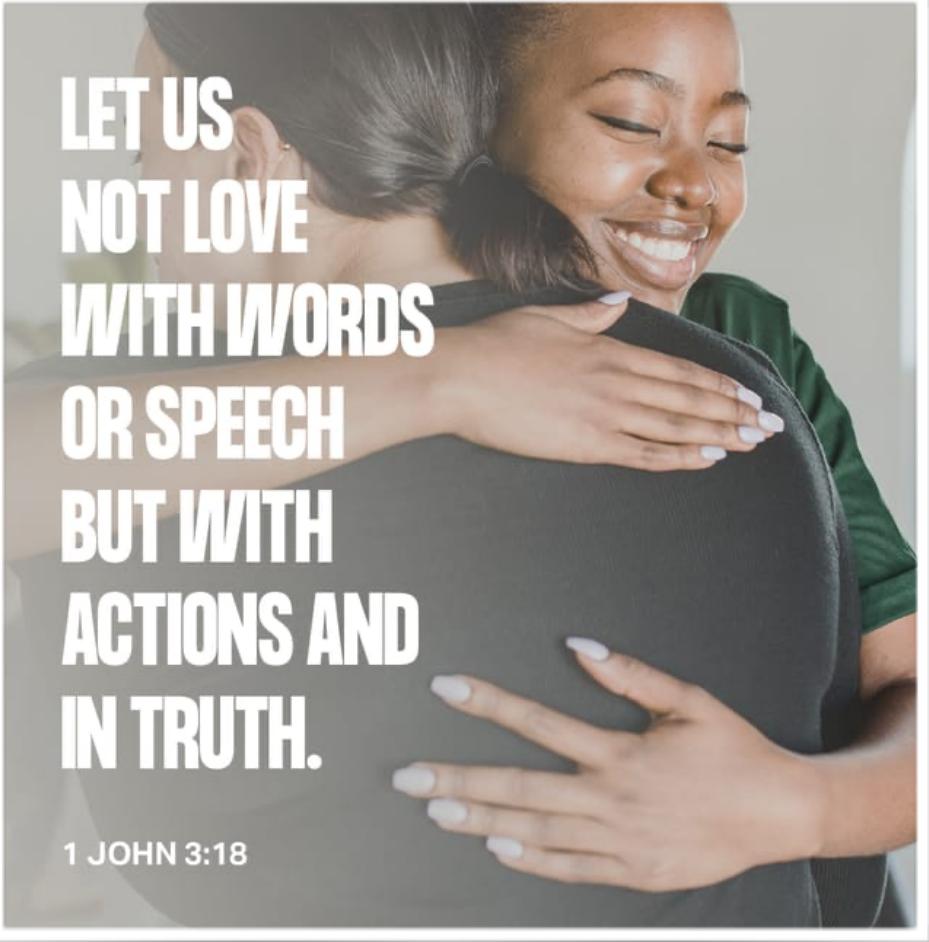
## YOUR ASSIGNMENT

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Choose an activity to work on this week that will help you engage with real life experiences:

- Spend time each day **praying with** someone.
- **Be still** and **listen** to what God has planned for you and then **obey**.
- Become part of a new group – **virtually** – to learn something new.
- Prepare and **present a lesson** on a section from the Bible for a small group.

Pray you will continue to lean into the journey God has for you in becoming a flourishing disciple.



**LET US  
NOT LOVE  
WITH WORDS  
OR SPEECH  
BUT WITH  
ACTIONS AND  
IN TRUTH.**

1 JOHN 3:18