A Guide to Spiritual Formation

INTIMACY WITH GOD
- THE FATHER
- CHRISTLIKE RELATIONSHIPS
- SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS
- SHARING YOUR GRACE STORY

The Outcomes

Just Remember

This is a journey that we are all on. We're not expecting you to be an expert in The Outcomes. You don't have to prove your worth. We are all following The Way – Jesus – because of God's grace (which none of us deserve). Don't feel like you have to do this alone, because God designed us to go through life together. So if you don't know what step to take next, just follow us as we follow Jesus.

Let's use the picture of digging a well to help us understand what we call The Four Outcomes. We believe that for the person who has been "born from above" and follows Jesus Christ, there are certain outcomes or consequences (in the positive sense of the word). These Outcomes do not make us more religious or put us on God's version of the Dean's List. Instead, the Outcomes put us in a position to be changed by God. Again, remove the idea of a checklist from your mind. These Four Outcomes are more like four shovels that we will use to dig our well deeper.

If you've been around people who may identify themselves as "religious," they probably have a code of conduct or a list of rules to abide by. It doesn't really matter what religion they adhere to, because the point is that they have a checklist of do's and don'ts that determine their steps. Being a Christian is not about having the best or a superior checklist; in fact, we can do without the checklist altogether. Being a Christian is a lot more like digging a well. The deeper we dig, the more we are washed over with the grace of God in our lives.

Some people only want to go in up to their ankles; that way, they can do their "Sunday/God thing" but still live their old lives Monday through Saturday. Why not dig deep? Why not go all in on this? The more and more that we taste the life-giving waters of Jesus, we will find the behaviors and desires of the world offers us less and less appetizing.

Digging A Well

God wants to take you on a journey from where you are right now to where He wants you to be. Ultimately, God will transform us to look like Jesus; the Apostle John tells us that, we will be like him (1 John 3:2). But right now we must take ownership of this process; we must go all-in. Spiritual formation means I will work towards the same goal God has for me: Christ-likeness. We can't do it on our own, but Jesus knows the terrain; He knows the way, because He is the way.

This tool will guide you in the right direction: to follow Jesus Christ. Find more at thechapel.com/outcomes.
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Intimacy With God

Teaching our soul that its satisfaction is found in God alone. Spend time with God each day through prayer and His Word.

The first Outcome for each believer is Intimacy with God the Father. The best way to know God is to know what He says. We do this by spending time reading the Bible and by praying. Here’s the challenge: instead of coming to God with a list of expectations, open the Bible and allow God’s truth to just wash over you. Then, take time to talk to God, maybe even about what you just read. By doing this, we grow closer to God, and we become more “at home” in His presence. It is in these times of intimacy that God will begin to shave away those things that are holding us back from growing in our faith.

TODAY, read the Bible for five minutes. If you’ve never read it before, use the table of contents in your Bible and start in a book called John or another book called Proverbs. Also, pray for five minutes. You don’t have to come up with five minutes of dialogue in advance, and you don’t even have to pray out loud; even just moments of silence are fine. Commit to spend five minutes reading and five minutes praying today.
Christlike Relationships

*How would Jesus live my life were He me? This impacts our relationships to people and to our stuff.*

Jesus wasn’t just a good teacher or a good example; He was and is God with skin on. The life Jesus lived was one defined by generosity – in all things. When we talk about Christlike relationships, here’s what we mean: if Jesus were in my place, how would He live my life? How would He treat my friends and family? How would He handle my money and my stuff?

It may scare us to ask these questions, because we may not like the answers. If we want to live like Jesus, it means we have to be defined by generosity: in our relationships to people, and in our relationship to our money and stuff. This means I love the people who aren’t easy to love. It means I pray for people who are impossible to get along with. It also means I use my possessions to help others, not just to make my life easier.

**TODAY**, as you spend time in prayer, ask God this question: *God, in what ways have I been stingy? Whether it’s stingy with my love for others, or stingy with my stuff – show me where I’ve been holding back and missing out. Help me to live like Jesus today.* Maybe ask God to show you one person who is difficult to love – and then ask that He gives you the ability to love them beyond your own ability.
Spiritual Giftedness

Each Jesus-follower is gifted by God for the good of others and the advancement of the Gospel. Everyone is necessary.

God’s mission in the world is too big for just the superstar Christians to do it. We need the whole Church. God has gifted each member in many ways. We all have different skillsets. Picture a baseball team: if we all tried to play the same position, there would be gaps and unfilled areas of our team. We need to work together. Like the manager of a team, God knows exactly who is gifted in what area, and every “position” is important to the mission. Except our mission isn’t winning baseball games; our mission is giving every man, woman, and child repeated opportunities to hear and see the Gospel of Jesus.

Two things to remember: (1) you are gifted, and (2) you are needed. Read 1 Corinthians 12 and you will see these two points repeated over and over. God has gifted you in a specific area; we call this Spiritual Giftedness.

TODAY, begin praying about your spiritual gifts. Ask God to show you exactly where He wants you to serve. Call a friend who has been on this journey for a while (maybe a small group leader or one of the pastors) and ask them to give you some advice in this area. Above all, start serving somewhere and your gifts will probably become clear to you.
Whenever people encounter Jesus, He leaves them with a story to tell. God’s grace has invaded our lives; we exist to share it.

Once you start following Jesus, people need to hear the story of what Jesus has done in your life. If we look into the New Testament, we see people who couldn’t help but talk about Jesus. He changed them forever, and they were compelled to talk about it.

Don’t worry, we’re not asking you to drive downtown and scream through a megaphone. You don’t even have to be a Bible expert to tell others about the changes God has made in your life. You don’t have to be overbearing or oppressive either; just be genuine. People will notice there’s something different about you – so just tell them! One person in the Bible that Jesus changed said it this way: I used to be blind, but because of Jesus, now I can see (John 9:25). Imitate the early believers in this way: Day after day…they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 5:42).

**TODAY**, begin praying about an opportunity to share your story of God’s grace within the next week. Don’t worry about having a polished story or an accompanying PowerPoint presentation. Just be genuine; tell one person this week about the changes God has made in your heart and your life.
Getting Connected

Get connected to a small group and find a place to serve.

Now you know a bit more about what will fuel your spiritual formation. The great thing is, you can do all of this on your own at any time of the day; you don’t need to come to a church building to be in relationship with God. But, just because you can do this on your own, we don’t want you to go through life alone. We want you to join us as we follow Jesus Christ. We may be at different points of the journey, but we all have this in common: Jesus is leading us on the path that leads to life. There are two specific ways we would invite you to get connected.

First, join a small group. Our church is large, and there are lots of people here on Sunday. But, in a small group, you will be connected with 8-10 other Christ-followers who can encourage you and celebrate life with you. It’s the assurance that someone will always be there for you, through thick and thin. You can find out more about our small groups at thechapel.com/smallgroups.

Second, find a place of service. One of The Outcomes is exercising your Spiritual Giftedness. Once you discover that gift, find an outlet to use it! There are tons of areas for you to serve, and you can find many opportunities at thechapel.com/serve.
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