

GROW

Grow is a framework for our discipleship, to help us live in the story of God and to develop as disciples of Jesus.

WHY GROW?

Our individual and corporate transformation is at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul (the author of many of the letters in the New Testament), says that we 'are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory.' As a result of this ongoing transformation, we begin to reflect more of God's character - more love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control - and who doesn't want more of that? God's desire is to reshape us into His likeness.

WHAT IS GROW?

Grow is designed to help each of us in two ways. First, Grow is intended to guide our growth into the likeness of Christ. All of us are growing and changing, but we need something to guide our growth. Justin Whitmel Earley in his book *The Common Rule* describes how our lives can be like Carolina jasmine plants. Without a trellis, these plants sprawl out everywhere and damage other plants. But, if they're given a trellis, they can grow into the beautiful plants they were designed to be. In the same way, Grow is a framework of habits that acts like a trellis to guide our ongoing transformation.

Second, Grow is designed to help us live in the unfolding story of God. There are many

competing stories in our culture that try to shape our lives, but we want God and His story to shape us before any other. The story we live in is crucial because the story we live in is the story we live out. In Romans 12:2 Paul writes, 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' We want to live in God's unfolding story and to be transformed in the process.

WHY FOCUS ON HABITS?

The framework of Grow is built around daily, weekly, monthly and yearly habits. Grow focuses on habits because they can play such a significant part in directing who we are becoming. George Orwell reportedly once said, 'At 50, everyone has the face they deserve.' We are, in part, the product of our habits and choices.



Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different than it was before.

C. S. LEWIS

I FIND KEEPING HABITS HARD...

You're not alone - we all find it challenging to sustain spiritual habits. We're all in different life stages which bring different freedoms and restrictions which can make some habits harder than others. With that in mind, Grow isn't a prescriptive list of habits to do at certain times and in certain ways. Instead, Grow is a counter-cultural invitation to explore the heart of these habits and weave them into your life.

On top of that, lots of us learn and absorb information in different ways. Some folks like nothing better than delving deep into a theological book to help them unpack the Bible. Whereas other people find that idea less appealing. The question of how we engage with a particular habit is almost as important as the habit itself.



Discipleship is about how we live;
not just the decisions we make,
not just the things we believe,
but a state of being.

ROWAN WILLIAMS

Introducing the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly habits behind Grow.

WHAT ARE THE GROW HABITS?

Each category of habits has a different emphasis. Our daily habits are centred around the Bible and prayer. Our weekly habits underpin our engagement with the church community. The monthly habits foster deep relationships with others and our yearly habits offer us the opportunity to pause and reflect on God's work in our inner lives.



DAILY HABITS

Our daily habits are centred on our individual relationships with God and how we can engage with him throughout the day through the Bible and prayer.



WEEKLY HABITS

Our weekly habits are focused on the church community and how we can help one another grow in our faith.



MONTHLY HABITS

Our monthly habits are about intentionally developing deep relationships with others in the Bay Church community.



YEARLY HABITS

Yearly habits are designed to help you reflect on your discipleship to Jesus and to identify areas you'd like to focus on over the next year.

HOW DO I MAKE THE MOST OF GROW?

This guide outlines everything that Grow is about. We'll walk you through the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly habits by setting a vision for each one as well as giving you some ideas about what they could look like in your own life. But, as we hinted earlier, Grow isn't a set of rigid habits. Grow is an invitation to think about how you can welcome more of God's transformative work into your life. How that works out may look slightly different from one person to another. But each of us are chasing after the same core things that the habits are built on.

HOW DO I USE THIS GUIDE?

Each category of habits (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly) is expressed in the same way. We start by casting a vision for each category and explaining the focus behind each one. Then we offer some examples of what they could look like in practice. After all that, it's over to you with plenty of space to note down your own habits that you'd like to develop (and some of our ideas if you're stuck).

