

Living Your Focus Word

model praise abide fa
generous listen loyal
committed love family
passionate teachable
thankful unity faith joy
redeemed believe pra
peace **yield** patience
kindness prayer wor
meditation trust redee
obey identity integrity
seek humility meekne
leader servant endura
delight learn rest wis
legacy promise surre

Focused Living Ministries



Living Your Focus Word

A Tool For Christ-Like Character Formation

NAME _____

**FATHER, THE FOCUS WORD ON WHICH I SENSE
YOU WANT ME TO CONCENTRATE THIS YEAR IS**

(Work through pages 1-14 before filling in)



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www.FocusedLiving.com

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God is always pleased when his people put themselves in a position to grow! This tool was designed for just that purpose. As you work your way through this Focus Word process, remember that it's not about 'getting through' this book. It's about being more like Jesus and growing more in your love with Jesus. Although this study could be completed in a few months, our strong encouragement is to let things simmer over the good part of a year.

Because we are a men's ministry, we have composed this with men as our primary audience. However, the principles of choosing, studying, and applying a Focus Word are certainly transferable to an audience of women. Our hope is that this tool will be used by individuals, discipleship pairings and small groups to add focus and depth to their spiritual walk. Enjoy the journey!

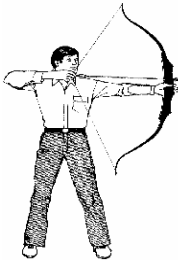
We dedicate this booklet to our beautiful brides, Janet and Katherine. Thanks for your continual prayers that we would become so **FOCUSED** on Jesus that we are **LIVING** like Jesus with both passion and purpose.

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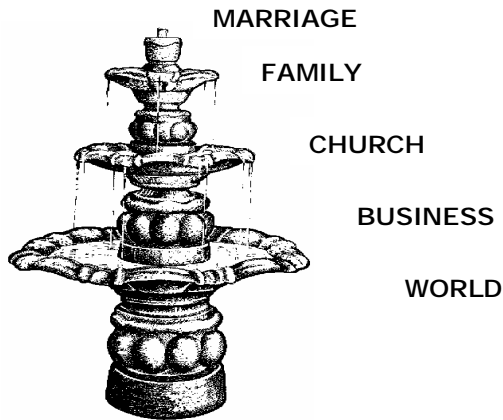
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The Vision

A man was walking along one day when he noticed a farmer randomly shooting arrows into the side of his barn. A few minutes later the farmer climbed up a ladder leaning against the barn and started to paint targets with each arrow in the center of the bulls eye. When he was finished, the farmer came down the ladder and announced to the bystander with a wide grin, "The townsfolk will sure be impressed!"



The Lord has called us to hit worthy targets! Instead of shooting aimlessly at worthless targets He wants His men to become more like Christ rather than impressing the townsfolk. It is His deep desire to grow an army of men who will walk so closely with Christ that His character will overflow into every relationship, circumstance, decision and opportunity in life.



Our Father God longs to...

OVER RULE us with His glorious majesty and

OVERWHELM us with His lavish love so that our lives will

OVERFLOW with His grace in order that we may victoriously

OVERCOME our culture, temptations and trials.

In his book, Power Through Prayer, E.M. Bound underscores this point in saying that, "*Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men.*"

So how do we become 'better men?' One character quality at a time! Often our spiritual growth process seems complicated and overwhelming. We are not sure where to start. We do not understand

the steps needed. We mistakenly think it is all up to us. One way to make the spiritual maturing process less overwhelming is to allow the Lord to narrow your focus to a single area of your life which you sense He wants to build (mature) or rebuild (restore).

Even the Apostle Paul found it necessary to narrow his focus in order to grow more in Christ. In Philippians 3:13-14 he admits, *“I do not regard myself having laid hold of it yet; but **ONE THING** I do, forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus!”* And that one goal was tapping into the power of the resurrected Christ. You see, Paul came to realize that the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead was available to Him through the Holy Spirit. And he wanted it!

Revelation 2:4 records Jesus commending the Ephesian church for their deeds, perseverance and theology. But then He challenges them on a single important area that they had greatly neglected. They had lost their first love for God and it desperately needed to be restored.

In fact, this is why Focused Living Ministries exists. We are committed to helping men become so **FOCUSED** on Christ that they begin **LIVING** out the priorities of Christ.

What would happen if you invested a whole year praying for, studying about, and living out a single character quality taught by Christ to His disciples? What if you made a central part of your life plan the choosing of one Focus Word each year for the rest of your life? Can you imagine what kind of a man, husband, father, leader, and businessman you would become as this single focus permeated every area of your life? Think ten years out. How would 10 Christ-like character qualities applied to every area of life radically change you? Think of the eternal impact it would make in your family and church family!

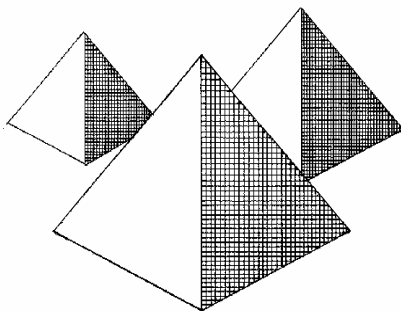
By focusing on a single character quality, discipline or Biblical role for the year, God will drive it deeply into your soul and lifestyle yielding a concentrated spiritual growth. Of course, the real focus is always on Jesus Christ. The one word focus simply positions you for intense growth and life transformation.

How would focusing on a single Christ-like character quality help you mature spiritually this year?

The Pyramid Principle

Now you may be asking, “That’s going to be a lot of work! Is it worth the effort?” Well, think for a minute about the importance of a solid foundation. There is good reason why the pyramid is the only geometric shape that cannot be pushed around or pushed over. It’s because of its massive base. It seems that many of God’s men are getting shoved around and pushed over in almost every area of life. Why? Because our base is too small.

Think about it. In every other area of life a big base is essential for maximum performance. Physically, the marathon runner knows he must build a base of 50 miles a week in private before he can run 26 miles in public. The weight lifter knows that he must privately lift 1000s of pounds before he can lift his personal best



of 500 pounds in public. Relationally, every husband knows that the bigger his base of sacrificial love for his wife, the more likely the marriage will stand tall in the face of life’s circumstances, pressures, and demands that press against it. Businessmen know that the greater their financial base the higher will be their summit of return. Educationally, the broader your base of learning, the more likely you will be at the top of your chosen field. Politically, the broader your base of support, the greater your chance of being elected.

The same is true spiritually. The bigger your spiritual base, the greater opportunity you have of reaching the top, the full potential of the man God has called you to be. The question is, ***“How big is your base?”***

Because many of us have neglected the basic spiritual disciplines of scripture reading, prayer, verse memory and truth application some will liken choosing a Focus Word to carrying a 70 pound sack of cement. It’s heavy, awkward, and dirty. But consider this: 70 pounds of cement properly set will support 70,000 pounds of weight for about 700 years. A little hard work of mixing God’s Word into your life now will produce a foundation that will, for generations to come, support the weight of the various demands on your life and that of your family. Is it worth the work of getting dirty building a strong foundation? You bet it is.

Jesus taught His disciples the pyramid principle. He showed them how to build their lives on the solid foundational rock of obedience to God’s Word. Listen to Jesus’ words recorded in Luke’s gospel.

*“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man **building a house**, who **dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock**; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been **well built**. But the one who has heard, and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house upon the ground **without any foundation**; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:46-49)*



Paul, too, was big on building big bases! He taught those he had led to Christ, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been **firmly rooted** and now being **built up** in Him and **established** in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.” (Colossians 2:6-7)

He understood that solid based men would lead their families, grow the church, and impact their culture by advancing God’s Kingdom. That is why he was constantly building folks upon the greatest foundation ever, Jesus Christ Himself.

