

SIMPLE LIVING

FINDING
JOY
IN JESUS



Finding Joy IN THE SIMPLE GOSPEL AGAIN

How to Pray:
the Beginner's
Guide

God's Design
for Worship
& Praise
by Elisabeth Grisa

Witness
for Mortals
by Pastor Mike



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SIMPLE LIVING CONVERSATION MONDAY NIGHTS | 7PM | ON ZOOM

Are you interested in hearing more from others on one of the mini-mag topics? Join in for a 30-minute Simple Living Conversation on Monday nights at 7pm to dig deeper into these practical topics. Feel free to tune in one week or every week! Register online to get the Zoom link

➤ elmbrook.org/simpleliving

If you're already connected with a life group, use the discussion questions to continue the conversation!

➤ elmbrook.org/discussion

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This magazine, or mini-mag, is a resource and guide to further your journey toward Simple Living and finding joy in your relationship with Jesus. Here are some important things to note along the way:

1. If you are using the mini-mag digitally - on a phone, laptop, or tablet - all the links noted in bold & underlined are clickable. This means that simply tapping on "elmbrook.org" or "Read More" will take you to a webpage with more.
2. If you've printed the mini-mag, we've put QR codes next to any resource that you may want to access or read more. For more on how to use QR codes, read "What's a QR code?" below!

3. If you're connected with a life group, or bible study, the discussion questions are an amazing companion resource. They're available on the Simple Living webpage - elmbrook.org/simpleliving. They will help you process, wrestle with, and deepen your understanding of each of these topics. Honestly, we could do a whole series on each topic, but that would take awhile. Use the questions to apply each topic to your life in ways that simply listening and reading will never be able to do. Life groups, consider pausing your current content for 8 weeks and using the questions in your weekly meetings.

We hope you not only enjoy this resource, but that it may be a catalyst to help you thrive!

ELMBROOK BOOKSTORE

There are many great recommended resources on the following pages. If you are interested in digging deeper into any of the books, check out our very own Elmbrook Bookstore, located in the Chapel Lobby. All of the books listed, and more, are available for purchase.

WHAT'S A QR CODE?

Throughout this magazine you will see lots of white boxes filled with smaller black boxes. This is a QR code. These codes can be scanned by a smart phone and take you directly to the website where each article or resource is found.

1. Open the camera app on your smart phone
2. Hover above the code and watch for a prompt from your phone to visit the website.



Q&A SIMPLE LIVING

WITH
ANDREW JOHNSTON



For centuries, the church has followed Jesus's example laid out on the New Testament pages. But this counter-cultural lifestyle, at times, can feel difficult or overwhelming to put into practice. Pastor Andrew Johnston answered some questions about this series - the why, what, and how of Simple Living.

ANDREW, WHY ARE WE ENTERING INTO THIS SERIES ON SIMPLE LIVING?

In the past few years, there has been a trend to simplify our lives. Whether it is getting rid of clutter, simplifying our calendars, or minimizing distractions, these trends have gained a lot of traction and popularity. There is a freedom found in simplicity. I think the same can be said of religion. Generally, people can find religion taxing, complicated, and challenging to navigate. However, Jesus shows us that following him can be a simple and joy-filled experience as we begin to root our lives in him. And so, this series is really a journey of how we can follow Jesus.

WHAT TOPICS OR FAITH PRACTICES WILL WE BE COVERING?

We will tackle eight practices the church has used for the last 2,000 years to understand and know Christ.

We are going to talk about how to read and study scripture, how to pray, how and why to be generous, how we should think and practice worship, why Christian community is so essential, why serving and witnessing create so much joy, and lastly, how to persevere in your faith for the long haul.

HOW WILL THESE PRACTICES HELP US AS CHRISTIANS?

Sometimes these topics have been said to be habits or disciplines of the Christian life. When you give yourself over to a discipline or habit, it begins to shape you. It shapes the way you think. It impresses on the emotions of your heart. It begins to give you a new orientation in life and becomes this galvanizing force to bring your life together in the pursuit of following Jesus.

These simple practices allow us to live out what Jesus says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength."

WHAT IF I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT A SPECIFIC TOPIC?

One of the things I am most excited about in the series is the resources that will be available following each week. We will have free ebook downloads from Mel Lawrenz, sermon discussion groups to take the conversation further down the road, or my personal favorite, this digital mini-mag. This Simple Living mini-mag will give you reading and resources on each of the topics covered in the series and show you several ways this topic can impact your faith life.



▶ SCRIPTURE

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

WRITTEN BY
MEL LAWRENZ

Excerpt from
"How to Understand the Bible:
A Simple Guide"

See Mel's Bible study page
"The Bible in Everyday Life"
a guide for personal Bible reading & study.

▶ [Click Here](#)

FREE EBOOKS AVAILABLE
APRIL 11-15

▶ [How to Understand the Bible:
A Simple Guide](#)

▶ [How to Study the Bible:
A Practical Guide](#)

It is fair to ask the question: "How will my life be better if I understand the Bible better?" because it certainly is possible to own a Bible, carry a Bible, read the Bible, listen to Bible teachings and sermons, and neglect working to understand what the Bible actually means. It is worth everything to understand the Bible better.