THE GROW HABITS



Dedicate, divert and dwell daily.

A VISION FOR DAILY HABITS

When it comes to daily habits, some of us may jump to the idea of having a 'quiet time' with God. Having a daily slot with God is great, but it can easily become another task to complete or the only engagement with God throughout the day. We want habits that punctuate our daily lives with the presence of God. We want to develop daily habits that invite the transformative work of God into our lives throughout the whole day. So, what does that look like? We've framed the daily habits in three words: dedicate, divert and dwell.

DEDICATE

There are so many things that fight for our attention from the moment we wake up - social media, our bank balances, breaking news headlines, and loads more. These things demand our attention because they want to invite us into other stories that are often characterised by fear and anxiety. We want to dedicate our day to setting ourselves in God's unfolding story and His reality. This matters because the story we live in is the story we live out. How can you dedicate your day to God by reaching out to Him before anything or anyone else?

DIVERT

Our days can be so fast and full with all the different responsibilities and mental loads that we carry. And, before we know it, another day is gone. We want to cultivate a daily habit that helps us to be present to the God who is ever-present to us. Christians have sought to do this in different ways over the centuries. The Daily Office, for example, is one of those ways. The Daily Office is a series of liturgical prayers that are designed to set each day within the context of prayer. For example, in the Church of England, each day has 'morning prayer,' 'prayer during the day,' 'evening prayer,' and 'night prayer.' We love how the heart of the Daily Office tries to reorientate our gaze towards God repeatedly throughout the day.

DWELL

Have you ever heard of the secular and sacred divide? It's often used as a way to describe how we tend to view things as either inherently 'un-spiritual' or 'spiritual.' Jesus didn't seem to suggest that some things are spiritual and some things aren't. In fact, he often used agricultural analogies to point to spiritual realities. For example, in Luke 8 Jesus teaches the parable of the sower which he uses to talk about the variety

of ways that people respond to the word of God. He blurs the lines between the things that people designated to 'spiritual' and 'non-spiritual' categories.

We think that there are loads of regular habits throughout our days that are bursting with spiritual potential. For example, we all have to eat and eating a meal isn't just a functional thing about getting food into our bodies. One of the things that we love about Jesus is that he is always eating and drinking with people. In fact, he eats and drinks so much that some people accused him of being a 'glutton and a drunkard' (Matthew 11:19). But Jesus understood the relational and spiritual power of a meal. In the same way, we can take something ordinary (like a meal) and, with a bit of thought and creativity, turn it into a habit that helps us to dwell in God's presence.



DEDICATE

What habit could you cultivate to help dedicate each day to God?

DIVERT

What habit could you develop to help you divert to be with God?

DWELL

What habit can you cultivate to help you dwell with God during the day?

IDEAS: DEDICATE

- Start the day well. Begin with the Bible and allow God's unfolding story to shape you before anything else. Reach for it before a phone. There are loads of resources to help you engage with the Bible in different ways. We love the HTB Bible in One Year and 24-7 Prayer's Lectio 365. If there are others in your home, you could make a habit of reading the Bible together.
- Pause before you walk out the door and pray about whatever lies ahead of you. Dedicate your day to God and all that it involves.
- Place Bible verses above your sink where you brush your teeth (or in other prominent places) and commit them to memory.

IDEAS: DIVERT

- Commit to diverting to be with God at specific moments throughout your day. Lunchtimes and break times can be ideal times to divert. You could choose to recite some scripture by committing it to memory or by reading a set prayer like the Lord's Prayer.

IDEAS: DWELL

- Meditate on a particular verse of scripture during your day.
- Another way of 'dwelling' with Jesus can be by doing what he says (John 2:5). Ask him throughout your day what he's saying and spend a few moments listening. He might bring someone to mind to pray for, a person who may need an encouraging message or he may want to say something to you specifically.
- Are there any other ways you could acknowledge the presence of Jesus with you throughout the day? For example, you could light a candle a mealtimes to remind you of God's presence with you.