*“According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise **master builder I laid a foundation**, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a **foundation** other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the **foundation** with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.”*

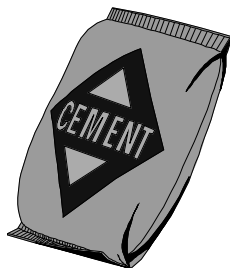
(1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

Now here is the single most important question you must ask and answer correctly if you are to mature in Christ. **WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY OF AN APPLE TREE?** (Hear the music theme from Jeopardy playing in the background as you jot your answer belowJ).

The correct Biblical answer: the primary responsibility of an apple tree is to **'KEEP ITS ROOTS IN THE GROUND!'** The fruits always follow the roots! In other words, choosing a Focus Word is a good way to help you grow your roots deep into Christ so that the fruit of a godly character will result in every season of your life. By the way, if you answered 'to produce apples' then we suggest you go back and review the principle of the pyramid.

Lately, would you say that you have been building more on solid rock or shifting sand? Why?

Before you get started, write out a prayer of commitment asking the Lord to guide you to the Focus Word which will help you to build a solid base and yield Christ-like fruit.



Choosing A Focus Word

We trust that you see the benefit of having a single focus for a season. Now the question is, What Focus Word should you choose? The first step in choosing a Focus Word is to prayerfully assess where you are spiritually so that you can determine where the Lord most wants you to grow. All through the process of creating the universe the Lord Himself evaluated and He invites you to do the same. (*"It is good!"* Genesis 1:10, 12,18, 21, 25, 31, 2:18).

So step back and take an honest assessment of your life. Do a quick spiritual inventory. Where are you doing well spiritually? What has satan stolen from the shelves of your life? Perhaps the following prayer will help you hear more clearly what the Lord has to say about the various areas of your life.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." (Psalm 139:23-24)

Now that your heart is soft before the Lord, honestly reflect on your life by considering the following questions for **each** applicable area below. By each category, we've included some words / phrases that may stimulate your thoughts.

1. What is my strength in this area?
2. What is my weakness? Where do I most need to mature here?
3. How would my wife/kids/friends say that I need to grow here?
4. Have I been convicted to grow here in the past but have never really followed through?

Spiritually (love Jesus more now than 3 months ago, heart, obedience, listening, in tune, passionate, lost first love, distant, seeking, focused)

Basic Spiritual Disciplines (hunger for God, personal devotions, Word, prayer, verse memory, fasting, sporadic, consistent, truth applied)

Basic Spiritual Character Qualities (Fruit of Spirit: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*)

Emotionally/Attitude (content, joyful, anxious, responsive, reactive, high, low, self-centered, other oriented, positive, negative, distant)

Mentally (renewing, focused, reading, learning, growing, new insights, applying, wisdom, decisions, time management)

Physically (disciplined, exercise, sleep, eating, weight)

Socially (friendships, relationships, temptations, forgiveness, grace)

Financially (saving, tithing, giving, debt, investing, future, spending)

Marriage (relationship, communication, intimacy, physical, spiritual, leading, serving, fun, romance, focused attention)

Parenting (focused attention, teachable moments, time with each child, family devotions, discipline, prayer with and for, future, legacy)

Occupation/employment (relationships, satisfaction, work ethic, growing, skills, enjoyment, submission, temptations, focus)

Small group (fellowship, accountability, involvement, leading, caring)

Leadership (growing, shepherding, problem solving, opportunities, skills, future, style, goals, objectives)

Church member (worship, attitude, involvement, giving, spiritual gifts, service, available)

Evangelism (friendships, testimony, Gospel presentation, fear, strategy, neighbors, clients, intentional, bold, compassionate)

Discipleship (of children, vision for one man a year for life, investing, imparting basics, caring for)

Other

Now, prayerfully review. What does the Lord seem to be most impressing upon your heart? Is there a common theme or pattern? Is there an area in which you are particularly weak?

From your perspective, list a few areas which the Lord needs to restore, reclaim or rebuild most in your life this year?

Christ understood that becoming a *disciple* was far more important than merely making a *decision* to become a follower. Christ did not say, “Go into all the world and get men to make *decisions* about Me.” He commanded, “go into all the world and make *disciples* who will follow Me!” Jesus has called you to be His disciple. **What does a disciplined person look like?** Many have found the following acrostic for the word **D-I-S-C-I-P-L-E** a helpful way to picture a disciple.

Dominated by God’s grace in Christ.

Inspired daily by God’s Word

Surrendered to the Holy Spirit

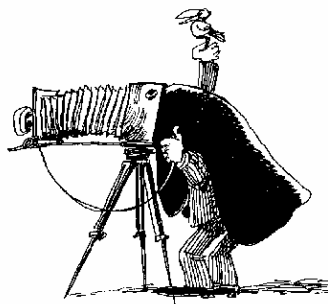
Committed to the work of prayer

Involvement in church’s work & worship

Pursues the lost with passion

Loves others as a servant

Exemplifies faith at home



Based on this DISCIPLE acrostic, which of the eight characteristics do you think the Holy Spirit might be asking the Father to build into you this coming year? Why?

Next, thoughtfully reflect on the following list of possible Focus Words. These are actual Focus Words which other men have chosen and pursued for a year. Each of these words / phrases can be traced to a trait that Jesus longs to see in the lives of His men. **As you review them, circle the ones that grab your attention.**

Abiding	Forgiving/Reconciling
Acceptance	Freedom
Accountable	Fruit of the Spirit
Acts of compassion/kindness	Generous/Giving
Administration	Gentle/Meek
Adopted son mind set	Good steward of time/talents/\$
Adoration/praise	Goodness/godliness
Alertness/sensitivity	Gracious/Merciful
Amaze	Healthy self-image
Applies truth to daily life	Kind
Authentic friendship	Kingdom building
Availability	Knows what to believe
Aware of satan's lies	Leadership skills
Balanced priorities	Leaves a legacy
Bold	Listen
Breaks evil strongholds	Loving
Brings Gospel to others	Love
Builds self-esteem	Loyalty
Celebrate	Maturity
Communicates/Teach Truth	Mentoring
Confession	Missions minded
Contentment	Nurturing father/grandfather
Courageous/Risking	Obedience
Creativity	Other-oriented
Daily Bible reading/study	Overflow
Deep communion	Passionate
Dependability	Patience
Dependent on God	Peace
Diligence	Peacemaker
Discerns God's call	Prayer
Discipline/self-control	Praising
Edifies others	Preaching
Endurance	Prepared
Evangelism/heart for lost	Purity
Faithful	Purposed/focused
Family mission/goals	Reflective
Family prayer	Reliance on God for all
Fasting	Reverent
Flexible	Rightly motivated

Sacrificial husband	Thankful
Secure in Christ	Thinks strategically
Security	Time management
Selfless	Transformed
Serving	Truth applied to culture
Sincerity	Understanding
Single-minded/Focused	Unity/teamwork
Sonship	Verse memory
Spiritual gifts	Vulnerable
Spiritual warfare	Willing
Surrendered	Wisdom
Teachable	Worshiping
Tender Heart	Zealous/ambitious for God

Like pruning, it is vital for you to eliminate in order to concentrate on just one aspect during this season of life. Of course, choosing one word for the year does not limit God's work to only that area. You will be surprised at the many ways the Lord transforms as you focus on a single area. So, **which 2-3 words gripped your heart?**

Discuss your findings/insights with your wife or with a friend if you are unmarried. On what Focus Word do they think you need to focus? Why?

What quality would your children like to see Christ build into your life this coming year? If they are 12 or older, sit down and have a conversation with them about this.

**FATHER, THE FOCUS WORD ON WHICH I SENSE
YOU WANT ME TO CONCENTRATE THIS YEAR IS**

(Record this Focus Word also in the box on page 1)

CEMENTING YOUR FOCUS WORD

The important step of choosing your Focus Word is done. Now it is time to discover what God has to say about it. The following principles/suggestions will help you process God's truth from your **HEAD** to your **HEART** to your **HANDS** until it forms a **HABIT**! To build a strong structural foundation, God's truth must be processed. There is no real spiritual *progress* without spiritual *process*!



