

A close-up photograph of an olive branch with several green olives. The leaves are elongated and have a silvery-green hue. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light green. A dark green horizontal bar is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Developing Routines" in white serif font.

Developing Routines

What is a Gospel-Centered Life?

Developing a gospel-centered life means placing gospel of Jesus Christ at the center of our entire lives. A gospel-centered life grows from an encounter with and our response to Jesus. To simplify, the gospel-centered life is being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing what Jesus would do. To this end, we need routines that equip us to regularly fast, study the scriptures, pray, attend church and partake of sacraments of communion and baptism, serve one another, partake in sabbath and strive to do what Jesus would do. Living a gospel-centered life requires a commitment to personal growth and continuous improvement, seeking to align our thoughts, words, and actions with Jesus. By doing so, we discover our Kingdom purpose, develop meaning for life's experiences, and cultivate joy in our lives as we develop a closer relationship with the Holy Spirit, our Heavenly Father, and His Son— Jesus Christ.

What are the Biblical elementary doctrines of the gospel?

The elementary doctrines are listed in Hebrews 6:1-2: “Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.” Suggestions on to how to develop a routine in each area is included below:

Why does this guide focus on Dallas Willard and John Wesley?

Dallas Willard and John Wesley, through their lives and teachings, not only exemplify the power of disciplined spiritual routines but have also inspired transformative shifts in Christian culture worldwide. Their unwavering commitment to intentional spiritual growth and their emphasis on cultivating routines of prayer, study, devotion and service have left an indelible mark on countless individuals, motivating them to pursue deeper relationships with Jesus and live out their faith in impactful ways. Their influence continues to shape and inspire generations of believers to prioritize spiritual disciplines and experience profound personal and cultural transformation. It is to this end—personal and cultural transformation that we honor their legacy.

We are on the cusp of a transformative shift. Let's join in. Let's get prepared. Let's lead!

Building a routine of repentance.

What is repentance? It is a transformative change of heart and mind, acknowledging and turning away from wrongdoing. It involves a deep sorrow for past actions, accompanied by a genuine desire to change and seek forgiveness. Repentance is not just a one-time event, but an ongoing process of aligning one's life with God's will and experiencing His transformative grace.

Routines and practices:

1. **Regular self-examination:** *Be with Jesus.* This involves setting aside time to reflect on your thoughts, words, and actions, and being honest with yourself about areas where you have fallen short. "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19).
2. **Confession, Forgiveness, Absolution:** *Be with Jesus.* Confessing your sins to the Father and, when appropriate, to others who have been affected by your actions. Release and receive forgiveness. Accept the Lord's response—even if you don't feel it. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).
3. **Turning away from sin:** *Become like Jesus.* Make a conscious effort to turn away from sin and choose to live in a way that honors the Father. "Repentance is the medicine for the soul. It cleanses the wounds of sin and heals the heart." Ignatius of Loyola

4. **Seeking accountability:** *Become like Jesus.* Like the Trinity which surrounds Jesus at all times, surround yourself with trusted individuals who can support you in your journey of repentance and hold you accountable to your commitments. "True repentance is not just a feeling of remorse or regret, but a turning away from sin and a turning toward God. It involves a change of heart, a change of mind, and a change of direction." John Wesley

5. **Engaging in spiritual disciplines:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Participating in spiritual practices such as fasting, prayer, meditation, sabbath and scripture reading, which can help you grow in your relationship with the Father and strengthen your resolve to live a life of repentance. "Repentance is not a one-time event but a way of life. It means turning away from sin and turning toward Christ, and it involves ongoing confession, forgiveness, and transformation." - Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God.*

6. **Celebrate progress as you live a life of obedience:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Recognize and celebrate the progress you have made in your journey of repentance, and thank the Father for His grace and mercy. These practices can be incorporated into a daily, weekly, or monthly routine, depending on personal preference and need. The important thing is to make repentance a *regular and intentional* part of your spiritual life. "Repentance, the soul's cleansing balm, allows us to turn our gaze inward, confront our faults, and seek God's mercy. It is through this humble act of contrition that our hearts are prepared to receive the divine grace that leads us closer to union with God." - Saint Teresa of Avila.

What did Dallas Willard have to say about repentance?

Dallas Willard believed that repentance was not just a one-time event, but an ongoing process that was essential for discipleship and spiritual transformation. He emphasized the need to live in the presence of God, to continually turn away from the things that hinder us from receiving God's grace, and to be open to the transforming power of that grace in our lives.