First, understanding the Bible leads to a fruitful life. The very first words of the very first Psalm say this:

"Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day & night.
That person is like a tree planted by streams
of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers."
Psalm 1:1-3

We need to be intentional about what kind of people we are. Do we want to be "planted" in a place of health and fruitfulness or wander in sin and wickedness?

One day Jesus taught that understanding and applying his words leads to a stable life.

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."
Matthew 7:24-25

Jesus's words are at the core of the word of God, but they must be understood and lived. Building your house on the sands of human opinion,

popular sentiment, or arbitrary expertise leads to one outcome only... to be washed away.

The apostle Paul explains how the word of God leads to a quality life.

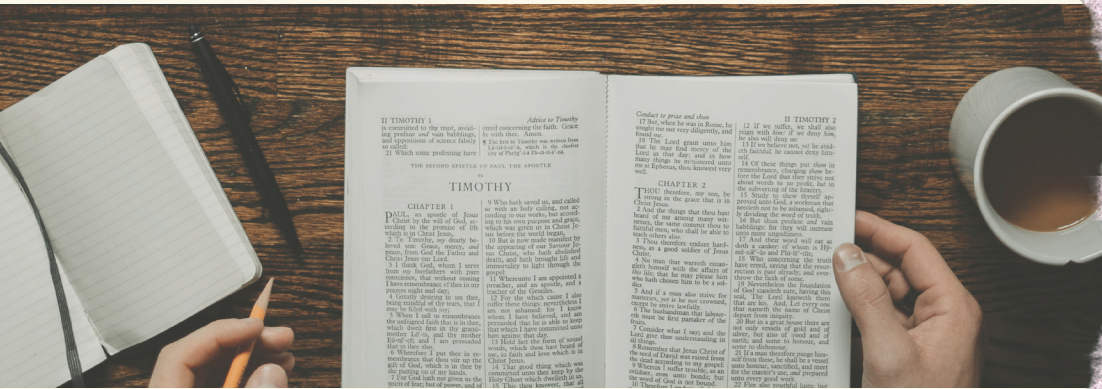
"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
2 Timothy 3:16-17

What an enormous blessing it is to have Holy Scripture, breathed out by God, which does these four things:

- 1 Teaching (that is, telling us the truth),
- 2 Rebuking (that is, telling us when we're off track in our lives),
- 3 Correcting (that is, getting us back on track), and
- 4 Training in righteousness (that is, helping us stay on track). This is quality control for our lives. It is God speaking to us in all candor, honesty, support, and confrontation. It's the firm hand of discipline with the gentle touch of love.

Love is really why we have Scripture—why God breaks the silence and silences the noise.

The law of the Old Testament is God patiently teaching human beings about holiness. The prophets screamed their warnings and proclaimed great promise—both acts of love. And then came God's speech through his Son. In Jesus, we get truth, which is greater than just "truths." The Son is radiance, glory, purification, authority. Those red letters we read in the Gospels are not moralistic maxims. They are piercing beams of light.



RESOURCES

BIBLE READING PLANS

YouVersion:

How to Start Reading the Bible

➤ [Click here](#)

The New Testament in 90 Days

➤ [Click here](#)

Bible Project:

The Bible

Read through the Bible in a year

➤ [Click Here](#)



HOW TO READ THE BIBLE SERIES

BY BIBLE PROJECT

➤ [Click here to watch](#)



THE BIBLE STUDY

BY ZACH WINDAHL

Studying the Bible can be overwhelming. This book combines imagery, messages, and questions to help you study the Bible in a year.



BOOKS BY MEL LAWRENZ

ELMBROOK'S TEACHING PASTOR

Free ebook on Amazon Apr. 10-14.

➤ [How to Understand the Bible](#)
➤ [Click here to download](#)

➤ [How to Study the Bible](#)
➤ [Click here to download](#)

WHY TRUST THE BIBLE?

WRITTEN BY GREG GILBERT Excerpt from Crossway.org

Don't believe everything you read. Everybody knows that.

So why trust the Bible? What can be known about its historical reliability? Even more than other religions, Christianity presents itself as history.

AT ITS HEART, CHRISTIANITY CLAIMS THAT SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY HAPPENED IN THE COURSE OF TIME— SOMETHING CONCRETE, REAL, & HISTORICAL.

In the Bible, the New Testament declares that a man named Jesus was born to a virgin, claimed to be God, did miracles like walking on water and raising people from the dead, was crucified on a Roman cross, then rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to reign as King of the universe. Can we conclude confidently these things are true without simply presupposing the Bible is “the Word of God”?

One way to find out is to approach the New Testament as a collection of historical documents that speak for themselves. But are these documents truly reliable, historically speaking?

Answering that involves a series of questions...

➤ [Read full article here](#)



CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

BY THE VILLAGE CHURCH

Prefer video content to articles? Check out this short video.

➤ [Click link to watch.](#)



PRAYER

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

HOW TO PRAY: THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

WRITTEN BY
ROSS MCCALL

Excerpt from Cru.org

► [Read the full article here](#)



To pray means to communicate with God. That can mean thanking Him, praising Him, confessing something you've done wrong, or expressing a need you have. It can even mean just talking to Him as you would to a friend.

Learning how to pray is really about developing a relationship with God. Relationships are built on moments of connection. Those moments of connection bond you to another person, and many of them center on communication—the words you say and the way you say them. But how do you do that with the God of the universe?

...Even if talking honestly with other people comes very naturally to you, it's understandable

if talking with God feels like a steep learning curve.