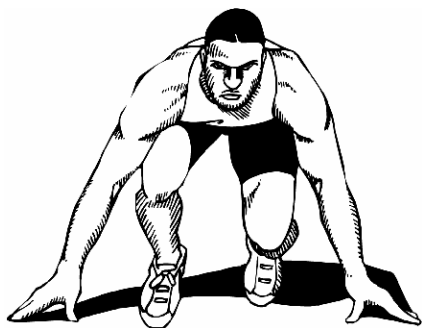
START WITH PRAYER to make sure that your heart is open to all that the Lord wants to teach you. Remember that the Bible is the Father's love letter to you! Luke 5:16 says that "*Jesus would often slip into the wilderness to pray.*" He demonstrated a constant submission to the Father. As you approach the Word in each step, pray that you would be like Ezra who "*set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel?*" (Ezra 7:10)



BE DILIGENT TO WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU DISCOVER. "*The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying....Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book.*" (Jeremiah 30:1-2) "*The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face just as a man speaks with a friend...The Lord said to Moses, 'Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.'* So he was there with the Lord forty days; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments." (Exodus 33:11, 34:27-29) Keep in mind that the Lord will be asking you to pass on to your family and church family the things you glean each day. "*This will be written for the generation to come; that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.*" (Psalm 102:18)



DON'T GIVE UP OVER A LITTLE HARD WORK. Remember the cement. The hard work will be worth the effort. Paul challenged Timothy to "*be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15) He also exhorted him to "take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all." (1 Timothy 4:15)



Step 1

Getting Started

Date _____

We realize that you may be new in your relationship with the Lord and might not be very familiar with Scripture. Not to worry. We encourage you to ask the help of a more mature follower of Christ who will gladly help you walk you through this cementing process.

Explain in detail why you sense God led you to choose this particular Focus Word for the year?

Describe what life changes you hope to see by the end of the year after intentionally opening yourself up for growth in this area.

BRAINSTORM RELATED WORDS & CONCEPTS

Whatever Focus Word you have chosen, undoubtedly there are a variety of words in Scripture that touch on the same concept. For example, if your Focus Word is '*surrender*' related words might include *yield*, *obey*, *submit*, *serve*, and *lordship*. This range of meaning is significant for you to know when you start to do your concordance work. Your actual Focus Word may not be mentioned very often in Scripture, but the core concept of your word may appear frequently. So

don't become discouraged if you have chosen the Focus Word '*commitment*' and discover that the actual word doesn't even appear in Scripture. The core concept of the word '*commitment*' is found on almost every page of the Bible through such words/phrases as '*follow Me*', '*die to self*', '*in Christ*', '*pressing forward*', '*lovingkindness*', '*trust*' or any command which assumes commitment to obey it.

Make a list of synonyms or concepts which are related to your Focus Word. Realize that you will be adding to these as you dig deeper and discover more about the limitless depth of the Scriptures concerning your Focus Word. Your thoughtful reflection on this step will make your concordance work over the next few steps flow much more smoothly**J**.

Sometimes people are mentioned in Scripture who clearly demonstrate your Focus Word. For example, Esther was an outstanding example of a woman who trusted the Lord completely yet the word 'trust' or even 'God' is never mentioned in the book of Esther. **Can you think of any biblical characters who either positively or negatively portray your Focus Word.**

Lord, I want to be more like Christ. Hear now my prayer of commitment and surrender so that in the power of the Holy Spirit my Focus Word might become a reality in my life.



Step 2

Concordance Work in Old Testament

Date _____

Using a concordance, topical Bible, or a computer search tool like www.blueletterbible.com or www.crosswalk.com look up your Focus Word. In addition, you may want to look up several of the synonyms you wrote down in Step 1 (p 17). Most likely, you will have a list of Scriptures as a result of this search. Scan the list. Sometimes you can immediately rule out verses based on the little bit of context you can see. For the remaining verses, look each of them up in your own Bible, reading the paragraphs on either side of your verse in order to gain a context. If the passage seems like one that will shed insight on your Focus Word, then record the Scripture address below along with a brief summary so you'll remember what the passage is about. Identify at least six passages in this way.

For example, let's say your Focus Word is **'obey'** or **'obedience'**. In your concordance you will find approximately 100 Old Testament references in which this word is used. Peruse the list and choose a few which seem to use the word 'obey' in the same sense that you want to emphasize. If you found Exodus 19:5, you might jot down:

Ex 19:5 "If you obey my voice, you will be my own possession" (God talking to Israel at Sinai)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

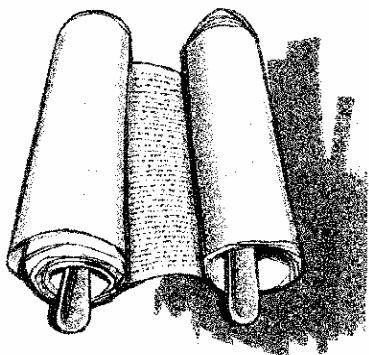
6.

7. What Old Testament character (individual or group) positively models your Focus Word? (Need help? Use the fine resources of your wife, pastor, elder, deacon, mentor or an author who has written on your subject.)

8. What Old Testament character is a negative example of your Focus Word?

NOTE: There is more space on pages 24-27 to list additional passages and notes.

Now that you have identified 8 Old Testament verses/passages regarding your Focus Word step back from your preliminary work for a moment. **Write out a prayer that reflects your heart impressions thus far.** *Lord, as I read these great verses of Scripture I...*



Step 3

Studying Old Testament Passages (Part 1)

Date _____

CEMENT AND APPLY SO YOU WON'T DIE!

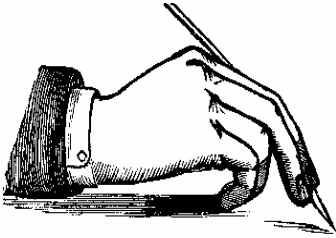
Remember, the reason we study the Scripture in depth is to build a solid foundation on which Christ can build His character qualities in our life. Study the first three passages you wrote down in **Step 2** (p 18). Use the following pattern for each passage.

- √ Study the verse in its context by reading slowly through the paragraph before and after, if not the whole chapter. Read the passage at least twice.
- √ What is the main principle/insight that the Lord seems to be screaming out concerning your Focus Word.
- √ Write a short, meaningful prayer to the Lord talking over with Him how you plan to live out the principle you discovered.

PASSAGE 1 _____

PASSAGE 2 _____

PASSAGE 3 _____



Step 4

Studying Old Testament Passages (Part 2)

Date _____

BE BOLD WITH THE OLD (testament)
SO YOU DON'T FOLD (compromise)
AS THE LORD GETS A HOLD (conviction)
YOU APPLY WHAT YOU'RE TOLD (build your base)

As you continue to build your foundation, study the next three passages you wrote down in **Step 2** (p 18-19). Once again, use the following pattern for each passage.

- √ Study the verse in its context by reading slowly through the paragraph before and after, if not the whole chapter. Read the passage at least twice.
- √ What is the main principle/insight that the Lord seems to be screaming out concerning your Focus Word.
- √ Write a short, meaningful prayer to the Lord talking over with Him how you plan to live out the principle you discovered.

PASSAGE 4 _____

PASSAGE 5 _____

PASSAGE 6 _____



The more you study, the more you will find out that there is still more to study. You'll soon discover that the initial passages you identified don't exhaust what God has to say about your Focus Word. This is especially true if your study spans over a year's time. So, as you come across additional Old Testament passages list them below and study them as time permits.

ADDITIONAL NOTES & PASSAGES



ADDITIONAL NOTES & PASSAGES



ADDITIONAL NOTES & PASSAGES





Step 5

Old Testament Positive Character Study

Date _____

Today you will see your Focus Word fleshed out in the life of an Old Testament character as you use the passage chosen in **Step 2** (p 19).

