

CRAFTING A SPIRITUAL GROWTH PLAN (SGP) DECEMBER 2021

Definition: A Spiritual Growth Plan (SGP) is an intentional, thought through, and written out plan that describes and defines what you believe God would have you do to walk with Him and grow spiritually. It has long been the understanding of men and women of God through the ages that God causes us to grow, but it is our responsibility to put ourselves in the position to grow. There are certain resources and disciplines that have long been recognized as “means of grace” that God has ordained to nurture our spiritual life. A spiritual growth plan is simply thinking through and personalizing how we will incorporate these things into our lives.

Focus for 2022: Build your relationship/friendship with God. Remember that God desires to have a relationship/friendship with you. This is why Jesus came, to restore relationship.

John 15:15 “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing but *I have called you friends*, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made know to you.”

Revelation 3:20 “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, *I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with Me.*”

From “Knowing God” “What happens is that the almighty Creator, the Lord of hosts, the great God before whom the nations are as a drop in the bucket, comes to you and begins to talk to you through the words of Holy Scripture. You come to realize as you listen that God is actually opening His heart to you, *making friends with you* and enlisting you as a colleague, a covenant partner. It is a staggering thing, but it is true, the relationship in which sinful human beings know God is one in which God, so to speak, takes them onto His staff, to be henceforth His fellow workers and *personal friends*.

Elements of a SGP

Connecting to God: By far the two things that God will use most powerfully and frequently in our lives to grow us and help us stay connected to Him are His Word and prayer. At the most basic level He speaks to us through His Word and we respond through prayer. This is how our relationship with Him is nurtured and sustained. So, the most significant thing that we can and should include in a spiritual growth plan is how we will read the Word devotionally (thoughtfully and responsively). We recommend as a starting point 30 minutes for such devotional reading of the Bible. Twenty minutes to read and reflect on what we read and ten minutes to respond in prayer to what He has shown us in His Word and speak with Him about other concerns we may have. In a plan include when you will do this, where, for how long, and what portion(s) of the Bible you will read.

Tips and Tools

Begin simply, but clearly. Plan ahead.

Give yourself lots of grace. He does! If you blow it, just start afresh. This is a friendship to be cultivated, not a task to be completed. Remember John 1 says Jesus is “full of grace”.

Try the New Testament portion of Woodlands in the Word as a good simple tool for a reading plan. If you are new at this or life is crazy right now aim for 3x a week instead of 5x.

Base your plan on YOUR life, not someone else’s. Each season of life is different, with unique challenges and opportunities.

Reevaluate and make changes as necessary. If it’s not working.... try a different approach. The key is to find what helps you connect with God. It will look different for everyone.