This is a practical guide to getting started talking with God, no matter where you are on your spiritual journey.

Here are some questions we will answer:

- What Is Prayer?
- Why Should You Pray?
- How Do You Pray?
- What Should You Pray For?
- What Will Happen When You Pray?
- Ways to Develop Your Prayer Life.

We hope that after reading this guide, you'll feel equipped for your journey with prayer...

WAYS TO WORSHIP GOD DAILY:

Start your day with Him. Read your Bible, listen to worship music, or simply thank Him for another day to live.

Pray. There's a method called ACTS prayer. Begin with:

Adoration: tell God how wonderful He is,
Confession: asking forgiveness for your sins,
Thanksgiving: thanking Him for His goodness
Supplication: make requests to God.

Write down things you're thankful for. By acknowledging the things we're grateful for, we are reminded of God's faithfulness and how He has blessed us.

Enjoy God's creation. The earth was God's canvas. When you're outside, pause and reflect on all that He's created.

Love others. It's not always easy to love everyone, but when we intentionally choose love, we bring honor and delight to God.

Get creative. Whether through art, dance, writing or other creative activities, you can praise & worship God by using the special talents He gave you!

Use your gifts. We each are uniquely gifted with different skills – whether you're a skilled accountant, teacher, parent, politician, doctor, or secretary – when you intentionally use your skills in a way that honors God, you worship Him.



PLACES TO PRAY:

PRAYER CHAIR



PRAYER WALK



IN THE CAR



IN THE SHOWER



OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME, YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE. FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN

Our Father in heaven,

Pray to know God and have a relationship with Him.

hallowed be your name,

Pray out of reverence to God.

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Pray for God to be known around the world.

Give us today our daily bread.

Pray for strength for today.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Pray for healing of your soul, your relationship with God, and your relationship with others.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Pray to overcome the enemy.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Amen

Annotations from Andrew Johnston's sermon notes on the Lord's Prayer

RESOURCES:



ECHO PRAYER APP:

Echo Prayer is a free app that helps you keep track of your prayers, reminds you to pray throughout the day, and lets you share prayer requests with others. Download the app below:

➤ new.echoprayer.com

PRAYER JOURNAL:

Keep a notebook for you to write out prayers to God, or use a special prayer journal, like the Daily Prayer Journal, to prompt you to engage in conversation with God.

➤ [Click here to order!](#)

ELMBROOK PRAYER WALL:

If you have a prayer request, our church family would love to pray for you! Post a prayer request, or pray for others by engaging with the prayer wall.

➤ elmbrook.org/prayerwall

BOOKS BY MEL LAWRENZ

ELMBROOK'S TEACHING PASTOR
available in Elmbrook Bookstore

Free eBook on Amazon April 18-21

Prayers for Our Lives: 95
Lifelines to God for Everyday
Circumstances

➤ [Click here to download](#)

A Book of Prayers for Kids

➤ [Click here to download](#)

A FAVORITE PARK



A COFFEE SHOP



IN A CLOSET/ROOM



AT THE GYM



GENEROSITY

ACTS 20:35B

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

BIBLICAL GENEROSITY DEMONSTRATED

WRITTEN BY TAMI CLARK

PASTOR OF GUEST RELATIONS

During the profound uncertainty of COVID, a letter arrived on my desk. It was from a man named Terry, who was 51, my same age. Terry has severe health issues and was dealing with the trauma of losing both parents in a car accident.

Amongst his grief, Terry was also recovering from triple by-pass surgery. A traveling nurse came to his rooming house in Milwaukee weekly to evaluate his vitals. She deemed his living conditions not suitable due to a bed bug infestation and mold. He needed to move.

Terry moved into an unfurnished lower flat down the street. The stove, microwave, refrigerator, and bed were all stolen. In his letter, Terry said, "I have no family, and I rely on a minimal disabilities benefit. I'm trying to find someone who would be willing to help me."

As God does, if you give Him a moment, he spoke. Scripture came to mind, "What good is

it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:14-17)

It took some determination, but we started to make a dent in Terry's list with generous people's help. It took the generosity of people's time, money, and kindness. Terry met us on the porch, and we'd say a "porch prayer." God was faithful to provide for his every need.

First, we were able to donate a full-size mattress and box spring. Next, Port of Missions in the city gave him a refrigerator, but pick up was delayed due to the warehouse shutting down from Covid. Terry waited patiently, displaying good, godly character. A few weeks went by, and



WAYS TO GIVE:

- Regular tithes at Elmbrook Church
- Compassion Fund of Elmbrook which supports those in need in our congregation
- Elmbrook Harvest Fund which supports local & global ministries and initiatives
- Individual field workers
- Support organizations that you appreciate with time, or donations
- Sponsor a child through World Vision or Compassion
- **Amazon Smile:** donate a percentage of your purchases to an organization you choose if you sign up!
- Offer your time to church or organization
- Babysit for a family for free
- Bring a meal or treat to a friend's house
- Join a short term mission team
- Support Elmbrook's monthly food, supply or blood drives

TITHES & OFFERINGS: YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

WRITTEN BY RAMSEY SOLUTIONS

Whether you grew up putting dollar bills into the collection plate at church every Sunday or the word tithing has got you scratching your head, it's always a good idea to check your attitude toward giving. And that's basically what tithing is—giving!