Make a habit of loving others weekly.

A VISION FOR WEEKLY HABITS

Trying to be a follower of Jesus doesn't work very well when we go at it alone - we need other people to nurture us and draw us deeper into the likeness of Christ. We desperately need the love and encouragement of others as well as the opportunity to love and encourage others too. We need each other and that's why we want to frame our weekly habits around being with one another.

In everything we do as a community, we want to make love our aim. We want to nurture a church community where people can be fully known and fully loved and where they can know others and love them fully too. Jesus encourages us to love each other in the same way that he loved us (tough call, right?)



A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

JOHN 13:34

In John 13:35, Jesus goes on to explain that people will know that we are His disciples by how we love one another. How we love one another, according to Jesus, is a hallmark of our discipleship. But, as we know, disciples of Jesus

aren't always great at loving each other. The church is full of beautiful yet broken people who sometimes get things wrong. So, what do we do about that? We can't create a community of people who love each other well by just describing it. We need to talk about what helps us stick together through the good times and the bad.

We believe one of the key ingredients to a community of disciples that love one another deeply is *commitment*. Commitment is an increasingly counter-cultural concept in our society. In our culture, we often look to our feelings to guide us. We love if we *feel* like loving someone. But love demands commitment and, sometimes, it needs us to choose to love too. In fact, we're not sure that love and commitment can be separated. In 1 Corinthians 13:7 Paul describes love as something that perseveres - it sticks with someone through thick and thin.

We want to help each other make a habit of love as part of our discipleship at Bay Church. So, what could that look like in the context of our habits? Here are three ways of fleshing this out:

BE WITH US

We can't love each other at arms length. Making love a habit starts by making a choice to be in community with others. Start by making a habit of *being with* the Bay Church community on Sundays, for example. We're asking everyone to commit to being at one service each Sunday. We all need to be encouraged by other

Christians, nourished by the Word and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live effectively as disciples of Jesus in the world.

LOVE OTHERS

We think one of the best places to make love a habit is in our bi-weekly Bay Groups. Bay Groups are one of the primary places within the life of the church where we can grow in our faith and in relationship with one another. We hope that they are places where people can experience a mutual sense of belonging, love, encouragement and challenge.

But, we miss the point of Bay Groups if we make them all about what we get from them. Bay Groups are a great environment to practice our habits of loving other people. A little bit of love goes a long way. How can you love people in your Bay Group? Perhaps you can make a habit of sending an encouraging text or checking in with someone, for example.

SERVE OTHERS

One of the other ways that we can make a habit of loving others is through serving each other practically. We have loads of Crews at Bay Church and they all help to make things happen. If we didn't have people on Crews, we wouldn't be able to serve each other coffee, or have children's work or youth work.



BE WITH US

Have you made a habit of being with us on Sundays at Bay Church?

LOVE OTHERS

What habit can you develop that would help you to love others in your Bay Group well?

SERVE OTHERS

What habits of service can you cultivate in your life to help you serve others?

IDEAS: BE WITH US

- Have you made a home at a particular service on a Sunday? Have you made a priority during your weekend amidst the other things that compete for your time?

IDEAS: LOVE OTHERS

- Have you joined a Bay Group? There are loads of Bay Groups that take place once a fortnight across the bay. Each group meets on a different night of the week to make them as accessible as possible.

Go to bay.church/groups to find out more and to join a group.

- If you're in a Bay Group how can you cultivate a bi-weekly habit that helps you to love others in your Bay Group? Perhaps you could make a habit of sending someone an encouraging text or inviting someone over once a month to get to know them better, for example.

IDEAS: SERVE OTHERS

- Can you make love a habit by serving the Bay Church community as part of a Crew?

Go to bay.church/crews to find out about all the different crews, what they do and how you can get stuck in.

Cultivate habits that nurture deep relationships which encourage and challenge you.