CHARACTER _____

PASSAGE _____

1. What in particular attracts you to this person (people)? What about this character do you most want to imitate?

2. What do you know about this person's life situation? How did God develop your Focus Word in the life of this person?

3. How specifically did this character rely on the power of the Lord to live out your Focus Word?

4. Did you discover a step by step developmental process/progression through which this person grew to model your Focus Word? What were the steps?

5. How did living out your Focus Word impact the lives of the people around them or folks throughout history?

6. How specifically did the Lord seem to bless this person as they demonstrated your Focus Word?

7. Putting yourself in their sandals, how do you think you would have succeeded in living out your Focus Word in their context and culture?

8. *Lord, as I studied this Old Testament character living out my Focus Word I learned...*



Step 6

Old Testament Negative Character Study

Date _____

Today you will study the life of an Old Testament character who failed to live out your Focus Word. Use the passage chosen in **Step 2** (p 19).

CHARACTER _____

PASSAGE _____

1. Why did you choose this person (people)? How in particular does this character negatively demonstrate your Focus Word?

2. What do you know about this person's life situation?

3. Why do you think they failed to live out your word?

4. Was there a step by step progression that led to their failure? What were the steps?

5. How did their failure to live out your Focus Word impact the lives of the people around them and throughout history?

6. What specific problems, curses or consequences did this person experience as a result of not making your Focus Word a central part of their lives?

7. Putting yourself in their loincloth, what would you have done differently to succeed where they failed?

8. *Father, you know that I too have failed to live out this year's Focus Word. But in studying today's passage I ask You...*



Step 7

Old Testament Word Study

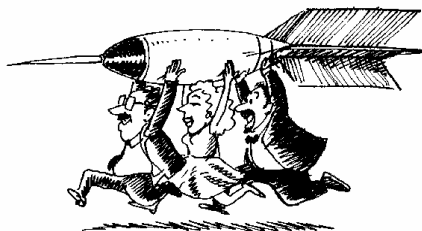
Date _____

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15

The Bible was not written in our language. So it often helps in understanding the heart of God to study your Focus Word in the original language. For in so doing, the Lord often leads us to discover incredibly rich nuggets of insights which can help us to grow in our love for Christ. So, like a miner digging and relentlessly searching for that priceless diamond, use the following steps to discover more valuable principles from your Focus Word.

1. Quickly scan the passages you have studied thus far (Steps 2-6). Choose a verse(s) that contains your Focus Word and especially intrigues you. For instance, perhaps the verse has some descriptor words that you would like to study further. Or maybe the verse compares or contrasts your Focus Word with other concepts. For example, suppose your Focus Word is **‘wait’** and your verse is Isaiah 40:31 which says that *“those who wait (‘hope’ in NIV) for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”*
2. Using a Strong’s Concordance that matches your version of the Bible, identify the word and record the Strong’s identification number. Example: In the KJV Strong’s Concordance **‘wait’** is assigned the number 6960 (as well as 6961) in Isaiah 40:31.
3. Now turn to the back of your Strong’s Concordance and look up this identification number in the Hebrew dictionary. Example: There you will find the word **‘kawvaw’** and its original meaning which is *to ‘bind together by twisting’* as well as to *‘expect or gather.’*

4. Using a little divine imagination, is there any insight you can discern as you reflect upon God's intended meaning of your Focus Word? For example, through Isaiah God wants us to know that to **WAIT** is to **gather up the loose ends of our life situation and to twist them around His strong character.** Further, as we study the context of the verse, we can expect Him to help us **soar like an eagle** through the fray and to walk forward without stumbling through the adversity as we wait upon His strength!
5. Lastly, apply this simple definition/insight directly to your life. Ie. *"Lord, as I go through this hard time at work I am not to wait around picking my nose (schnozola in the Hebrew). Rather, I am to be busy twisting the loose ends of my negative circumstances, finances and attitude by binding them around Your sovereign strength. Only then, Father, can I fly through these hard times like an eagle and run forward with great strength. Thanks for this insight. Help me to apply it at the office in my attitude toward my boss. Also, help me to live it when I get home tonight by being a servant even though we are stressed over our finances."*



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

1. Scan the verses/passages you have studied to this point and choose an interesting one which also contains your Focus Word or synonym.

Verse: _____

2. Using a Strong's Concordance that matches your version of the Bible, identify the word and record the Strong's identification number.

3. Look up this # in the word listing in the back of a Strong's Concordance. The Hebrew word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is....

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition.
Record any insights you gain as you reflect over why
God would use this word.



5. Apply the insight by writing out a prayer which reflects what the Lord has taught you.

TRY AGAIN. SAME SONG, DIFFERENT VERSE!



Because there may be several synonyms related to your Focus Word you may want to try the same process on a few other words found in the same or alternate verses.

1. Verse: _____

2. Strong's identification number. # _____

Remember, a different related word, parallel passage or synonym may yield a different number.

3. The Hebrew word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is....

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition. Record any insights you gain as you reflect over why God would use this word.

5. Apply the insight by writing out a prayer which reflects what the Lord has taught you.

YOU'RE GETTING THE HANG OF IT! TRY IT YET AGAIN!



Maybe there is a descriptor word (adjective, adverb) that modifies your Focus Word. Studying this word may give you further insight.

1. Verse: _____

2. Strong's identification number. # _____

3. The Hebrew word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is....

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition. Record any insights you gain as you reflect over why God would use this word.

5. Apply the insight by writing out a prayer which reflects what the Lord has taught you.



LAST TIME!

1. Verse: _____

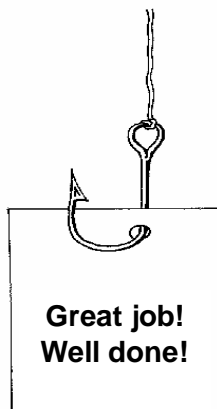
2. Strong's identification number. # _____

3. The Hebrew word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is....

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition. Record any insights you gain as you reflect over why God would use this word.

5. Apply the insight by writing out a prayer which reflects what the Lord has taught you.





Step 8

Old Testament Summary

Date _____

Hey, we appreciate your good effort thus far! We understand that for many of you this is a whole new level of commitment to understanding and applying God's Word to your life. But remember the payoff! A 70 pound bag of cement properly set will support 70,000 pounds of your life for generations to come! So it's well worth the sweat, grit and heavenly hernias. Before moving on to the study of your Focus Word in the New Testament, be sure to pause and allow the Holy Spirit to drive His truths from your HEAD deep into your HEART so that your HANDS will make them a daily HABIT.

If your pastor asked you to share the three most important Old Testament insights you discovered regarding your Focus Word, what would they be?

Passage:
Principle:

Passage:
Principle:

Passage:
Principle:

What one Old Testament verse has most gripped your heart which you will commit to memory?

What principle does your family most need to hear which you will teach them?

Where have you seen tangible PROGRESS in that it is starting to take root in the following areas?

Personal life?

Attitudes?

Motivation and Priorities?

Home, marriage or family?

Work?

Church?



Step 9

Concordance Work in New Testament

Date _____

Using a concordance, topical Bible, or a computer search tool like www.blueletterbible.com or www.crosswalk.com look up your Focus Word. In addition, you may want to look up several of the synonyms you wrote down in **Step 1** (p 17). The result of this search will be a list of Scriptures. Scan this list and cull out the ones that don't seem to apply. Then, lookup each of the remaining verses in your own Bible, reading the paragraphs on either side of the verse in order to gain a context for that Scripture. If this seems like a passage that will shed insight on your Focus Word, then record the Scripture address below along with a brief summary so you'll remember what the passage is about.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7. What New Testament character (other than Jesus) positively models your Focus Word?