But that brings up a ton of questions:

WHAT EXACTLY IS TITHING? HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU GIVE? CAN YOU GIVE WHILE YOU'RE IN DEBT? IF YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS AROUND TITHES & OFFERINGS, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE.

Let's dig in so you can experience the joy of giving no matter your financial situation...

Click here for full article





Community Warehouse picked up the fridge and dropped it off at Terry’s house. A few days after that, a microwave appeared on his front porch. Then a few months later, a family from our congregation donated a stove.

Terry is overwhelmed by the generosity he has been shown. He said,

“ YOU DON’T FIND MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO GO OUT ON A LIMB FOR PEOPLE DURING COVID. I’D BEEN LOOKING FOR A WHILE FOR SOMEONE TO HELP, BUT IT SEEMED LIKE NO ONE CARED BECAUSE NO ONE RESPONDED. ”

Responding is to acknowledge there is a need. We are asked to look at generosity not as giving to others but giving to God. When you view giving with Scripture as your basis, it throws open the windows of your heart.

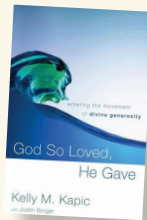
Terry added one last thing to his list - a Bible, one with a leather cover. His is being held together by shipping tape. This latest request shows the full effect of meeting someone’s physical needs – the strengthening of faith.

Dear Terry, your new Bible is in the mail!

GOD SO LOVED, HE GAVE: ENTERING THE MOVEMENT OF DIVINE GENEROSITY

WRITTEN BY KELLY M. KAPIC

The God who created a good and perfect world, but whose world turned from him, has brought restoration through gift: The Father loved the world and gave the Son, and the Father and the Son pour out the gift of the Spirit into the hearts of humanity bringing about praise, hope, and new creation. Those who are united to the Son by his Spirit then find they have received the glorious gift of God’s coming Kingdom. In other words, the Gospel is shaped by giving: God’s generosity buys us out of bondage and brings us into all the blessings of belonging. But the good news is not only that God has made us to be recipients of his grace but also participants in the movement of his divine justice and generosity. Living in God’s gifts, Christians discover



they are free to give themselves. The cross and resurrection of Christ come to shape and define this new life of faith, hope and generosity—a life that is best lived not in isolation but as a community. Throughout the book special attention is given to the relationship between divine generosity and concern for the poor and oppressed. Kapic and Berger encourage readers to not simply discover the immensity of God’s grace, but to enter into the flow of divine generosity as God has invited them to become avenues of his great gifts to the world.

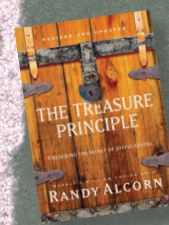
RESOURCES:



GENEROSITY BY BIBLE PROJECT

In the story of the Bible, God is depicted as a generous host who provides for the needs of his guests. However, humans live from a mindset of scarcity and hoard God’s many gifts. In this video, we explore God’s plan for overcoming our selfishness by giving the ultimate gift of himself in the person of Jesus.

[CLICK TO WATCH](#)



THE TREASURE PRINCIPLE BY RANDY ALCORN

Partake in a revolution of radical generosity and freedom from materialism! This bestseller features a personal journaling section; answers to frequently asked questions; and more. Discover how joyful giving brings God glory.



FOR KIDS: FINANCIAL PEACE JR.

Financial Peace Jr. gives parents the tools they need to raise money-smart kids. The kit covers four basic concepts: working, spending, saving and giving.

Even if your financial history hasn’t been perfect, you have the opportunity to teach your child to live differently.

[Click here for more info](#)

WORSHIP

PSALM 96:9

Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

PSALM 95

*"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*

*Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.*

*For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.*

*In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.*

*The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.*

*Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;*

*for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.*

Today, if only you would hear his voice,

*"Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,
where your ancestors tested me;
they tried me, though they had seen what I did.*

*For forty years I was angry with that generation;
I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they have not known my ways.'*

*So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'"*

BLUE = GOD'S CHARACTER | GREEN = OUR RESPONSE

GOD'S DESIGN FOR WORSHIP & PRAISE

WRITTEN BY
ELISABETH GRISA

LAKE COUNTRY
WORSHIP COORDINATOR



I stood like a stiff soldier in the pew, shoulder to shoulder with my family for Elmbrook's Christmas Eve service. The voices of thousands rang out like Christmas bells, reverberating off the wall of the sanctuary, in one accord, singing O Come All Ye Faithful. I saw an elderly woman with her hands raised in worship, her eyes twinkling and her song breaking through the symphony of voices singing, "O come let us adore Him, o come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord." My body tensed, and my voice croaked out the words as I tried to hold back tears that were fighting to burst out. I was an outsider, entirely out of my comfort zone, and yet, I felt something bubbling up inside my spirit that wanted to come out. What was this that I was trying to suppress with all my human will?

So what is the psalmist saying about worship? What is worship? What is praise? Why should we worship and praise God anyway? What's with all the people raising hands and shouting aloud, clapping, and making a scene in church?!

As Timothy Keller puts it, "Worship is the act of ascribing ultimate value to something in a way that energizes and engages your entire being." Worship is meant to be holistic in nature, including your mind, will, emotions, and body. We aren't divided simply into people who worship and people who don't. We all worship something. Put another way, worship is taken

from the word, worthship: what we give worth to, what's important to us. To find out what you value, just take some time to think about what you spend your time doing? What do you spend your money on? What thoughts occupy your mind most often?