A VISION FOR MONTHLY HABITS

Our hope is that everyone can experience loving and deep relationships with other people at Bay Church. As we mentioned earlier, being a follower of Jesus is tough, but it's even harder when we try and do it on our own. We want to nurture deep relationships between people where they can encourage and challenge one another. But relationships like these don't happen by accident. Relationships like this need wisdom, intentionality, and plenty of time for trust to grow. But, more than anything, they need a willingness to be honest and vulnerable with one another. Brené Brown puts the need for vulnerability brilliantly.



Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.

BRENÉ BROWN

So, how can we create an environment where deep relationships can flourish?

We'd love to introduce you to Tables. Tables is an hour spent with two other people once a month where you can encourage and challenge one another in your discipleship to Jesus.

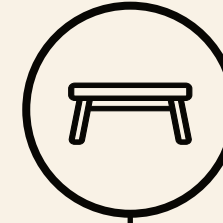
The idea of Tables is based on the experience of the disciples of Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-25. As they were walking along the road to Emmaus they shared their hurts and disappointments about the recent crucifixion of Jesus. Suddenly, they were joined by a man who began to explain to them why Jesus needed to die according to the scriptures. Eventually, they ended up sharing a meal together around a table. During their meal the man revealed himself as the risen Jesus!

In a similar way, our hope is that Tables provides a space where people can go deeper in their faith together, to share life's heartaches and joys, and to encounter the presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit together.

Each gathering is just an hour a month. This is to keep the time you spend together as focussed as possible. The hour follows the same pattern each month. It is split into three slots with some guidance and questions for you to work through each time. The three slots are: Share, Ask, Invite. The first 15 minutes is spent sharing with one another about how the last month has been. The

next 15 minutes are spent inviting one another to ask each other questions about what you have shared. The final half an hour is spent praying for one another. To find out what a Table looks like in more detail head over to:

bay.church/tables



INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS

How can you cultivate habits that enable you to develop deep relationships that encourage and challenge you?

IDEAS: INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS

- Cultivate a monthly habit of taking someone out for coffee that you want to get to know better.
- Some of the most spiritually formative times in our lives are the hardest ones. Could you cultivate a monthly habit to check in with someone you know of who's going through a troubling time? Deep friendships are often formed in difficult times.

STICK WITH IT

Deep relationships can take time and effort... What habit can you cultivate to help create deep relationships with others?

IDEAS: STICK WITH IT

- Whatever habits you're trying to cultivate to develop deep relationships, don't stop trying! The temptation to stop or give up can be really strong from time to time. Relationships like these nearly always take longer than we think to develop.
- Life is hard. Living as a Christian is really hard. The Bible is honest about the reality of our lives between now and when Jesus comes back - it's going to be hard. Tough times give us a choice. We can either push the church community away or we can pull ourselves towards them. How can you choose to engage with the church community even when life is tough?

ASK SOMEONE

Who could you ask to join a Table with you? Or, who could you invite for a coffee?

IDEAS: ASK SOMEONE

- If you'd like to create a Table, try asking two other people to join you. We know it can be a bit scary and it can take a lot of courage to ask. But the potential rewards far outweigh the risks. If you're really stuck or those that you wanted to create a Table with are already in one, drop Pete an email at pete@bay.church and we'll do what we can to create a Table for you.

Develop yearly habits to help you pause, reflect and review each year.

A VISION FOR YEARLY HABITS

There are always loads of shows on TV looking back at the past year during the gap between Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. And you probably find yourself remembering things that you had completely forgotten about or seeing past things in a new way. We think that habits that help us pause, reflect and review all that has gone before us can be incredibly powerful. When we pause and look back, we are able to gain insights and new perspectives that we wouldn't have been able to gain otherwise. So, what could a yearly review look like?

PAUSE

Sometimes half the battle can be against the relentless busyness of our lives. We must be intentional about putting our lives on pause for a set time. If we're not intentional about doing that, we'll never do it.