8. What New Testament character is a negative example of your Focus Word?

9. Where did Jesus model and/or teach your Focus Word?

Now that you have identified 9 New Testament verses/passages regarding your Focus Word, step back from your preliminary work for a moment. **Write out a prayer that reflects your heart impressions thus far.** *Lord, as I read these great verses of Scripture I...*



Step 10

Studying New Testament Passages (Part 1)

Date _____

CEMENT AND APPLY SO YOU WON'T DIE!

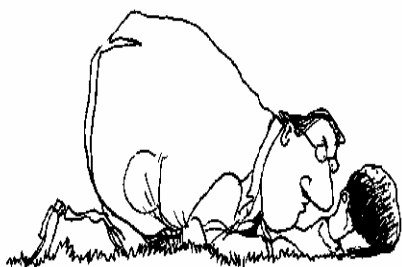
Remember, the reason we study the Scripture in depth is to build a solid base on which Christ can build His character qualities in our life. Study in context the first three passages you wrote down in **Step 9** (p 40). Use the following pattern for each passage.

- ✓ Study the verse in its context by reading slowly through the paragraph before and after, if not the whole chapter. Read the passage at least twice.
- ✓ What is the main principle/insight that the Lord seems to be screaming out concerning your Focus Word.
- ✓ Write a short, meaningful prayer to the Lord talking over with Him how you plan to live out the principle you discovered.

PASSAGE 1 _____

PASSAGE 2 _____

PASSAGE 3 _____



Step 11

Studying New Testament Passages (Part 2)

Date _____

BE BOLD WITH THE NEW (Testament)

DON'T STAND IN THE QUEUE (in line with the crowd)

BECAUSE THE LORD DISCIPLED A FEW (12 disciples)

THEY APPLIED WHAT THEY KNEW (build your base)

As you continue to build your foundation, study the next three passages you wrote down in **Step 9** (p 40-41). Once again, use the following pattern for each passage.

- ✓ Study the verse in its context by reading slowly through the paragraph before and after, if not the whole chapter. Read the passage at least twice.
- ✓ What is the main principle/insight that the Lord seems to be screaming out concerning your Focus Word.
- ✓ Write a short, meaningful prayer to the Lord talking over with Him how you plan to live out the principle you discovered.

PASSAGE 4 _____

PASSAGE 5 _____

PASSAGE 6 _____



Use the pages that follow to record additional New Testament passages that you come across that might help you further understand your Focus Word. Study them as time permits.

ADDITIONAL NOTES & PASSAGES

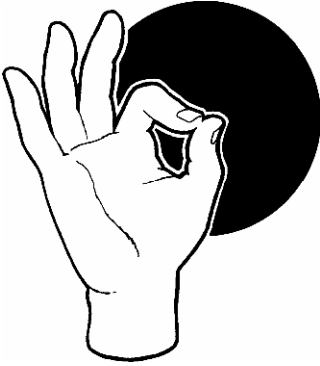


ADDITIONAL NOTES & PASSAGES



ADDITIONAL NOTES & PASSAGES





Step 12

New Testament Positive Character Study

Date _____

Today you will see your Focus Word fleshed out in the life of a New Testament character as you use the passage chosen in **Step 9** (p 41).

CHARACTER _____

PASSAGE _____

1. What in particular attracts you to this person (people)? What about this character do you most want to imitate?

2. What do you know about this person's life situation? How did God develop your Focus Word in the life of this person?

3. How specifically did this character rely on the power of the Lord to live out your Focus Word?

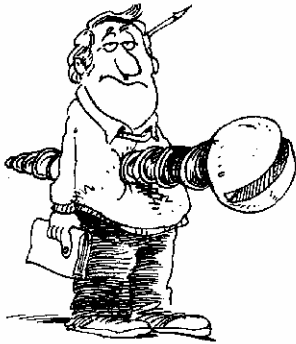
4. Did you discover a step by step process/progression through which this person grew to model your Focus Word? What were the steps?

5. How did living out your Focus Word impact the lives of the people around them or folks throughout history?

6. How specifically did the Lord seem to bless this person as they demonstrated your Focus Word?

7. Putting yourself in their sandals, how do you think you would have succeeded in living out your Focus Word in their context and culture?

8. *Lord, as I studied this New Testament character living out my Focus Word I ask...*



Step 13

New Testament Negative Character Study

Date _____

Today you will study the life of a New Testament character who failed to live out your Focus Word. Use the passage chosen in **Step 9** (p 41).

CHARACTER _____

PASSAGE _____

1. Why did you choose this person/people who negatively demonstrates your Focus Word?

2. What do you know about this person's life situation?

3. Why do you think they failed to live out your word?

4. Was there a step by step progression that led to their failure? What were the steps?

5. How did their failure to live out your Focus Word impact the lives of the people around them and throughout history?

6. What specific problems, curses or consequences did this person experience as a result of not making your Focus Word a central part of their lives?

7. Putting yourself in their loin cloth, what would you have done differently to succeed where they failed? Explain.

8. *Father, you know that I too have failed to live out this year's Focus Word. But in studying today's passage I ask You...*



Step 14

Jesus Models or Teaches Your Focus Word

Date _____

In Romans 8:29, God says that He longs for us to be “*conformed to the image of Christ.*” The word ‘image’ literally means ‘icon’ and an icon is the small representation of something (someone) greater. Put simply, when God ‘double clicks’ on your life, He expects Jesus to pop up! So take the next step in growing in the character of Christ by discovering your Focus Word in the life and teachings of Christ.

Start by thinking of familiar passages and ask yourself, “*Is Jesus modeling or teaching my Focus Word?*” I.e. Suppose your Focus Word is ‘prayer’. You may recall a time when Jesus taught His disciples to pray or when He pulled off by Himself to spend time with the Father. Find 1-2 of these passages using a concordance and write the reference down below. Perhaps you already have a few of these passages from your previous study in **Step 9** (p 41). If you are having trouble, ask for help **J**.

PASSAGE(S) _____

1. **What did Jesus teach concerning your word?** Perhaps during his sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7) or during his farewell speech to his disciples (John 14-17). Did one of his many parables teach a principle about your Focus Word?

2. How did Jesus model your Focus Word? Think about how Jesus related to God (i.e. submissive, obedient, yielded, confident in, dependent on, trusted in, etc.) What can you learn from the ways he related to people (the disciples, religious leaders, ‘sinners and tax collectors’, people in need, Nicodemus [John 3], Woman at the well [John 4], Blind Bartimaeus [Luke 10]. Does your Focus Word relate in any way to Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross?

Jesus, after studying my Focus Word in Your life I pray that...



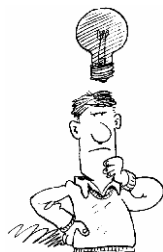
Step 15

New Testament Word Study

Date _____

The New Testament was written in Greek which is a very exacting and descriptive language. For example, in English we have one word for 'love' but the Greeks had at least four! So, once again, we ask you to study in order to magnify God's choice of your Focus Word in His Bible. Follow the pattern below.

1. Quickly scan the New Testament verses/passages you have studied thus far and choose one that interests you from **Step 9** (p 40-41) . For example, suppose your Focus Word is '**study**' God's Word and your key verse was **II Timothy 2:15**. "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth.*"
2. Using a Strong's Concordance that matches your version of the Bible, identify the word you want to study and record its identification number. For example, suppose you begin to wonder what the phrase/word '**handling accurately**' has to do with your Focus Word which is '**study**'. When you look it up the Strong's Concordance number is **3718** (Always look for the root word which is most often found in the numbers in the immediate vicinity. In this case the root is from 3716 and 3717.)
3. Now turn to the back of your Strong's Concordance and look up this identification number in the Greek dictionary. Example: There you will find the word '**orthotomeo**' meaning to '**cut straight, be exact, dissect.**'
4. Using a little divine imagination is there any insight you can discern as you reflect upon God's intended meaning of your Focus Word? For example, we get the word 'orthopedic' from the word '**orthotomeo.**' Of course an orthopedist is someone who specializes in cutting to make crooked or broken bones straight! If I am to be a



diligent workman who handles accurately God's truth then, like an orthopedist, I must seek to cut straight to what God says, not to what I think. And I must set straight the lies (broken truth) which cloud my own thinking.