Throughout Psalm 95, there is a response on our part that is necessary because of who God is (blue = God's character, green = our response).

Look at verse 1 in Psalm 95. The psalmist tells us that we are to engage our emotions in worship, to sing for joy, shout aloud, come before Him and extol Him with music and song. Why? Because He is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Verse 6 tells us that we are to worship with our will, to bow down, kneel, to submit to Him. Why? Because He is our God, He is the Shepherd, and we are His flock.

The end of verses 7 and 8 speak to the language of reason and thinking: to hear His voice and to accept what He says.

So why on that Christmas Eve did I feel this tension about responding in these ways presented in Psalm 95? Why was I fighting against the very design in which God had made me, in which God has made every human being: worshippers. Years later, after I chose to follow Christ,

I realized this tension was because I had not recognized the true value of who I was supposed to be worshipping. While I attended church all my life, I heard the stories of Jesus, and I knew the do's and don'ts of Christianity; I didn't know the true value and worth of the God I proclaimed to love and serve all my life.

Worshipping God is in our DNA, the very fabric of our being, as God has "set eternity in human hearts," and yet sometimes, we don't truly know the value, beauty, and "worthship" of who God is, what He has done for us, and all He is going to do.

You see, worship must be transformational for it to be true worship. It's not just mind, will, or emotion; instead, it's all three and more, and it changes the way you live. If you robotically affirm doctrine and beliefs, you sing the songs on Sunday like a broken record player without ever experiencing an awakening sense of beauty and joy of who God is. It's not worship. On the other hand, if you go to service and have a mountain-top emotional experience, but it doesn't change the way you live, your character, or your life patterns, it's not worship.

Worship is to see what God is worth and to give Him what He's worth. To see and grasp His worth in such a way that you begin to live in accordance with it. When we do that, we start to sacrifice what others think of us to give Him the glory He is due. We begin to worship Him with our whole being, no matter what it looks like. We start to love others like we never have before. We begin to heal and forgive and experience freedom from bondage in our lives. Worship is transformational, and the psalmist knew that.

A quick word on praise! Praise must require expression. You may feel admiration in your heart, but how are you expressing it to God and the world? That's praise. The Bible has lots to say about praise and how to praise. Here are a few practical insights if you're anything like me and once wondered what on earth is going on during a worship service!

7 Hebrew Words for Praise:

Halal [huh-lal]: to rave, shine, be clamorously foolish. To make merry or boast! Are we willing to look like a fool for God?! Think of David when he danced in his underwear! But maybe let's keep our clothes on in church, people! This word appears 96 times in the Old Testament.

See this word in context in Psalm 35:18

Yadah [Yah-dah]: to lift or throw arms upward in praise and surrender, making a confession to God.

Psalm 42:5

Towdah [Toe-dah]: To lift your hands in thanksgiving for promises not received yet. Often used as a "sacrifice of praise."

Psalm 100:4

Shabach [Shuh-Vakh]: To shout, to address in a loud tone. A loud joyous shout of testimony.

Psalm 47:1.

Barak [Buh-rakh]: To kneel, to bless God as an act of adoration, reverence, and submission.

Psalm 95:6

Zamar [Zah-mare]: To pluck the strings of an instrument, to sing, to play a musical instrument.

Psalm 57:8-9.

Tehillah [The-hill-lah]: Hymns of the spirit or praise. To sing a spontaneous, unrehearsed song of the Lord from your spirit.

Psalm 100:4

TRUE WORSHIP IS MORE THAN SINGING IN CHURCH

WRITTEN BY JOSHUA S HILL

EXCERPT FROM RELEVANT MAGAZINE

There's a divide in the Church. Well, there are plenty of divides in the Church. But one of the most concerning, I think, centers around the idea of worship: It's a divide between those who understand what it means to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) and those who don't.

This division of the Church results in apathetic congregations, and congregations suspected of "charismaticism."

We've all heard claims that "worship isn't just singing." But let's be honest: these words resound with less and less truth when the other aspects of our lives don't reflect any measure of worship at all.

I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT WORSHIP IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE, IF NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT.

As a result, Satan has targeted it directly, profusely and without ceasing. And because of this, it's vital to understand what it really means to worship—and why worship is far more than just singing in church...

Click here for full article



COMMUNITY

1 JOHN 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

EXCERPT FROM CRU.ORG

Okay, so picture this:

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42-47 NASB).

Now, does this sound like your experience of Christian fellowship? Gladness, sincerity, unity, generosity, awe, and wonder are all words that can be used to describe the experience members of the first Christian community enjoyed.

SO, WHAT WORDS WOULD WE USE TO DESCRIBE OUR OWN EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?

Some of us would probably have to use words like boring, shallow, and disappointing. Others might use more positive adjectives like fun, nice, positive ... but what happened to the awe and wonder? Let’s take a look at some of the things we need to do if we want to experience the kind of Christian community that Acts talks about...

[Click here to read full article](#)





KONINIA

WRITTEN BY MEL LAWRENZ TEACHING PASTOR ELMBROOK CHURCH

Fellowship is one of the basic tools in the believer's spiritual growth.