REFLECT & REVIEW

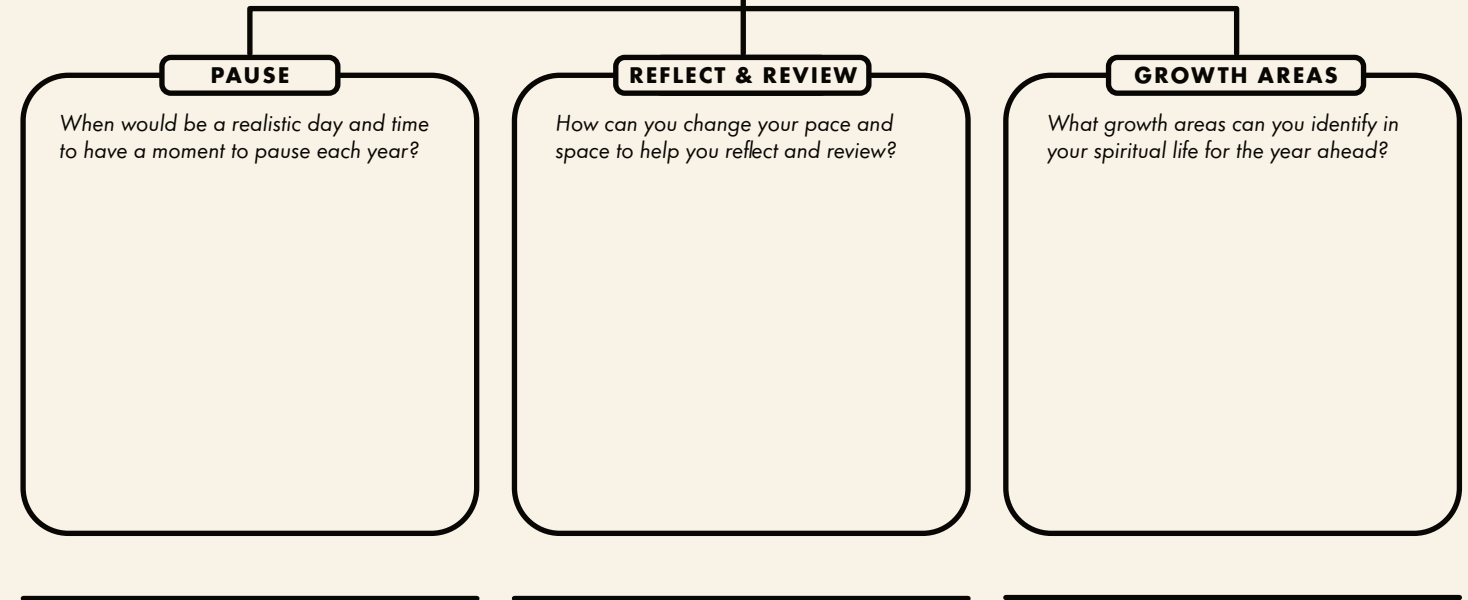
A change of pace and a change of place offers a change of perspective. If we are to get the best out of yearly habits, we need to change the pace and space that we're in. For example, some people make a habit of going away on an annual retreat.

Whatever specific habit you cultivate to help you reflect, we think it's crucial to get away from the hustle and bustle of life. And, more specifically, where you can be quiet with God. The idea of quiet time out with God can freak some of us out - especially those of us who are extroverts! But, as Elijah discovered in 1 Kings 19:12, God's voice is often a still small voice that can easily get drowned out by the noise of life. Our lives can be like a glass of murky water which is constantly shaken up by the things of life. Time to reflect and to be quiet with God allows the murky water of our lives to gradually settle and for us to see more clearly as a result.