A few quotes from Dallas Willard on repentance:

"Repentance is not primarily something we do. It is something that we are. We are repentant to the extent that we are living in the presence of God, and we are not repentant to the extent that we are living outside of that presence." - *The Divine Conspiracy*

"Repentance is the beginning of discipleship, and discipleship is the continuation of repentance." - *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

"The only way to experience the transforming power of God's grace is to first confess our need for it and turn away from the things that hinder us from receiving it." - *Renovation of the Heart*

John Wesley on repentance:

Repentance, for Wesley, is the vital key to salvation. It demands genuine remorse, a decisive turn from sin, and a steadfast commitment to holy living. It holds the power to birth a new heart, fostering ongoing transformation. Rooted

in faith, repentance unveils the doorway to forgiveness, restoration, and an eternal union with Christ.

Quotes from John Wesley on repentance:

1. "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." - John Wesley (Luke 13:3)
2. "Repentance is a total change of heart and life." - John Wesley
3. "Repentance is not a single act, it is a habit of mind." - John Wesley

Dive deeper: scripture references for repentance

1. 2 Chronicles 7:14 - "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."
2. Joel 2:12-13 - "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."
3. Isaiah 55:7 - "Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon."
4. Acts 2:38 - "Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

5. Luke 15:10 - "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."
6. Matthew 4:17 - "From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."
7. Acts 17:30 - "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent."
8. 2 Corinthians 7:10 - "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."
9. Mark 1:15 - "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"
10. Acts 3:19 - "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."

Building a routine for developing belief in God could involve the following:

What is belief in the God of the Bible and in the Trinity? Belief is an awe-inspiring trust that God is at work in our lives. It embraces the triune nature of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—recognizing their mutual submission to each other, perfect unity and distinct roles. This transformative belief invites us into an intimate relationship with the living God, through Jesus Christ, empowering us to experience His abundant grace, walk in His truth, and be filled with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

Routines and practices:

1. **Prayer:** *Be with Jesus.* Set aside time each day to be with Jesus. Listen, pray and talk with Him. This can involve expressing gratitude, asking for guidance, and seeking a deeper understanding of who He is. Remember prayer is an act of relinquishing control. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." - Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

2. **Lectio Divina and Contemplative Listening:** *Be with Jesus.* Engage in contemplative practices such as silent prayer, breath prayer, or the practice of "Lectio Divina" (divine reading), where you attentively read and reflect on smaller sections of Scripture, allowing God to speak to your heart. "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." - Joshua 1:8

3. **Solitude:** *Become like Jesus.* Intentionally go away from others and give God your best which means giving Him time

during your most productive time of day. Consider whether early morning is when you are at your best. Be honest because maybe your best time of day is at noon or late at night alone. "After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone." - Matthew 14:23

4. Fellowship: *Become like Jesus.* Like being part of the Trinity, intentionally connect with the Father and Holy Spirit. Spend time with other believers and build relationships that support your journey of faith. This can involve participating in small group Bible studies, serving together in ministry, or simply spending time in fellowship and conversation. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." - Hebrews 10:24-25

5. Serve others through neighborliness: *Do what Jesus would do.* Volunteer at an assisted living facility or adult day care. Show up to help a neighbor in need. Engage in acts of service with the poor and share the love of Christ with others and participating in God's redemptive work in the world. "The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:31

6. Sabbath Rest: *Do what Jesus would do.* This may be hard for people to believe. But, sabbath rest allows for us to recognize who is truly at work throughout the cosmos. Set aside a specific day or portion of time each week for rest, reflection, and worship. Use this time to intentionally connect with God, detach from distractions, and rejuvenate your soul.

7. **Sharing the gospel:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Jesus didn't keep quiet about the Kingdom and He wasn't ashamed of telling others. Jesus had a mission to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. We can participate in this mission by sharing the message of salvation and hope with those around us, living as witnesses for Christ in our words and actions. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" - Mark 1:15

8. ** EXTRA CREDIT **Embrace doubt, misunderstanding or questions about faith and God.** *Do what Jesus would do.* Do not ignore them. Understand that doubt is a natural part of the journey of faith, and be open to questioning and seeking answers to deepen your understanding and belief in God.

What does Dallas Willard have to say about belief in God?