The Greek term koinonia is translated in various passages as "fellowship," "participation," "sharing," "partnership," "communion." The practicalities of koinonia - like sharing material goods, sharing in ministry, being partners in the gospel - are rooted in the spiritual reality of a connection between believers based on their relationship with Christ.

John put it this way:

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:3, 6-7)

The sharing of fellowship includes the unveiling of self to others and the potential for profound and lasting spiritual formation.

Fellowship is knowing and being known. Except for when we feel like hiding, we long to know others and be known by them because we need relationships so desperately. One easy way to answer whether someone is in fellowship is to ask: do they know, and are they known?

To be more concrete, one could ask, is there at least a small circle of people who you know better than you knew them a year ago, and is there a group of people who know you better today than a year ago? If one is in fellowship in the sense of a regular, natural, honest relationship, and if there is an opportunity to disclose the struggles, the needs, the advances, the graces, the failings of day-to-day life, then mutual comprehension will flow quite naturally.

FELLOWSHIP IS KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN.

This is what people mean when they say that their Bible study or their small group is like their family. It is why they will pick up the phone and

ask for prayer when a crisis comes up with these people they know and are known by. It is why they will confess sin there and perhaps nowhere else.

A discipline is involved here. The unveiling of selves ordinarily does not happen quickly. A crisis can indeed strip people down to their true selves and cause them to unite around the mercy of God, or an intensive experience like a mission trip can give people an immersion into the personal lives of others. But ordinarily, the best outcome of fellowship happens with the gradual progression of letting others know the real you and seeking to understand others better. Fellowship is not measured in days or weeks but years or even decades.

RESOURCES



BibleProject Podcast: Solitude & Community

This teaching is called "Solitude & Community". In the New Testament, "church" is the gathering of Jesus's followers into a community of support and worship. But in the life of Jesus, that communal practice is also matched by the habit of regular solitude. What is this practice all about, and why was it so important to Jesus?

► [Listen to the podcast!](#)

LIFE GROUPS AT ELMBROOK CHURCH

We believe they are the best way to grow in your faith and find community. In a Life Group, you'll connect weekly or bi-weekly to discuss the Bible, encourage one another and pray together.

► elmbrook.org/lifegroups

True Community BY JERRY BRIDGES



Fellowship among believers is more than just talking over coffee after church service. Biblical fellowship in New Testament times -or koinoni- had rich and varied meanings...

In True Community, bestselling author Jerry Bridges guides you through koinonia and its implications for today's church. With discussion questions at the end of each chapter, this book will help you dig deeper into what Christian community in the twenty-first century should look like. You will come away with a new appreciation for fellowship, the church, and what God intended the body of Christ to be.

SERVING

ACTS 20:35B

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

PLACES TO SERVE:

IN THE CHURCH:

Serve over the weekend or during the week by supporting ministry and helping individuals connect at Elmbrook. However God has gifted you - whether it be with a love of coffee, a

bright smile, a heart for kids or students, a mind for technology, musical talents, and more - we would love to find a place for you to use those gifts at Elmbrook!

► elmbrook.org/serve

IN THE COMMUNITY:

James Place has five locations in Waukesha & Milwaukee that meet the practical needs of our local communities.

Community Warehouse/Partners in Hope provides Milwaukee's most challenged neighborhoods with home improvement materials. Partners in Hope helps prisoners reenter into society and find sustainable employment.

Care Net Pregnancy Center of MKE. exists to uphold the sanctity of human life and to share the love of Christ with women and their families facing an unplanned pregnancy.

Hope Street Ministry is home to 40 men, women, and children whose lives have been affected by toxic environments where they can live, learn and develop new habits that help people flourish.

International Community Center is a place where volunteers help immigrants learn English, tutor children with school work, and form lasting cross-cultural relationships.

Safe Families for Children Greater Milwaukee Area temporarily hosts children & provides a network of support while parents get back on their feet. There is a variety of ways to serve from hosting children to mentoring parents.

Wisconsin Inmate Education Association (WIEA) gives inmates the opportunity to receive theological training while incarcerated through a partnership with Trinity International University.

And so many more! If you've heard of organizations that have tugged at your heartstrings, reach out and ask about a place to serve!

► elmbrook.org/localpartners

IN THE WORLD:

Pray! Sign up to receive our monthly email of Field Worker Prayer Requests.

Watch your email for information about short-term mission opportunities, including disaster relief efforts.

Participate in our annual Harvest Commitment each October, and give faithfully to Elmbrook's Harvest Fund. This fund is dedicated to the financial support of our field workers around the world and other initiatives that further the cause of Jesus Christ.

► [Donate to the Harvest Fund](#)

RESOURCES:

3 REASONS YOU SHOULD BE SERVING IN YOUR CHURCH

WRITTEN BY PHYLICIA MASONHEIMER EXCERPT FROM PROJECT INSPIRED

Whether you love your church or you're struggling through some church boredom, it's easy to get stuck in a rut. We go through the motions of attending the service, greeting our friends, shaking hands and heading to lunch. Sometimes this goes on for years! But church is more than a social event. It's a place for the body of believers to learn and thrive.

"Am I serving in my church?" For many young people, youth group and the main service are the extent of their interaction with fellow believers. But the church doesn't exist just to pour into us. A growing faith requires action, and that means pouring into others. You should be serving in your church, and here's why...