Wherever you go and for however long you go there for, we think it's really important to have something to help you review the last year. Or, in other words, to help you pay attention to the things that God has said, the things that he has done and the things that he wants to do in and through you in the future. There are loads of resources out there to help you do just that. But one of the ones that we really like is the Spiritual Health check. You can download the PDF at: bay.church/grow The Spiritual Health check is a series of exercises to work through to help you identify how you're doing and how you'd like to grow in future.

GROWTH AREAS

A yearly moment to reflect and review can help us to identify areas in our spiritual lives that need attention or where we want to develop. You might, for example, notice that you want to dig deeper into the Bible. Or, alternatively, you might notice that you're in a season where God seems quiet and prayer is unnatural and difficult. Whatever it might be for you, it can be helpful to acknowledge a need and commit to something to help you over the next year but without overdoing it. It can be really easy to commit to a new habit, resource, course or book before realising after a few weeks that we have bitten off more than we can chew. Whatever growth area you have identified, commit to something that is achievable and reasonable.



IDEAS: PAUSE

- Make a habit of pausing once a year. Be intentional and book a day and time in your diary that is unlikely to change or be challenged by competing diary demands.

IDEAS: REFLECT & REVIEW

- Where can you go to get away from the hustle and bustle of normal life? It could be a retreat centre or somewhere outside in creation.
- What resources can you use to help you go through a spiritual review? We have put together the Spiritual Health check which can be downloaded as a PDF from: bay.church/grow

IDEAS: GROWTH AREAS

- What growth areas have you identified? What resources could you make use of to help you grow in these areas? We've provided a load of recommended resources towards the back of this booklet that may be helpful to you.
- Could you share the growth areas you have identified with someone else? Other people can often spot things that we can't and can offer a helpful and external perspective.

Try transforming your existing habits.

Each of us have regular habits that we go through each day. Some of them might be habits that we all have (like eating and drinking) and others might be unique to us. We want to encourage you to think about the existing habits in your day and how you could transform those into moments that welcome something of the presence of God into your day. It might take a bit of thought and a bit of creativity, but we think it's totally worth it. So, here are three steps that you can follow with some guidance on how you can transform some of your existing habits

TRACK

What habits do you have throughout the day? Start by jotting down everything you can think of (even if it's something like cleaning your teeth)

TRANSFORM

This is where it can get really fun! What can you do to bring something of the presence of God into your existing habits? For example, you could put some bible verses above your sink to read whilst you're brushing your teeth.

TEST

Try it out. Did it work? Don't get too hung up if things don't work or you forget. Just keep going and keep trying until you find ways to transform some of your existing habits.

TRACK

Make a list of your existing daily habits...

TRANSFORM

How can you transform some of these habits to bring something of the presence of God into different moments throughout your day?

TEST

How can you transform some of these habits to bring something of the presence of God into different moments throughout your day?

Review your habits in your Bay Group once a term.

We need other people to keep us accountable and to encourage us in our journey of faith. We will be encouraging Bay Groups to spend an evening once every term to explore how they're getting on with Grow, to share ideas and to encourage one another.

We'd encourage you to use the steps to help you reflect and review how you have found Grow over the last few months. It's a good idea to take time to talk about each stage as a group before you move on to the next one.

1 LOOK BACK

What habits or patterns did you commit to last time?

2 WHAT WORKED?

What worked or didn't work about the habits and patterns you wanted to commit to? What can you adjust?

3 LOOK AHEAD

Spend some time praying together as a group for God's strength and guidance as you move forward...

4 PRAY

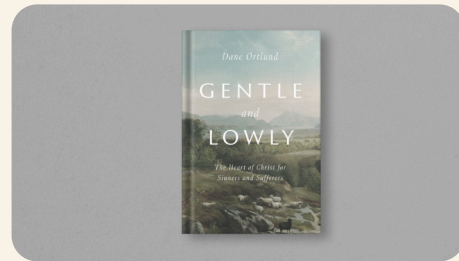
What habits or patterns would you like to commit to this time? Pray for one another...