Dallas Willard's writings on belief in God emphasize that true belief goes beyond mere intellectual alignment and agreement. It involves a dynamic and active trust in God, surrendering our entire being to His reality, presence, and work in the world. According to Willard, belief in God is not just a theoretical concept, but a lived in experience that requires cultivating a deep and personal relationship with God. This relationship transforms our character, shapes our actions, and informs our worldview. Belief in God extends beyond acknowledging that He exists. It encompasses an integrated faith that permeates every aspect of our lives, leading to a vibrant and purposeful journey of spiritual formation and discipleship.

Here are some quotes from Dallas Willard on why fellowship is so important:

"The aim of fellowship is not friendship, but rather to enable people to live in the reality of God's kingdom." **Serving others:** Look for opportunities to serve others and demonstrate God's love through acts of kindness, generosity, and service." Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*.

"Fellowship is the natural expression of our love for one another as we share in the life of Christ together." **Engaging in spiritual disciplines:** Participate in other spiritual practices that can help you deepen your relationship with God, such as fasting, meditation, and silence." Dallas Willard, *Leadership Journal* in 2006.

"Fellowship is not just about being in the same room with other believers, but about experiencing a deep sense of unity and oneness in Christ." **Seeking out mentors:** Seek out mentors or spiritual directors who can guide and support you in your journey of faith. Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*.

John Wesley on belief in God:

Like Dallas Willard, John Wesley also taught that belief in God is not a mere intellectual exercise, but an active, explorative, transformative relationship that leads to a life of holiness and love. Genuine belief is demonstrated by a deep desire to follow Christ and be conformed to His image, resulting in a dynamic journey of growth through spiritual disciplines and a commitment to prayer and Scripture.

Quotes from John Wesley:

"One great reason why many religious people have little or no joy in their lives is because they have no assurance, no settled peace in their souls. And the reason for this is plain: They have not yet received the Holy Spirit. They are still walking in the darkness of their own understanding, and not in the light of God's truth." - John Wesley, Sermon 10, The Witness of the Spirit.

"It is good, notwithstanding, to examine ourselves, to search narrowly into the foundation of our hope, and see upon what it is built. And if we find it built upon the Rock of Ages, the hope of glory, let us not fear but all the winds and storms of temptation and affliction will never be able to shake it." - John Wesley, Sermon 14, The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption.

"Doubts and fears are the proper exercise and trial of faith. By these, we have been warned of danger, excited to watchfulness, led to prayer, and preserved from presumption. By these, the soul has been brought to cling closer to the promises, to trust in them more simply, to draw more largely from the fulness of Christ." - John Wesley, Sermon 105, On Faith

Dive deeper: scripture references that can help develop the basics of faith:

1. Prayer: Matthew 6:6, Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 4:2, James 5:16
2. Bible reading and study: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 119:105, Hebrews 4:12
3. Worship: Psalm 95:1-7, John 4:23-24, Colossians 3:16-17
4. Fellowship and community: Hebrews 10:24-25, Acts 2:42-47, 1 John 1:7
5. Service and outreach: Matthew 25:34-40, James 2:14-17, Galatians 6:9-10
6. Fasting: Matthew 6:16-18, Isaiah 58:6-7, Joel 2:12-13
7. Giving: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Proverbs 11:25, Luke 6:38
8. Silence and solitude: Psalm 46:10, Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16
9. Gratitude: Psalm 107:1, Colossians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
10. Confession and repentance: 1 John 1:9, Psalm 51:10-12, Acts 3:19

Building a routine of purity in our personal life.

What is purity? Purity can be a beautiful and compelling exercise as we become mature disciples of Jesus. But, it is not easy. Building a life of purity can mean different things to different people. In the Bible, purity is often linked to holiness. God is holy. We need to become holy. Holiness and purity take on new meaning as we consider how to apply what we learn as we build a routine.