If this isn't happening in your church experience, you might consider switching churches. But before you do, ask yourself:

➤ [Click here for full article](#)



SERVING AT CHURCH: HOW TO DECIDE WHAT AND WHEN

WRITTEN BY TOMMY LEE EXCERPT FROM CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM

Do you serve at church on top of working and possibly serving with other ministries? A lot of people ask me if I serve at church. Honestly, I wrestle sometimes trying to decide whether I should or not. If this was 10 or 12 years ago, my whole life was spent in the local church serving in our high school and college ministries.

I know this is a question that some people have wrestled with and so I wanted to share a few guidelines that have helped me in the last 10 years.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, NO MATTER WHAT WE DO, OUR SERVICE SHOULD BRING GLORY TO GOD. EVERYTHING WE DO CAN HELP TO ADVANCE THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IN SOME WAY.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| What are your areas of strength, passion, or gifts? | Are you serving to fulfill a need within the church? | Do you feel a leading from God to do this? | Is serving the wisest choice for your life NOW? |

➤ [Click here for full article](#)



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AT ELMBROOK CHURCH

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➤ freeshapetest.com

▶ WITNESS

1 PETER 3:15

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

WITNESS FOR MORTALS

WRITTEN BY
MIKE M.

MISSION PASTOR

Nothing strikes fear into the heart of a follower of Jesus like the word witness. Prayer? No problem. Scripture? I got it. But actually talking to another human being about Jesus? That must be in the fine print somewhere. We're tempted to mimic Dana Carvey's impersonation of George Bush Sr.: "Wouldn't be prudent. Not... gonna... do it."

Part of our problem, though, may lie in our perception of the word witness. Many of us imagine only the most uber-extroverted types striking up conversations with random strangers and somehow, like a skilled salesman, closing the deal like a pro. Although that might be a possibility for a tiny percentage of the population, the rest of us are left hamstrung because we don't know what to do. So we do nothing.

However, Scripture doesn't allow us that option. Thankfully there is a whole spectrum of appropriate ways to approach the concept of witness, and mercifully, there are ways that fit every personality type and temperament. More importantly, Jesus never told us to go out and make converts (I really hate that word) or even get people to pray a prayer. What he did tell us to do is make disciples of himself. This is much less threatening and hopefully much more attainable than personal evangelism because making disciples comprises at least three components, which we all can do for it to be effective:

Relationship: Jesus had an extensive relational network that comprised some of the most notorious folks, so much so that he gained the reputation for being a "friend of sinners and tax-collectors" (Matthew 9:10-17, Mark 2:15-22, Luke 5:29-39). Many of these friends became his followers and went on to join the movement he began. Jesus then spent three years doing life with these disciples, and at the

end of that time, he speaks of their intimate friendship (John 15:15). If we want to make disciples, we may need to start by making some authentic relationships with people who are far from God and disenchanted with the church.

Process: We also need to understand that discipleship doesn't happen instantaneously. Just as Jesus spent three years teaching, training, and modeling the kingdom of God for his followers, we need to accept that our witnessing of Jesus to others will be a process that takes time. Effective disciplers prayerfully and patiently see friends graduate from seeker to believer to follower and ultimately to an influencer of others. This process doesn't take place overnight, and it will inevitably include times of frustration and disappointment. But much like parenting, people who do this task well continue to comfort, encourage, and inspire their friends towards Christ-likeness.

Intentionality: Not only does discipleship not happen instantaneously, but it also doesn't happen automatically. Although it may seem that Jesus was nonchalant and laissez-faire in his approach to discipleship, a closer examination reveals that he was anything but. Jesus very methodically graduated his disciples from observing him do ministry to involving them in ministry to deploying them to do ministry themselves. He took them away for retreats where he would debrief their experiences (Mark 6:30-32, Luke 9:10). Jesus was very systematic in his approach towards helping people follow him, and if we want to help others grow spiritually effectively, we should be too.

Witness doesn't necessarily assume cold-call sharing with strangers, but it does assume something we all can do: intentionally lead friends through a process of growing in Christ-likeness.



RESOURCES:



HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH:

One of the best ways to share God's love with others is by sharing how you have been impacted and changed by God. When you share your story, you give the honor and glory to God. No matter how ordinary or extraordinary you might think your story is, it shows God's character in real and tangible ways. It's your personal account of how God rescued you from sin and death, and it helps others get to know who God is and what He can do. Here are three points of your story to think about:

- 1 **BEFORE.** Think about a theme that was present in your life before Christ. What were you searching for before coming to know Christ (love, popularity, security, attention, etc.)? How did you try to satisfy that inner need (relationships, sex, popularity, drugs or alcohol, money, etc.)? Or what events in your life caused you to consider that there was more to life than what you were currently experiencing? Share briefly about that theme and how you sought to fill that void.
- 2 **HOW.** Share the events or circumstances that led you to Christ as the solution to your problem or satisfaction of that inner need. What was happening at the time? Were there people or circumstances that influenced your decision?
- 3 **SINCE.** How has God's love and forgiveness impacted the way you live? How have your thoughts, attitudes, and emotions changed? Share what your relationship with Him means to you. Remember to be realistic. We still struggle as Christians, and life is far from perfect.

WITNESS

BY BIBLE PROJECT

What does the word witness mean in the Bible? The word "witness" may bring up ideas of someone testifying in a courtroom. It's a simple word, but being a witness carries a lot of responsibility! In fact, one of the ten commandments instructs against being a false witness (Exodus 20:16).