Resources to help you grow in discipleship...



BAY CHURCH
THE BAY CHURCH PODCAST

The Bay Church Podcast explores different topics and themes around discipleship and unpacks them in an accessible and conversational format.



DANE C. ORTLUND
GENTLE AND LOWLY

Gentle and Lowly takes the core truths of Christian faith and unpacks them in a beautiful and fresh way. Each chapter is just a few pages so it can be read devotionally.



LUCY PEPIATT
THE DISCIPLE

A beautiful (if slightly more academic) look at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and how we are formed by the Bible, the Spirit, life and one another.



BAY CHURCH
PRAYER APPOINTMENTS

Prayer Appointments are an extended time of prayer ministry for anyone in the life of the church who would welcome the opportunity to be prayed for by some of the prayer crew.



JOHN MARK COMER
THE RUTHLESS ELIMINATION OF HURRY

John Mark Comer explores how we can remain spiritually healthy and faithful to Jesus in a busy and distracted world.



TOM WRIGHT
SIMPLY CHRISTIAN

Tom Wright explores the fundamental aspects of what it means to be a follower of Jesus in a deep way whilst remaining accessible.

Resources to help you grow in prayer...



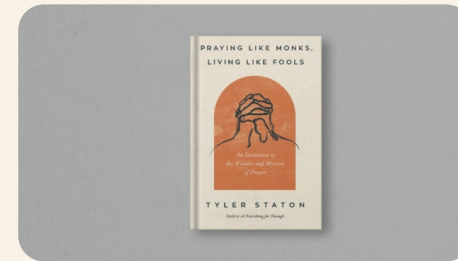
DANE C. ORTLUND
IN THE LORD I TAKE REFUGE

A daily and prayerful journey through the Psalms with Dane Ortlund. An ideal book to work through as part of your daily habits for a season.



24-7 PRAYER
LECTIO 365 APP

Lectio 365 is an app based on Lectio Divina which is an ancient way of reading the Bible. It is designed to help you slow down and to pray the Bible. We love it!



TYLER STATON
PRAYING LIKE MONKS, LIVING LIKE FOOLS

Tyler Staton's book is a fresh invitation into the wonder and mystery of prayer whilst exploring some of the common roadblocks that can sometimes stop us from going deeper.



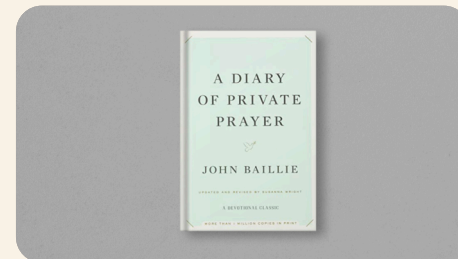
RUTH HAYLEY BARTON
INVITATION TO SOLITUDE AND SOLITUDE

Ruth Hayley Barton invites us to realise that solitude and silence are essential if we are to grow spiritually.



PETE GRIEG
HOW TO PRAY

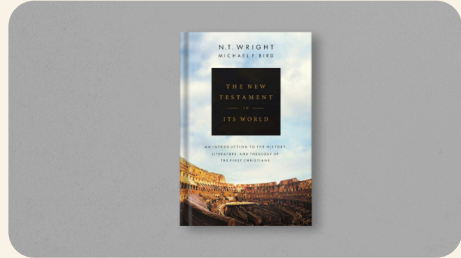
Pete Greig's book is a wonderful and down-to-earth exploration of what it means to pray. It's not lofty, but really accessible and honest.



JOHN BAILLIE
A DIARY OF PRIVATE PRAYER

A Christian classic and a helpful series of daily prayers to help you engage with God through someone else's prayers that you can turn into your own.

Things to help you grow in understanding...



TOM WRIGHT & MICHAEL F. BIRD
THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ITS WORLD

Ideal for those who are familiar with the Bible but want to go deeper into the New Testament. This is an excellent book that will help you to get under the skin of the NT and its meaning for us today.