Routines and practices:

1. **Make a public declaration:** *Be with Jesus.* Decide what purity means from scripture and why it is important. Set clear intentions or goals for what you want to achieve, remind yourself of these intentions or goals regularly. Tell others. Make a public declaration to your family, friends and co-workers that you are really working on this area of your life and ask for their support.
2. **Cultivate internal purity:** *Be with Jesus.* Develop a habit of Christlikeness and self-awareness. Abstain from usage of alcohol, tobacco or recreational drugs. Limit screen usage. Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and actions, and notice when you are acting in ways that are not aligned with Christlikeness.
3. **Practice self-care:** *Become like Jesus.* Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. This may include getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and taking time for solitude or to relax and recharge.
4. **Avoid negative influences:** *Become like Jesus.* Surround yourself with positive, supportive people

who share your values and goals. Avoid people, places, and things that may tempt you to behave in ways that are not aligned with Christlikeness. If you cannot leave your situation or circumstance, take breaks often by going for a walk, listening to music or take a nap. Avoid gossip at all costs. Do not fall into bad habits while trying to develop Christlike behaviors.

5. **Demonstrate confession and forgiveness:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Confession is good for the soul. Confess or talk openly with Jesus or a trusted friend. Forgive yourself and others for past mistakes or transgressions. Take responsibility for your part, especially when it means being aware of your own complicity or holding onto previous hurts. Holding onto grudges or negative emotions can hinder your ability to live a pure and authentic life.

6. **Manifest reconciliation:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Decide to make it real. Decide to grow forward and to do the hard work of reconciliation. Be able to acknowledge the break down. Select what may be necessary to begin the reconciliation process and do it. Building takes time. The Bible has clear expectations about reconciliation.

What does Dallas Willard have to say about purity?

Dallas Willard emphasized that purity is about the transformation of the heart and mind. He taught that true purity involves aligning our desires, thoughts, and intentions with the character of God and living in harmony with His will. Willard encouraged believers to pursue purity as a lifelong process, recognizing that it requires ongoing spiritual growth, reliance on God's grace, and the cultivation of virtues that reflect Christ's nature.

Here are some quotes from Dallas Willard on purity:

"Purity is the direct outgrowth of a disciplined vision of God."
- *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

"Purity requires a deep and enduring love for the good." - *The Divine Conspiracy*

"Purity is the result of inner transformation, not just external compliance with rules." - *The Divine Conspiracy*

John Wesley spoke early and often through his sermons on the topic of purity. John Wesley believed that purity of heart was essential for salvation and for living a holy and useful life. He emphasized the need to cleanse ourselves from both inward and outward pollution, continually long for God and aspire after holiness, and to pursue perfection as our ultimate goal. Perfection is not to be confused with *perfectionism* or having *perfectionistic judgmental qualities*. Holy perfection is the gradual improvement of the believer's heart and soul over time to become more like Jesus Christ.

“Purity of heart is the gate to the kingdom of heaven; and he that would enter into it must 'cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,' from all inward as well as outward pollution." - From John Wesley's sermon "The Sermon on the Mount, V”

"True purity of heart is a continual thirst for God, a continual longing to be like him, a continual aspiration after holiness and usefulness." - From John Wesley's sermon "On Pleasing All Men”

"Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. We must not only be saved from sin, but saved to holiness. The very end of our salvation is that we should be made 'perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.'" - From John Wesley's sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation”

Dive deeper: Bible references that touch on the topic of purity:

1. Psalm 51:10 - "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."
2. Proverbs 22:11 - "One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend."
3. Job 11:4 - "You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight.'"
4. Psalm 119:9 - "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word."
5. 1 Timothy 4:12 - "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."
6. Matthew 5:8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

7. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 - "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."
8. 2 Timothy 2:22 - "Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."
9. James 4:8 - "Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."
10. Philippians 4:8 - "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Building a routine of surrender to Jesus' authority.

What is surrender to Jesus? Practicing surrender to Jesus' authority involves developing a Christ-like mindset and lifestyle that aligns with His teachings and submitting our will to His guidance. Remember, surrendering to Jesus' authority is an ongoing process that requires commitment, self-reflection, and constant surrender. It involves developing a deep relationship with him and inviting His transformative power to work in your life.

Routines and practices:

1. **Seek Knowledge:** *Be with Jesus.* Engage in regular study of the Scriptures to deepen your understanding of Jesus' teachings and his character. This will help you discern His will and recognize His authority in your life.
2. **Surrender Self-will:** *Be with Jesus.* Set aside dedicated time with Jesus for surrendered prayer, meditation, and reflection, allowing yourself to connect with Jesus and seek His will. Surrender your attempts of control. Offer your concerns, desires, and decisions to Him in surrendered prayer, expressing your trust in his authority.
3. **Trust in His Plan:** *Become like Jesus.* Develop a mindset of trust and surrender, acknowledging that Jesus is for you and knows what is best for you. Jesus trusted His Father. You must also trust. Let go of the need to control every aspect of your life and trust that he has a purpose and plan for you.
4. **Obey His Commandments:** *Become like Jesus.* Practice obedience to Jesus' teachings and commandments. This involves aligning your actions,

attitudes, and choices with Biblical principles such as the Kingdom goals, humility, righteousness, compassion, love, and faithfulness.