5. Apply this simple definition/insight directly to your life. Example: I need to be more diligent about understanding and applying what God is saying to me from His Word. This will help me mend the 'bones' of my life which have been broken because of my sin. I notice that my marriage is limping along. One reason is because of some of the words I have spoken to my wife. Therefore, I must diligently study God's design for marriage (Ephesians 5:22-31) as well as put a sock in my mouth so I don't break any more bones (Ephesians 4:29).



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!



1. Scan the verses/passages you have studied to this point **Step 9** (p 40-41) and choose an interesting one which also contains your Focus Word or synonym.

Verse: _____

2. Using a Strong's Concordance that matches your version of the Bible, identify the word and record the Strong's identification number.

3. Look up this # in the dictionary in the back of a Strong's Concordance. The Greek word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is...

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition. Record any insights you gain.

5. Apply to my life situation by writing a one sentence prayer including a key insight.

TRY IT AGAIN. SAME SONG, DIFFERENT VERSE!



Because there may be several synonyms related to your Focus Word you may want to try the same process on a few other words found in the same or alternate verses.

1. Verse: _____

2. Using a Strong's Concordance that matches your version of the Bible, identify the word and record the Strong's identification number.

3. Look up this # in the dictionary in the back of a Strong's Concordance. The Greek word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is...

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition. Record any insights you gain.

5. Apply to my life situation by writing a one sentence prayer including a key insight.

YOU'RE GETTING THE HANG OF IT! TRY IT YET AGAIN!



Maybe there is a descriptor word (adjective, adverb) that modifies your Focus Word. Studying this word may give you further insight.

1. Verse: _____

2. Strong's identification number. # _____

3. The Greek word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is....

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition. Record any insights you gain as you reflect over why God would use this word.

5. Apply the insight by writing out a prayer which reflects the insight(s) that the Lord gave you.



LAST TIME!

1. Verse: _____

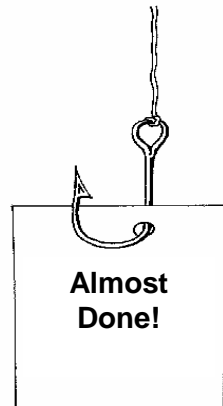
2. Strong's identification number. # _____

3. The Greek word is _____.

The definition(s) of the word is....

4. Using divine imagination reflect on the definition. Record any insights you gain as you reflect over why God would use this word.

5. Apply to my life situation by writing a one sentence prayer including a key insight.





Step 16

New Testament Summary

Date _____

If your pastor asked you to share the three most important New Testament insights you discovered regarding your Focus Word, what would they be?

Passage:

Principle:

Passage:

Principle:

Passage:

Principle:

What one New Testament verse has most gripped your heart which you will commit to memory?

What principle does your family most need to hear which you will teach them?

Now that you have discovered, through diligent study, what God has to say about your Focus Word let's make certain to keep living it out. Remember, our goal is life change not spiritual brownie points.

TELLING IS NOT TEACHING.

LISTENING IS NOT LEARNING.

ASSUMING IS NOT ASSIMILATING.

INFORMATION IS NOT TRANSFORMATION.

Describe an **ATTITUDE CHANGE** that must take place using a truth gleaned from your Focus Word.

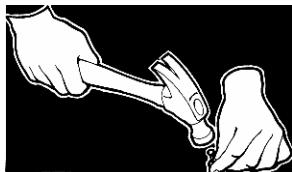
Describe a **HABIT** that must start, stop or change using a truth gleaned from your Focus Word.

Describe a **RELATIONSHIP** that must grow or become more intimate using a truth gleaned from your Focus Word.

Describe a **PRIORITY/GOAL** that must be realigned using a truth gleaned from your Focus Word.

Describe a **SITUATION** where a truth gleaned from your Focus Word must be applied.

Lord God, I do not have the wisdom, strength or will to make the changes You desire or live these truths out so I beg You...



Nail ing Down Your Focus Word

You have discovered what God has to say about your Focus Word. Now, consider tackling some practical assignments to further solidify this character area or discipline in your life.

Interview - This practical assignment is to interview someone. Literally, write out some questions and make an appointment with a person to discuss. You might interview someone whom you have observed in action living out the Focus Word you are trusting God will build into you. Perhaps someone whom you only know from a distance, but sense that you would benefit from hearing their story.

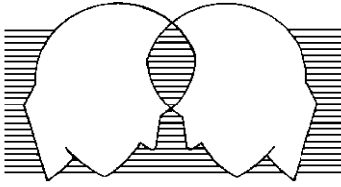
Book Review - This practical assignment is to read a book that directly or indirectly speaks to your Focus Word. Again, why not take advantage of someone else's thoughtful study and presentation of a topic. Perhaps you would choose a biography, and get the unique perspective of peering into the life of a fellow follower of Christ as he/she walked the journey.

In addition to gaining more information and perspective from other people, another great way to nail down your Focus Word is to give it away! Indeed, may we not be guilty of wallowing around in unlived truth. Instead, let's practice the "blessed to be a blessing" principle and give away the insights God has been teaching us.

Slice of Life – This practical assignment is to share some aspect of your life with a person who does not yet trust Christ. After all, our character development is never divorced from God's desire to see people come into relationship with Him. This assignment will help you build a bridge between a need in your friend's life and some aspect of what God's doing in your life (i.e. Focus Word area).

Teach a Lesson – This practical assignment asks you to seek out a venue to teach other believing people a thoughtful lesson relating to your Focus Word. We give you some guidelines to help you walk through the process, whether you think teaching is your thing or not. J

Pray and purpose to carry out as many of these as will help to make your Focus Word a part of your life. You'll find the details of all four of these on the following pages.



Interview

Some of your greatest and most underused resources are the people whom the Lord has sovereignly placed in your life. Imagine the centuries of untapped wisdom and life experience around you every day just waiting to be passed on to you? Think of the insight, counsel and encouragement that could be yours through a small investment of an hour or two.

People who are wiser, older, experienced, and seasoned! People who have walked with the Lord for decades, grown strong through weakness, softened their character through brokenness, and gained perspective through perseverance. People who have integrated life's invaluable lessons into every facet of their being through failure... failures you just may avoid if you listen intently to their hearts and zealously process their lifetime of understanding.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INTERVIEW!

First, think of just one person whom you respect and who seems to authentically model your Focus Word. Please realize that these people do not need to be perfect, famous, successful, or local. In fact, some of the best interviews will be the humble heroes of the faith who are quietly slugging it out every day in total dependency upon the Holy Spirit for strength. Perhaps you should interview someone who has failed greatly yet has been victoriously restored in the area in which you are struggling. You might know these folks or maybe you've admired them from a distance. We encourage you not to interview someone who is just easy to get to or with whom you are already familiar. Take a risk! Get to know others in the Body of Christ. Realize also that, not only will these interviews be valuable to you, but will be an encouragement to those interviewed!

Example 1: If your Focus Word is 'commitment' 'humility' or 'joy', *Robertson McQuilken* may be a great man to interview. This former president of Columbia International University proved his love and commitment to God's design for marriage by caring for his wife who suffered from Alzheimer's for 25 years.

Example 2: If your Focus Word is 'prayer' then perhaps a *prayer-warrior widow* would be a wise choice or a *missionary* who faced hard times overseas and survived only through persistent prayer. Or maybe

there is a church member whose prayer life draws you ever closer to the Lord when they pray.

Example 3: Perhaps your Focus Word is a role such as ‘nurturing father’. Then interview a *grandfather*, *step father*, or *dad* whose children are grown and could pass on to you a few secrets of parenting. Or, better yet, interview them along with their own children to gain a full perspective on their parenting patterns.

WHOM WOULD YOU LIKE TO INTERVIEW AND WHY?