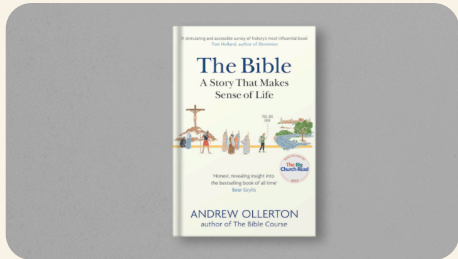
THE BIBLE PROJECT
BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

The Bible Project offer free videos, podcasts and courses to equip Christians to grow in their understanding of the Bible and its overarching storyline.



BAY CHURCH
BIBLE TRACK

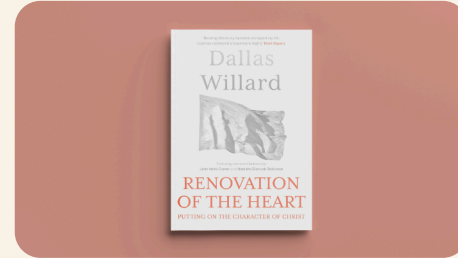
The Bible Track is a three-part course designed to equip Christians to read the Bible with greater confidence and clarity. It's ideal for new Christians as well as seasoned readers.



ANDREW OLLERTON
THE BIBLE: A STORY THAT MAKES SENSE OF LIFE

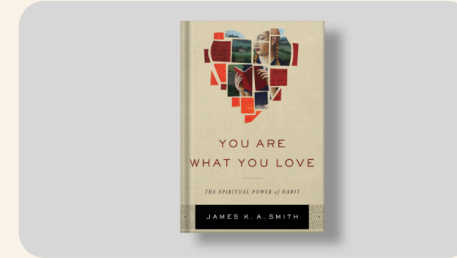
Andrew Ollerton has written this brilliant book to help Christians understand how the Bible isn't a series of abstract truths, but a story that makes sense of life.

Resources that inspired Grow.



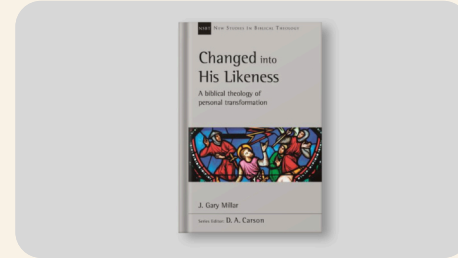
DALLAS WILLARD
RENOVATION OF THE HEART

A Christian classic that explores the biblical foundations for transformation as well as the disciplines and practices that are crucial if we want to be changed from the inside out.



JAMES K. A. SMITH
YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE

A guide to understanding the ways in which we are being unconsciously shaped by the world and how we can open ourselves to being counter-formed in the way of Christ through habits.



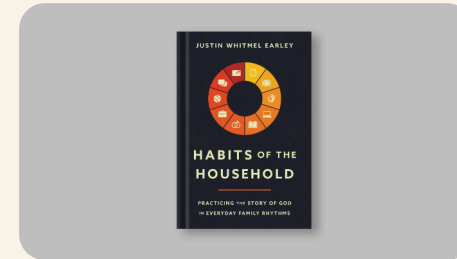
J. GARY MILLAR
CHANGED INTO HIS LIKENESS

A biblical examination of the thread of transformation that runs throughout the whole of scripture. This book is ideal for those who want to go much deeper.



JUSTIN WHITMEL EARLEY
THE COMMON RULE

The Common Rule explores how we might cultivate habits that reorientate our hearts towards God throughout the day.



JUSTIN WHITMEL EARLEY
HABITS OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Habits of the Household takes the gold from The Common Rule and seeks to explore how habits might impact our families and not just us as individuals.

GROW

GROW GUIDE | v 1.0

Developed and produced by
Bay Church in Torbay.

bay.church/grow

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