5. **Surrender to Trinitarian authority and allowance for perspectives:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Cultivate humility by recognizing your limitations and acknowledging that Jesus surrendered His personal authority to the authority of the Trinity. Perspective is key to understanding we have limited knowledge. By considering multiple perspectives, we gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of complex issues. Engaging with other viewpoints fosters empathy and compassion by helping us see things from others' perspectives. It promotes understanding, reduces prejudice, and encourages us to consider the bigger picture.

6. **Seek Christian Community and Accountability:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Surround yourself with mature fellow believers who can support, encourage, challenge and correct you in your journey of surrender. Engage in a faith community where you can learn from others, receive guidance, and hold each other accountable.

What does Dallas Willard have to say about surrendering to Jesus' authority?

Dallas Willard highlights the transformative power of surrendering to Jesus' authority, urging believers to yield their entire lives to Him. Surrender brings freedom, purpose, and abundant grace as we align ourselves with His wisdom and love. It is through surrender that we discover our true selves and relinquish our false selves. It is through surrender that we experience the transformative work of God's authority in every aspect of our lives.

Here are a selection of quotes from Dallas Willard's book "*The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*" that touch on the topic of authority:

1. "Authority is the life-changing power of God that is present to us in the person of Christ by the Spirit." (The Divine Conspiracy, p. 222)
2. "Authority, as understood in his teaching and experience, is always rooted in the person who exercises it... Authority is not arbitrary power, but power that is within you and comes through you insofar as you are in touch with God, the source of all authority." (The Divine Conspiracy, p. 223)
3. "The authority of Jesus is personal, direct, and immediate. It is the authority of a personal presence that brings life... He will act as himself in our lives when we let him." (The Divine Conspiracy, p. 225)
4. "Jesus was the one and only perfect human being. He lived constantly and completely under the rule of God, in the kingdom of the heavens, and he has opened the way for us to do the same." (The Divine Conspiracy, p. 235)

John Wesley had much to say about the authority of Jesus Christ:

According to John Wesley, Jesus possesses supreme authority, encompassing all realms of existence and governing every aspect of life. Wesley emphasized that submitting to the authority of Jesus leads to personal transformation, liberation from sin, and the ability to live in agreement with God's divine purposes. For Wesley, recognizing and embracing the authority of Jesus is pivotal in experiencing salvation, receiving the Holy Spirit's empowering presence, and participating in God's work of redemption in the world.

Here are a few quotes from John Wesley that touch on the topic of authority:

1. "Authority is no more than a right to govern, to direct, and to command those over whom it is exercised, for their good and the glory of the governor." (Sermon 49: "The Use of Money")
2. "I fear authority. I dare not trust myself with it." (Letter to Alexander Mather, 1762)
3. "God himself is the only authority to which I submit." (Letter to Alexander Mather, 1762)
4. "Authority is not given to enable us to govern others; it is given us to govern ourselves." (Sermon 111: "The Circumcision of the Heart")
5. "The authority which God has given parents is for the good of the children, not the parents; for their

instruction, improvement, and happiness." (Sermon 94: "On Family Religion")

Dive Deeper: Bible references for understanding Godly authority:

Here's a list of ten Bible references on the topic of authority, including passages from both the Old and New Testaments:

1. Genesis 1:26 - "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"
2. Exodus 20:12 - "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."
3. Deuteronomy 28:13 - "The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom."
4. Psalm 62:11 - "One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: 'Power belongs to you, God.'"
5. Proverbs 21:1 - "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will."
6. Matthew 28:18 - "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'"
7. Colossians 1:15-17 - "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and

for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

8. Ephesians 1:20-22 - "[God] raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church."
9. Hebrews 1:1-2 - "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."
10. Philippians 2:9-11 - "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Building a Routine for belief in the Resurrection

What is the resurrection of Jesus and how does His resurrection affect me? The resurrection of Jesus is one of the hallmark doctrines of Christian faith. It signifies His triumph over death, assuring believers of eternal life and empowering them with the Holy Spirit. It validates His teachings, offers hope beyond the grave, and enables victorious living, demonstrating the transformative power of His resurrection.