When you set up your time to meet, make sure to choose a comfortable environment. Perhaps a meal at a quiet restaurant or a walk in a park. If appropriate, invite your spouse and even older children if they are at all interested in the topic. Once you set the time and place, send the person to be interviewed a list of specific questions you wish to discuss so that they can be pre-prayed and prepared for your time together. Emailing them might work best. Not all of your questions have to directly relate to your Focus Word. For instance, questions like ‘How do you maintain your spiritual vitality?’ Or ‘What parenting tips would you pass on to me in my season of life?’ might really be on your mind. End your time together in grateful prayer for the things gleaned through your conversation. And don’t forget to write a ‘Thank You’ note mentioning the things that impacted you the most.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

The following questions are offered to “prime your pump.”

1. My word for the year is “_____.” What principles has God taught you about this area of your life?
2. What process or experiences has the Lord used to develop this area in your life?
3. What did this area of life look like before you became a follower of Jesus?
4. Are there any "must read" books in the area of my Focus Word?
5. What does your devotional time look like? (i.e. when, where, what)
6. What is the most fruitful way of leading your family spiritually?
7. In terms of your children, how do you balance love and discipline?
8. What advice would you give to me as a young father?
9. How do you maintain your romance with your wife?
10. What does a typical Sabbath day look like for you?
11. Are there any "must read" books in the area of discipleship, marriage, parenting etc. that you would recommend?
12. How do you specifically resolve conflict with the various members of your family?

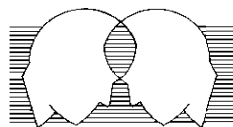
13. Who are some of the people who have had the most influence on you spiritually?
14. Do you have any hints on how to help a child learn how to share?
15. What is the greatest truth the Lord has taught you?
16. How do you get and stay motivated for God?
17. How do you maintain your spiritual vitality? Practices/disciplines?
18. What do you think my generation really needs to hear from God?
19. Have you ever been discipled? What was it like? Have you ever discipled someone else? How?
20. What has been your greatest success in life? To what do you attribute it?
21. What are the most important lessons you learned growing up which you are determined to teach your children?
22. What 3 questions will you ask Jesus when you meet face to face?
23. What has been your greatest failure in life? What would you do over and why? How would you do it?
24. What is your favorite passage of Scripture? Why?
25. Who is your favorite Bible character? Why?
26. What has been the biggest test of your faith in the past few years?
27. What do you do as a couple when you are not unified with each other on a particular issue or decision?
28. Who handles the finances in your home? Do you have a budget? How do you stick to it?
29. How do you avoid child-centered parenting?
30. How do you make Sunday special for your family and the Lord?
31. What have been the most difficult decisions of your life? Why?
32. What do you do to reduce the negative effect of TV on your kids?
33. Who are your heroes and what makes them a hero?
34. Do you have a habit of memorizing scripture and how has it changed your life?
35. How do you balance the different demands and pressures of life?
36. In your sphere of influence who do you most desire to come to Christ? What ways have you found to be effective in sharing the Gospel with your friends?
37. Is there anything else you perceive I need to hear or learn?

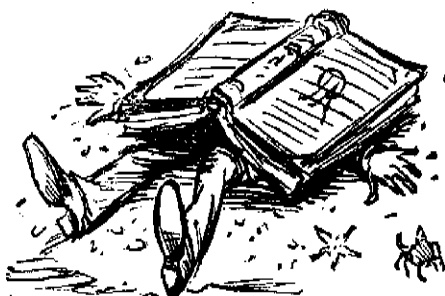
Additional Questions

Be sure to write a thank you letter for their investment in your life!

NOTES FROM MY INTERVIEW

Person interviewed _____ Date _____





Book Review

An extremely valuable resource for developing your Focus Word is to simply read a book.

LEARNING FROM WHAT OTHERS HAVE WRITTEN

God has called you to be a leader in your home, church and in the marketplace. He has called you to represent Him with excellence as an ambassador. One way to grow and mature in your leadership is by reading and applying the insights that others have written under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Simply put, he who reads leads! In order to drive your word for the year even deeper into your heart and extend it even deeper into your areas of influence, we encourage you to work your way through one or two books this year which touch upon your Focus Word. Here are a few guidelines.

1. Choose wisely a book which will help you to deepen your understanding as to how the Lord desires to develop your Focus Word into your life. Perhaps it is a book that has been on your night stand for the past three years laughing at you every night before you go to bed! Biographies of faithful Christians throughout history are often good choices. Maybe you have a favorite author who addresses your area of interest. You may want to ask other folks about books which the Lord has used in their lives that are related to, or speak directly about your area of interest. Maybe you may want to read together the same book with your spouse, child, or discipleship partner. See the list of book titles starting on the next page for some ideas.

2. Read prayerfully! Each time you sit down to read, stop for a moment to ask the Lord to soften your heart and alert your mind to His insights for your life. Listen for the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth through the writings of His men and women.

3. Make It Yours! Be sure to mark up, highlight and take margin notes as you read for better retention and a future resource tool you will revisit. If the book is good enough to read, it is good enough to own.

4. Give It Away! As you are plowing through your book, periodically share an insight you gleaned with your wife, child, small group or

friend. The more you articulate to others what you learned the more you will both remember and process the truths.

5. Nail It Down! We suggest that, as you read through your book(s), that you stop at the end of each chapter to write out a single sentence describing the insight or application which God most placed on your heart.

6. Listen Up! There are many books available on cassette which can be listened to as you drive. Be sure to check out this possibility at your Christian book store or church library or favorite internet site for books. There are a lot of quality video series available too.

7. Read it to the Father! Have you ever considered reading a book aloud as though God Himself is listening. It's an awesome experience to read and then stop at various points for praise, prayers of conviction or quiet reflection with the Father. Reading a book to the Lord as if He were seated near you is guaranteed to deepen your intimacy with Him.

The book I plan to read this year is

Following the D-I-S-C-I-P-L-E acrostic that you will recognize from page 12, we are recommending titles under each area. We realize that new resources (books, tapes, videos, etc.) are coming out all the time, so use this list as a starting point. Visit the internet, the local book store or ask a friend for more ideas.

DOMINATED BY GOD'S GRACE IN CHRIST.

Abraham by Swindoll

David, A Man After God's Own Heart by Swindoll

Desiring God by Piper

The Discipline of Grace by Bridges

Elijah, A Man Of Heroism and Humility by Swindoll

Experiencing God by Blackaby

A Gentle Thunder by Lucado

God Came Near by Lucado

God: Discover His Character by Bright

The Grace Awakening by Swindoll

The Holiness Of God by Sproul

Humility by Murray

A Hunger for God by Piper

Incredible Moments With The Savior by Gire

Intense Moments With The Savior by Gire



Intimate Moments With The Savior by Gire
Into The Depths of God by Miller
The Jesus I Never Knew by Yancy
Knowing God by Packer
Loving God by Colson
Man In The Mirror by Morley
The Practice of the Presence of God by Lawrence
The Pursuit Of God by Tozer
Sacred Romance by Curtis & Eldridge
The Secrets of the Vine by Wilkerson
Six Hours One Friday by Lucado
Transforming Grace by Bridges
What's So Amazing About Grace by Yancy

INSPIRED DAILY BY GOD'S WORD.

Abide In Christ by Murray
Absolute Surrender by Murray
Beneath The Surface by Reccord
Biblical Ethics by McQuilkin
Chosen By God by Sproul
Cultivating a Life for God by Cole
Experiencing Spiritual Breakthroughs by Wilkerson
Fresh Power by Cimbala
Godliness Through Discipline by Adams
Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret by Taylor
In His Steps by Sheldon
Keeping In Step With The Spirit by Packer
Knowing Scripture by Sproul
Lord, I Want To Know You by Arthur
A Love Worth Giving by Lucado
Margins by Swenson
My Utmost For His Highest by Chambers
Ordering Your Private World by MacDonald
Racing To Win by Gibbs

SURRENDERED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Green Letters by Stanford
The Life You've Always Wanted by Ortberg
The Mind of Christ by Hunt
The Power Of True Success by Inst. Basic Life Principles
The Pursuit Of Holiness by Bridges
Traveling Light by Lucado
Using Your Money Wisely by Burkett
The Westminster Confession
What The Bible Is All About by Meirs



COMMITTED TO THE WORK OF PRAYER.