This video from BibleProject helps define what it means to witness and bear witness.

► [Click to watch](#)



FINDING JOY IN THE SIMPLE GOSPEL AGAIN

WRITTEN BY DESMOND HENRY, EXCERPT FROM CHRISTIANITY TODAY

If there's anything COVID-19 has achieved, it is the amplification of our feelings of isolation, fear, anxiety, and rampant uncertainty. Why would we not feel this way when the foundations of our lives have been shaken and the roots of our idolatrous worship have been left exposed?

In Matthew 12:34, Jesus reminds us that out of the overflow of our hearts, our mouth speaks. What have you heard or spoken during this uncertain time? If you're anything like me, your

words have most likely been laced with fear, full of anxiety, and not as life-giving as you'd expect.

AS WE RE-EMERGE FROM COVID-19'S INITIAL IMPACT, HOW WILL WE FIND JOY IN SHARING THE SIMPLE GOSPEL AGAIN?...

► [Click here for full article](#)



THE BRIDGE TO LIFE

BY NAVIGATORS

This tried-and-true resource gives you the Bible verses to explain why we need Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross to solve our greatest problem: separation from God. When you're not sure if friends have surrendered their lives to Christ yet, this is a great way to help them make that decision.

► navlink.org/bridge

PERSEVERANCE

JAMES 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO UNDERSTAND PERSEVERANCE IS THROUGH THE STORIES OF BROTHERS & SISTERS IN CHRIST WHO HAVE FACED TRIALS OF MANY KINDS (JAMES 1:2).

HERE ARE JUST A FEW STORIES THAT HAVE TOUCHED MANY LIVES.

THE HIDING PLACE

WRITTEN BY CORRIE TEN BOOM

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch watchmaker who became a heroine of the Resistance, a survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, and one of the most remarkable evangelists of the twentieth century. In World War II she and her family risked their lives to help Jews and underground workers escape from the Nazis, and for their work they were tested in the infamous Nazi death camps. Only Corrie among her family survived to tell the story of how faith ultimately triumphs over evil.

Here is the riveting account of how Corrie and her family were able to save many of God's chosen people. For 35 years millions have seen that there is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still. Now *The Hiding Place*, repackaged for a new generation of readers, continues to declare that God's love will overcome, heal, and restore.



JEREMY CAMP'S WIFE'S DEATH AT 21 NEARLY COST HIM HIS FAITH IN GOD

WRITTEN BY KARA WARNER
EXCERPT FROM PEOPLE.COM

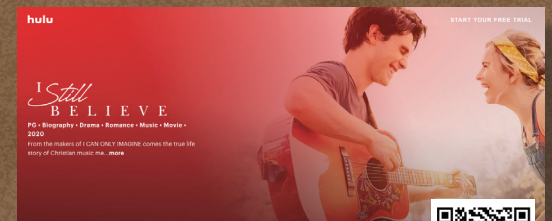
Just as his music career was about to take off, Jeremy Camp suffered a life-changing loss.

Less than four months after marrying the woman he expected to spend his life with, Melissa Henning, she died from ovarian cancer at age 21. Camp was 23 at the time of her death.

"It's the most painful part of my life," says Camp, now 42. "I believed that she was going to be healed and we would have this long story together."

The Indiana native says he was struck by the "purity in her heart for God" when he met Henning in 1999 at a Bible study... After Henning's death, Camp tried to find strength in what she'd told him from her hospital bed.

▶ [Click here for full article](#)



Or, watch "I Still Believe" on Hulu



because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

UNBROKEN: A WORLD WAR II STORY OF SURVIVAL, RESILIENCE, AND REDEMPTION

WRITTEN BY LAURA HILLENBRAND

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.



5 WAYS TO PERSEVERE IN OUR FAITH

WRITTEN BY
PASTOR MATTHEW ATKINS

Someone once said to me that 'If we aren't in a storm, we have either just come out of one or we are about to go into one.' Not the most encouraging of statements I know but Jesus never said that following Him would be easy. Furthermore, I do believe that we are in a spiritual battle and that we need to fight the good fight of the faith (1 Timothy 6:12). We are called to run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12:1), so whatever lies ahead press on and keep going.

Below are 5 ways to help persevere in our faith:

- 1 Draw Near to God
- 2 Hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess
- 3 Consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds
- 4 Not give up meeting together
- 5 Encourage one another

➤ [Click here for full article](#)



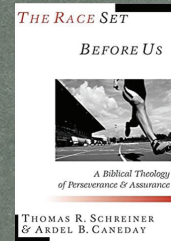
RESOURCES:



PERSEVERING THROUGH
THIS PANDEMIC
JONI EARECKSON-TADA

How are you persevering through this COVID-19 season? Are you hopeful? Expectant? It's a good idea to do an assessment of just how well we're persevering.

➤ [Click here to watch](#)



THE RACE SET BEFORE US: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance & Assurance
BY THOMAS R. SCHREINER & ARDEL B. CANEDAY

Discipline. Endurance. Perseverance. The New Testament often describes the Christian life as a marathon, a race set before us. But what exactly is the prize?

Here is a foundational study that considers all of the relevant New Testament texts and that weighs the meaning of those texts for both Christian living and pastoral ministry.

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