Auburn Alliance Church
Congratulates

The

Class of 2014

30 Steps Closer

Getting Started Journal

30 first steps to knowing Him more

30 Steps Closer
New Graduate Edition

Scripture quotations are from:
The Holy Bible, New International Version
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The concept of a 30 day worship journey was presented in *The Air I Breathe* by Louie Giglio © 2003 Multinoma Books

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INTRODUCTION

The most important thing for us to discover in our life is the fact that we have been rescued from our lost and hopeless state of sin by the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. The fact that the God of the universe reached out to save us is an even more amazing realization. The most incredible fact of all is that God continues to reach out to us every moment of every day. Though we continue to let him down time after time, He pursues us and He desires us to pursue Him. At the core of worship is our recognizing and proclaiming who God is and what He does and has done for us. But how can we worship a God we don't know? How can we expect to grow in our relationship with Him unless we at least try to get a daily glimpse of this God who created the universe yet lives inside us?

This booklet is inspired by the concept of a 30 day worship journey that is described in the book *The Air I Breathe* by Louie Giglio. It doesn't have anything with to do with singing songs, raising our hands or other activities that we most commonly associate with worship. Rather this is a journey that focuses on some of the attributes of God from the book of Psalms. The intent of the journey is to focus on an attribute of God for a day and let the depth and wonder of God soak in.

It is my hope that this little journal will help you take a 30 day walk with the God who wants you to know Him more. When we get a fresh taste of who He is then our relationship with Him grows and we move past religion and into a relationship with God. This is the growing relationship that He desires to have with us and the relationship that we so desperately need with Him.

Dave Q

Three New Questions for Graduates

There are three common questions that I observe young people wrestling with when they reach their high school or college graduation time:

- Who Am I?

- What should I be when I grow up?

- What does God want me to do with my life?

These are some very difficult questions. In fact, I would argue that for the most part these questions are not answerable for a new graduate or a person of any age. I hear many adults repeatedly ask questions similar to these of graduates. Though well intentioned, the questions only serve to increase the graduate's concern and feelings of inadequacy toward an unknown future.

So, rather than stressing about how you will figure out the answer to these unanswerable questions, I'd like to propose 3 replacement questions.

~~- Who Am I?~~
- Whose am I?

~~- What should I be when I grow up?~~
- Who am I becoming?

~~- What does God want me to do with my life?~~
- What does God want me to do today?

~~Who Am I?~~

Whose am I?

Many college age adults set off to discover who they are. Often the thought is that when they get out on their own, away from some or all of their childhood influences, they will be able to see who they really are. The bad news is that most don't ever find the answer they are looking for. Why? Because they are searching in the wrong place. They search for a group where they can fit in but often don't truly discover who they are at all. Many just start emulating another person or group that is "like them". They start adopting the beliefs and activities of those they surround themselves with rather than getting to the bottom of who they really are.

The truth is that every human being's true identity has to be found in God. Why? Because God made us, each one of us. He is the creator. We are his whether we follow after him or not. I will never find my true identity apart from God. The answer to "Who am I" has only one answer and that is "I am who God made me". That's great news because God doesn't make junk, we are designed to be who he wants us to be.

The real question that we need to daily focus on is "Whose am I". If I continually get closer to God who made me then I get closer to understanding who I am. If I really want to understand a poem, then I should talk to the author. If I really want to understand a painting, then I need to get to know the painter. Information other than what I get directly from the artist is either my best guess or someone else's opinion which are pretty poor substitutes for information from the artist himself. Don't worry about figuring out who you are, make sure you know whose you are.

~~What should I be when I grow up?~~

Who am I becoming?

Let me guess, everybody and their brother are asking you what you want to be when you grow up. You're probably getting that question from everyone that you know.

There are 2 big problems with the question "What should I be when I grow up". First, it's the "what should I be" part which is way too broad to even be a question. Most people mean what job will you do, but what you do for a job doesn't encompass all the important things in your life. Plus, how could you possibly know what job you will have or even like 5, 10 or 25 years from now? Give me a break; no-one can answer that. The second half "when I grow up" is an equal mess. Do you mean "when I get out of college" or "when I get my first job" or "when I get married" or … When are you grown up? Grown up is not a tangible thing but only a relative point in the future that keeps moving until you stop growing. Did you catch that part? You're not grown up until you stop growing, but you don't stop growing as a person your entire life. The way I see it, there are 2 kinds of people, growing and dead. Bottom line, you will be in the process of growing your entire life.