Routines and practices:

- 1. Focus on Resurrection Doctrine and Reflections:** *Be with Jesus.* Set aside specific times for intentional reflection on the resurrection of Jesus. Journal your thoughts, beliefs, doubts, experiences, and insights related to the resurrection of Jesus. Explore how the reality of Jesus' resurrection can shape your thoughts, attitudes, decisions, and approach to living life here and now.
- 2. Embrace a posture of living hope:** *Be with Jesus.* Invite Jesus to reassure you this is not the end. In the midst of life's challenges, allow the reality of the resurrection to infuse your perspective, providing encouragement and resilience. Remember that difficulties, temptations and storms are temporary, and the hope of resurrection brings ultimate victory over suffering and death.
- 3. Demonstrate the Resurrected Life:** *Become like Jesus.* Live out the resurrected life in your own resilient actions and attitudes. Show resilience after a failure. Offer kindness, compassion, and forgiveness to enemies. Let the joy and peace that comes from your belief in resurrection be evident in your daily interactions. Your example can be a powerful testimony in itself. Believe in and give a second chance.

4. Embrace Doubt: *Become like Jesus.* Trust the Father for answers and assurance. Fearlessly explore historical evidence surrounding Jesus' resurrection. Present scholarly and historical arguments that support the reliability of the biblical accounts to others. Share books or resources that provide compelling evidence for the resurrection, such as "The Case for Christ" by Lee Strobel or "The Resurrection of the Son of God" by N.T. Wright.

5. Morning and Evening Reflections on the Day: *Do what Jesus would do.* Morning and evening are essential as we understand the limitation and boundary of time—there is only so much we can do in one day. We anticipate what we can accomplish at daybreak and mourn lost opportunity at sunset. Jesus repeatedly foretold His own resurrection to His disciples and to count the days.

6. Baptism, Reaffirm your Baptism, Remember your Baptism: *Do what Jesus would do.* Baptism was an essential rite of initiation for early Christians. Through baptism, we identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus. The act of being submerged in water and emerging symbolizes dying to the old self and being raised to new life in Christ. Make arrangements to participate in a baptism renewal experience.

What does Dallas Willard have to say about resurrection?

Dallas Willard writes that the resurrection of Jesus is not just an event to be celebrated, but a transformative reality that shapes the life of believers. He emphasizes that the resurrection is not limited to the future, but it has present implications, enabling believers to experience the power of

the risen Christ in their daily lives. Willard encourages believers to live in the reality of the resurrection, allowing it to bring about personal transformation, renewal, and the manifestation of God's kingdom here and now.

A few quotes from the writing of Dallas Willard about resurrection:

1. “Our most serious failure today is the inability to provide effective practical guidance as to how to live the life of Jesus. And I believe that is due to this very real loss of biblical realism for our lives” — Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*
2. “Jesus’s attitude toward death is frankly quite cavalier. Here he is himself, dying, and a wretched man dying along with him recognizes him for who he is. He asks Jesus to remember him when he comes into his place of power, his kingdom. Jesus replies, “You can be sure that this very day you will be with me in Paradise.” Now “Paradise” was understood to be a very good place to be, a place of life and fullness.” - Forward to *Room of Marvels*
3. “I suspect there will be many surprises when the new creative responsibilities are assigned. Perhaps it would be a good exercise for each of us to ask ourselves: Really, how many cities could I now govern under God? If, for example, Baltimore or Liverpool were turned over to me, with power to do what I want with it, how would things turn out? An honest answer to this question might do much to prepare us for our eternal future in this universe.” *Passing through the Stage Normally Called Death, Renovare.*

John Wesley's views on the resurrection:

John Wesley emphasized the moral and ethical implications of the resurrection. He taught that the resurrection empowers believers to live holy and righteous lives in the present, motivated by the hope of future resurrection and eternal life with God. Wesley also emphasized the hope and assurance that believers have in their own future resurrection. He believed that through faith in Christ, believers are united with Him and will experience resurrection to eternal life. Wesley saw the resurrection as a transformative reality that not only guarantees future existence but also has present implications for the believer's life and conduct.