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire by Cimbala
How To Listen To God by Stanley
Intercessory Prayer by Sheetz
Power Through Prayer by Bounds
The Prayer of Jabez by Wilkerson
The Prayer of Jesus by Hanegraaff
Praying Through The Bible by Moore
Restoring Your Spiritual Passion by MacDonald
Too Busy Not To Pray by Hybels
Waiting On God by Murray
With Christ In The School Of Prayer by Murray

INVOLVED IN THE CHURCH'S WORK & WORSHIP.

Company of the Commited by Trueblood
Dedication and Leadership by Hyde
Disciples Are Made, Not Born by Henrichsen
Game Plan by Buford
Half Time by Buford
John Wesley by Miller
The Seven Laws Of A Learner by Wilkerson
Spiritual Gifts Inventory
Spiritual Leadership by Sanders
They Smell Like Sheep: 21st Century Leaders by Anderson
With Christ In The School Of Disciple Making by Wilson

PURSUES THE LOST WITH PASSION.

The Alpha Course
Becoming A Contagious Christian by Hybels
The Big Picture by Bowers
The Christian Persuader by Ford
Christianity Explained by Bennett
Discovery Series: How To Share Your Faith by CCBT
Everyday Evangelism by Eisenman
Gentle Persuasion by Aldrich
How To Give Away Your Faith by Little
How To Reach Secular People by Hunter
Inside The Mind Of Unchurched Harry & Mary by Strobel
Know And Tell The Gospel by Chapman
Lifestyle Evangelism by CBMC
Life Works by Ambassadors For Christ
Living Proof by Peterson
The Master Plan Of Evangelism by Coleman
One Verse Method by Jones
Out Of The Salt Shaker by Pippert



The Power Of Story by Ford
Questioning Evangelism by Newman
Share Jesus Without Fear by Bright
Show And Then Tell by Humphreys
Surprising Insights From The Unchurched by Rainer
Tell The Truth by Metzger
What Would Jesus Say by Strobel
Witnessing Without Fear by Bright

LOVES OTHERS AS A SERVANT.

Calvary Road by Hession
Conspiracy of Kindness by Sjogren
Hand Me Another Brick by Swindoll
If You Want To Walk On Water, You've Got To Get Out Of The Boat by Ortberg
Improving Your Serve by Swindoll
Living Above The Level Of Mediocrity by Swindoll
Moses, A Man Of Selfless Dedication by Swindoll
The Great Commandment Principle by Ferguson

EXEMPLIFIES FAITH AT HOME.

The Act of Marriage by LaHaye
Anchor Man by Farrar
Building Your Marriage by Rainey
Dare To Discipline by Dobson
The Effective Father by MacDonald
Faith Training by White
Family Life by Swindoll
Financial Peace by Ramsey
The Five Languages Of Love by Chapman
How To Keep Your Kids On Your Team by Stanley
Magnificent Marriage by MacDonald
Point Man by Farrar
Power Of A Praying Husband by Omartian
Power Of A Praying Parent by Omartian
Preparing For Adolescence by Dobson
Raising Boys by Dobson
Seven Seasons Of A Man's Life by Morley
Strike The Original Match by Swindoll
Tender Warrior by Weber
What Kids Need Most In A Dad by Hansel
Wild At Heart by Eldridge





Notes, Quotes & Anecdotes

Record your insights and principles below.

A Slice Of Life



The mark of spiritual maturity is not defined by how much we read the Bible or by how well we have studied a Focus Word. The mark of a Christ-like maturity is how our lives impact others for Christ (John 15:34-35; I John 3:16-17). God never intended for us to simply mature in a vacuum. Since you can only impart what you truly possess, the true test of really having something is giving it away! God has not given you a year's worth of truth to keep it to yourself. In this Life Assignment we are asking you to give away a single principle or insight concerning your Focus Word to someone who does not yet have a relationship with the Lord.

For example, let's say your Focus Word is 'prayer' or 'patience.' Then in the next week, look for an opportunity to share a slice of your life with your unbelieving friend. You might share something like this:

*"Bill, during the past few weeks you have mentioned several times the incredible pressure and worry in your life at home. **This year I have learned that when I experience pressure or worries, instead of letting it kill me, I talk to God in prayer first so that He and I can handle it together.** I just wanted to let you know that I will be praying for you that God would teach you to go to Him with your concerns so that He will draw your heart to Him and give you His peace."*

OR

"Dan, could I take a minute to tell you what I have been learning about patience. You've mentioned to me on a few occasions these last weeks how you have lost it a few times at home. Well, it happens to me too. God has been teaching me that when I selfishly look short term at how my needs are not being met at the moment I react with impatience rather than respond with kindness. Just the other day as I was becoming impatient with my kids while watching a football game He reminded me that my kids are more important in this season of life than my pleasure and that He would give me the relaxation I need in other ways if I just trust Him. It really gave me the perspective I needed to respond rather than react."

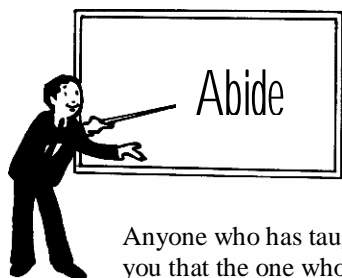
We are asking you to follow this example and to give away something appropriate that God has taught you while studying your Focus Word which you think would help to encourage your friend. Remember, there are no formulas! Let the Spirit guide you.

PRAYER Start by praying for your friend. Use Colossians 4:2-6 as a guideline, lifting up the various phrases and insights to the Lord. List a few specific things to pray for your friend and yourself as you step forward to share a slice of your life.

CARE Make sure your relationship is genuine and authentic as you move forward motivated by love and not this assignment. A great way is to simply listen for the heart felt concerns in your friend's life so that you can respond appropriately, matching something God has taught you with something he/she needs to hear. List a few of the needs or concerns you have heard from your friend below.

SHARE Prayerfully think through and write out a sentence or two (slice) of something you learned which you will tell your friend in the power of the Holy Spirit. It doesn't have to be polished, or politically correct. Just real and from your heart. Don't memorize it. Just be familiar and comfortable enough with what you want to say to not cave in at the last minute. Ask the Lord to help you build a bridge between what is on your heart to share and a legitimate need in your friend's life. The goal at this point is not to share the Gospel, but to open the door wide for them to hear the Gospel from you soon.

Remember that God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. One courageously overflowing elevator operator said, "I'm just a NOBODY telling EVERYBODY about SOMEBODY who can save ANYBODY!"



TEACHING YOUR FOCUS WORD

Anyone who has taught God's Word at any level will tell you that the one who passes on God's truth to others is not only greatly blessed by the experience but almost always grows more than the students. In this Life Assignment we are asking you to teach some of the highlights of what God has put on your heart while studying your Focus Word to an audience you feel could greatly benefit from what you have learned. For example: your small group, Sunday School class, children's class, a group of Christian neighbors, Men's group, AA meeting, elders/deacons meeting, devotional for a retreat.

As you put together a simple lesson, the planning format below might help guide you through the process.

AUDIENCE

DATE

TIME

PRAYER TEAM (2-3 folks who will be praying for you specifically)

THEME (In a single sentence what is the 1 thing you want to say)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES(S)

PRINCIPLES (1-3 insights to flesh out your theme)

ILLUSTRATIONS

APPLICATIONS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

HANDOUTS

VISUAL AIDS

ROOM SET UP

*"For Ezra had set his heart
to study the law of the Lord and
to practice it, and
to teach His statutes and ordinances
in Israel."*

Ezra 7:10





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