GROWING IN CHRIST

23 Practices of a Consistent, Spirit-Empowered Life

A New Testament guide for believers who want to grow in their walk with the Lord

"Exercise yourself toward godliness."

1 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)

Spiritual growth is intentional

The New Testament does more than tell us what to believe. It teaches us how to live as followers of Jesus. Again and again, believers are called to continue, abide, persevere, practice, pursue, and grow. These words describe a life shaped by consistent devotion to Christ and cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

The practices in this guide are drawn from New Testament instruction. They are not a checklist for earning salvation, God's approval, or spiritual status. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8–10). Rather, these practices are ways believers respond to that grace and make room for the Spirit's ongoing work in us.

Consistency does not mean performing every practice every moment. Some are daily rhythms; others are ongoing attitudes or recurring responsibilities. The goal is not religious busyness, but a life increasingly surrendered to Jesus.

1. COMMUNION WITH GOD

Pray continually

Key Scriptures: *1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2*
Prayer is more than a scheduled activity. It is an ongoing posture of dependence, conversation, and attentiveness to God.

Pray in the Spirit

Key Scriptures: *Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20; 1 Corinthians 14:15*
Invite the Holy Spirit to empower and guide your prayer. Scripture speaks of praying in the Spirit and, where appropriate, praying with both spirit and understanding.

Abide in Christ

Key Scriptures: *John 15:4–7; 1 John 2:24, 27–28*
Remain in living connection with Jesus. Fruitfulness flows from relationship with Him, not merely from working harder for Him.

Give thanks in every circumstance

Key Scriptures: *1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17*
Thanksgiving recognizes God's goodness and faithfulness even when circumstances are difficult. Giving thanks in everything does not mean calling everything good.

Offer praise continually

Key Scriptures: *Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 5:19–20; Colossians 3:16*
Make praise a regular expression of faith. Worship belongs in everyday life, not only in a church service.

2. THE WORD AND A RENEWED MIND

Continue in the Word

Key Scriptures: *John 8:31–32; Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:14–17*
Read, receive, study, and obey Scripture. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you and shape your beliefs and decisions.

Renew your mind

Key Scriptures: *Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2*
Allow God's truth to reshape the way you think. Spiritual transformation includes learning to recognize and reject patterns of thought that oppose Christ.

Examine your life honestly

Key Scriptures: *2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Corinthians 11:28; Galatians 6:4*
Regularly invite God to search your heart and evaluate your choices in the light of Scripture. Self-examination should lead to repentance and renewed trust, not despair.

3. COOPERATION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Walk in the Spirit

Key Scriptures: *Galatians 5:16, 25; Romans 8:5–14*
Live in daily dependence on the Holy Spirit. Let Him influence your desires, decisions, conduct, and direction.

Put to death the deeds of the flesh

Key Scriptures: *Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; Galatians 5:24*
Refuse to let sinful desires rule your life. This is not self-reliance: Romans 8:13 emphasizes that we put sin to death by the Spirit.

Flee temptation and pursue righteousness

Key Scriptures: *2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 6:11*
Do more than avoid what is destructive. Intentionally pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, and godliness.

Cultivate and exercise your spiritual gifts

Key Scriptures: *2 Timothy 1:6; 1 Timothy 4:14–15; Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 14:1*

Do not neglect what God has entrusted to you. Develop and use your gifts in love, humility, and service to the body of Christ.

4. LIFE TOGETHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Love one another

Key Scriptures: *John 13:34–35; 1 Thessalonians 4:9–10; Hebrews 13:1*

Love is the defining mark of Jesus' disciples. Keep growing in practical, sacrificial love patterned after Christ.

Encourage and build up one another

Key Scriptures: *Hebrews 3:13; 10:24–25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Ephesians 4:29*

Speak words that strengthen faith, gather with other believers, and help one another resist the deceitfulness of sin.

Forgive one another

Key Scriptures: *Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Luke 17:3–4*

Extend the forgiveness you have received in Christ. Forgiveness does not call evil good or eliminate wise boundaries; it releases vengeance to God.

Serve one another

Key Scriptures: *Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:3–4*

Use your time, abilities, and spiritual gifts for the good of others. Every believer has a part to contribute to the health of the body.

Pursue peace and mutual edification

Key Scriptures: *Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:1–3*

Make choices that promote peace, unity, and the spiritual strengthening of others. Maturity seeks the good of the whole body.

5. CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER AND PERSEVERANCE

Continue doing good

Key Scriptures: *Galatians 6:9–10; 2 Thessalonians 3:13; Hebrews 13:16*

Keep doing what is good, even when results are slow or recognition is absent. Do not allow weariness to turn you away from faithful obedience.

Stay watchful and spiritually alert

Key Scriptures: *1 Peter 5:8–9; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Matthew 26:41*

Remain alert to temptation and spiritual danger. Watchfulness is not fearfulness; it is a sober, prayerful awareness of our need for God.

Walk in the light and confess sin

Key Scriptures: *1 John 1:7–9; James 5:16*

Be honest before God and, where appropriate, with trusted believers. Confession brings sin into the light so that we can receive forgiveness, cleansing, prayer, and help.

Rejoice in the Lord

Key Scriptures: *Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16; Romans 12:12*

Choose joy rooted in the Lord rather than in ideal circumstances. Christian joy can coexist with grief, hardship, and honest lament.

Grow in grace and knowledge

Key Scriptures: *2 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; Hebrews 5:12–14*

Pursue maturity. Keep learning Christ, developing discernment, and becoming more like Him over the course of your life.

Stand firm and persevere

Key Scriptures: *1 Corinthians 16:13; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 10:23, 36; 12:1–2*

Hold fast to Christ and continue in faith. Spiritual maturity is revealed not only in how we begin, but also in how we remain faithful.

A simple framework for putting this into practice

You do not have to attempt all 23 practices at once. Begin with a few intentional steps, build consistency, and keep bringing your habits under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

- Begin each day with Scripture and prayer.
- Practice brief moments of prayer, gratitude, and attentiveness to God throughout the day.
- Choose one area of character or obedience where the Spirit is prompting you to grow.
- Stay connected to the body of Christ through worship, fellowship, encouragement, and service.
- End the day by reflecting honestly: Where did I follow Jesus today? Where do I need His forgiveness or help tomorrow?

The goal: a life that looks more like Jesus

Spiritual disciplines do not replace the work of the Holy Spirit; they are ways we respond to Him. We do not practice these things to earn God's love. We practice them because, in Christ, we have received His grace and desire to become increasingly like Him.

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)

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