John Wesley speaks about resurrection:

1. "It is certain that the most heavenly bodies will be given to the most heavenly souls; so that this is no little encouragement to us to make the greatest progress we possibly can in the knowledge and love of God, since the more we are weaned from the things of the earth now, the more glorious will our bodies be at the resurrection." (Sermon 137, On the Resurrection of the Dead)
2. "If I had 300 men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing but sin, and were determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, I would set the world on fire."
3. John Wesley said of the new birth, "It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is created anew in Christ Jesus." A message he often preached was "Since we were born in sin we must be born again." The resurrection of Christ affirms the

everlasting power of Christ to save and deliver humanity from sin and death. (Sermon 27 Regeneration, Part 1)

Dive deeper: Bible references about resurrection:

1. Job 19:25-27 "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."
2. Isaiah 26:19 "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead."
3. Daniel 12:2 "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."
4. Matthew 22:29-32 "But Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.'"
5. Mark 16:6 "And he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.'"
6. Luke 24:5-6 "And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.'"

7. John 11:25-26 "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"

8. Acts 2:31 "He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption."

9. 1 Corinthians 15:20 "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

10. Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years."

Building a Routine in order to Prepare for Eternal Life

What is Eternal Life? Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God is a profound and transformative state of existence where we experience unending communion with God. It is a new life marked by perfect fellowship, intimacy, and love with Jesus, the Father and the Spirit. In this state, we are freed from sin, suffering, and the limitations of our earthly existence. Our being is fully transformed, characterized by righteousness, holiness, eternal love and the fullness of joy. Eternal Life is abundant life and everlasting existence, filled with God's shalom—presence, love, blessings, peace, and fulfillment. It transcends time and extends throughout eternity, offering endless growth, exploration, and the realization of our true purpose in the presence of the Kingdom of God; both here and now and with anticipation of the future.

Routines and practices to foster a deeper experience of Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God:

1. **Develop a Kingdom Mindset:** *Be with Jesus.* Set aside regular time for prayer and meditation to cultivate a deep understanding of the Kingdom. Seek our King's presence, listen to His voice, and pour out your thoughts, worries, doubts, concerns and visions.
2. **Bible Study and Discussion:** *Be with Jesus.* Engage in regular study of the Scriptures to deepen your understanding of God's Word and His Kingdom. Reflect on its teachings and apply them to your life, allowing the truths to shape your thoughts, attitudes, and actions.
3. **Participate in Kingdom focused Worship and Community:** *Become like Jesus.* Participate in communal worship with other Kingdom minded believers, where you can join together in praising and glorifying our King of Kings. Engage in fellowship,

encouraging one another and sharing in the life of the Kingdom.

4. **Cultivate Citizenship in Kingdom Service and Love:** *Become like Jesus.* Actively live as a citizen of God's Kingdom now. Engage your redeemed imagination. Demonstrate the love of God by serving others selflessly. Seek opportunities to help those in need, showing compassion, kindness, and generosity. Let your actions reflect the values and principles of the Kingdom.
5. **Sabbath and Spiritual Disciplines:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Incorporate spiritual disciplines rich in Kingdom ethos such as fasting, sabbath, solitude, simplicity, and gratitude into your daily, weekly and yearly routine. These disciplined practices can help you focus on Kingdom goals, detach from worldly distractions, and cultivate a commitment to carry out Kingdom initiatives.
6. **Govern with Kingdom Ethics and Virtues:** *Do what Jesus would do.* Strive to order your life according to Kingdom ethics and virtues such as agape love, peace, patience, humility, forgiveness, faithfulness and gratitude in your daily life. Allow these ethics and virtues to shape your character and interactions, reflecting the transformative power of the Kingdom. Be driven to collect other Kingdom minded people to create governance over your life, church and the world around us.

What does Dallas Willard have to say about eternal life?

He begins by asking us to be active in our spiritual growth. “We do this by unrelenting study under Jesus, and in particular by following him into his practices and adapting them to form an effective framework of spiritual disciplines around which our whole life can be structured. This is precisely how we ‘through the spirit do mortify the life of the flesh ’(Rom. 8:13) and ‘put off the old person and put on the new ’(Col. 3:9-10, etc).” *Soul Shepherding*

Dallas Willard describes discipleship to Christ as certainly not an off the shelf program! “As teachers of disciples, we must lead everyone we teach into developing his or her own plan.” In other words, spiritual formation in Christ needs to be customized and individualized.

Dallas Willard presents how we live eternal life now: from the *Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God*

1: Confidence In and Reliance Upon Jesus: “Confidence in and reliance upon Jesus as ‘the Son of man, ‘the one appointed to save us (John 3:15)... This confidence is a reality, and it is itself a true manifestation of the ‘life from above, ‘not of human capacities” (Heb. 11:1)... Anyone who truly has this confidence [is] ‘included ‘[as a participant in eternal life].”

2: Desire to Be Jesus ‘Apprentice: “This confidence in the person of Jesus naturally leads to a desire to be his apprentice in living in and from the kingdom of God... We live within his word, that is, we put his teachings into practice (John 8:31). And this progressively integrates our entire existence into the glorious world of eternal living. We become free indeed (John 8:36).”

3: Obedience to God: “The abundance of life realized through apprenticeship to Jesus, ‘continuing in his word, ‘naturally leads to obedience. The teaching we have received and our experience of living with it brings us to love Jesus and the Father with our whole being: heart, soul, mind, and (bodily) strength. And so we love to obey him... (John 14:15, 21)

4: Pervasive Inner Transformation: In his concluding comments on his third dimension Dallas seems to introduce his Inner Transformation stage: “Love of Jesus sustains us through the course of discipline and training that makes obedience possible. Without that love we will not stay to learn.”

“Obedience, with the life of discipline it requires, both leads to and, then, issues from the pervasive inner transformation of

the heart and soul. The abiding condition of the disciple becomes one of [the fruit of the Spirit]...”

5: Power to do the Works of God’s Kingdom: “Finally, there is power to work the works of the kingdom [relying on Jesus to do the works he does and even greater works] (John 14:12)... But, frankly, even a moderate-size ‘work ’is more than most people’s life could sustain... Great power requires great character if it its to be a blessing and not a curse...” “It is to God’s intent that in his kingdom we should have as much power as we can bear for good. Indeed, his ultimate objective in the development of human character is to empower us to do what we want...”.

6: Abiding: Dallas doesn’t actually identify a sixth stage, but his comments on where stage four leads imply an ongoing growth in Christly character and union with God that might be considered as an ultimate and open-ended final stage. “The abiding condition of the disciple becomes one of ‘love, joy, peace, long-suffering [patience], kindness, goodness, faith to the brim, meekness, and self-control ’(Gal. 5:22; compare 2 Pet. 1:2-11). And the love is genuine to the core. These are called ‘fruit of the Spirit ’because they are not direct effects of our efforts but are brought about in us as we admire and emulate Jesus and do whatever is necessary to learn how to obey him.”

John Wesley on eternity:

It is God alone who (to use the exalted language of Scripture) “inhabiteth eternity,” in both these senses. The great Creator alone (not any of his creatures) is “from everlasting to everlasting.” His duration alone, as it had no beginning, so it cannot have any end. On this consideration it is, that one speaks thus, in addressing Immanuel, God with us: —John Wesley, *On Eternity*, Sermon 54

The best thing we can say of this house of earth, is, that it is a ruinous building, and will not be long before it tumbles into dust; that it is not our home, — we look for another “house, eternal in the heavens;” that we shall not always be confined here, but that in a little time we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, from this burden of flesh, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: —John Wesley *On the Resurrection of the Dead*, Sermon 137

This is the original design of the church of Christ. It is a body of men compacted together in order, first, to save each his own soul, then to assist each other in working out their salvation, and afterwards, as far as in them lies, to save all men from present and future misery, to overturn the kingdom of Satan, and set up the kingdom of Christ. And this ought to be the continued care and endeavour of every member of his church. Otherwise he is not worthy to be called a member thereof, as he is not a living member of Christ. John Wesley, *The Reformation of Manners*,

Dive Deeper: Bible verses for Eternal life

1. Isaiah 45:17 - "But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting."
2. Isaiah 51:11 - "The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."
3. Daniel 12:3 - "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."
4. Micah 5:2 - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."
5. Habakkuk 3:6 - "He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal."
6. John 6:40 - "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."
7. John 10:28 - "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."
8. Romans 6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
9. 2 Corinthians 4:18 - "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."
10. Revelation 21:4 - "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

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*Written by
Rev. Dr. Jennifer Wilson*

Willerup Church
*414 W. Water St.
Cambridge, WI 53523
churchoffice@willerupchurch.org
willerupchurch.org*

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