So, if we'll be in the process of growing for our entire life, let's stop worrying about what we will be at some arbitrary point in the future and ask a better question: "who am I becoming?" That's a way better thing to focus on daily. If my goal is to be growing, then let's keep an eye on what kind of person I'm becoming, my character growth. What sort of results do you look for to measure that kind of growth? God spells it right out for us in Galatians 5:22-23. The Bible calls the measurable result of our character growth the fruit of the Spirit. When we are becoming who God wants us to be, we will see more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control flowing out of us.

~~What does God want me to do with my life?~~

What does God want me to do today?

The question "What does God want me to do with my life" sounds noble enough right? It implies that you want to follow God and you are willing to give your life to what God wants you to do.

The problem with this question is the way we expect it to play out versus the way God works. Often people act as if they expect God to hand them an entire book listing every decision He wants them to make for their entire life and they need to receive that book sometime in their Junior year of high school so that they can get the college paperwork going. Bad news, God doesn't work that way. It's not that He can't, but He doesn't. Remember, what God wants most from us is a relationship with Him. He has stuff for us to do and He has given us a specific skill set to do it. However, what we do for Him is secondary to our day to day relationship with Him. It is not God's desire to hand us a plan and let us run through life doing everything on the list and then meet him at the finish line. He desires that relationship. He wants us to walk with Him step by step and talk through the decisions with Him.

The only thing that I can really act on is what God wants me to do today. I'm not implying that we don't make long term decisions or plans. Maybe today is the day that we have to pick a college, accept a job offer or decide to move to a new town. People often get immobilized when it's time to make a decision and they don't feel they have clear enough direction from God. God wants to be there beside you when you make decisions and the next day and the next day. If you can't see what God wants you to do a year from now, be sure you are doing what He has put in front of you to do today. God wants to paint the picture of your life with you, one brush stroke at a time.

My
30 Steps
Journal

30 steps to knowing Him more

30 Steps Closer Journal

How it works

For the next 30 days, this journal will outline a couple verses in the book of Psalms for you to read each day. You will identify an attribute or behavior of God from the verses and focus on that attribute for the day.

Follow these simple steps each day:

1. Read the verses through a couple of times. Pick a time that you will read the verses each day and try to stick with that time for all 30 days.

2. Select one attribute or action of God from the verses. Pick something that will stick in your head, a single word or a couple words that talk about who God is or how He acts toward us.

3. Write the focus word(s) in the *Today's Focus* section.
It should be simple enough so that you can remember it for the day, but write it in the journal as a reference for later.

4. Let it sink in for a whole day. Think about the day's focus attribute throughout the day. Include the topic in your prayer time. Tell God what you think about that attribute of Him. Ask Him to help you understand that attribute more deeply. Think about how that attribute affects your relationship with him. Praise Him for that attribute. Think what it would be like if He didn't have that attribute.

5. Journal your thoughts in the *My Thoughts* section. Write down some things that you realized during the day. What did you discover about this attribute? Does understanding this attribute better change your reaction to God or others? Did you learn anything that surprised you?

(SAMPLE)

Day 1

Verses: Psalms 2:7

"I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father."

Today's Focus: *I am his son!*

My Thoughts:

How incredible that the God of the Universe says that He is my father and I'm His son. Just like a father has known his son from day one, God knows everything about me, good and bad, past, present and future and He still chooses to be my Dad. Yup, it really is amazing grace. Why do I try to hide from Him sometimes? He knows everything about me. He's not going to walk away or write me off ever. We are a family of the best kind. .
Dear God: can I call you Daddy? Is that ok? It seems weird. You are so powerful and mighty but I think it's what You want. Daddy, still getting used to it, Daddy

Date: *6/11/14*

Day 1

Verses: Psalms 3:3

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 2

Verses: Psalms 4:8

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 3

Verses: Psalms 7:17

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 4

Verses: Psalms 8:3-6

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 5

Verses: Psalms 9:10

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 6

Verses: Psalms 10:14

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 7

Verses: Psalms 11:4

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 8

Verses: Psalms 13:5-6

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 9

Verses: Psalms 14:2

Today's Focus: _____

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Date: _____

Day 10

Verses: Psalms 16:2

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 11

Verses: Psalms 16:7-8

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 12

Verses: Psalms 16:11

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 13

Verses: Psalms 17:6

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 14

Verses: Psalms 18:19

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 15

Verses: Psalms 18:30-31

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Day 16

Verses: Psalms 19:1

Today's Focus: _____

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Day 17

Verses: Psalms 19:7-8

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Day 18

Verses: Psalms 19:14

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 19

Verses: Psalms 23:4

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 20

Verses: Psalms 25:3-5

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Day 21

Verses: Psalms 27:1

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Day 22

Verses: Psalms 27:8

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Day 23

Verses: Psalms 29:11

Today's Focus: _____

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Date: _____

Day 24

Verses: Psalms 30:4-5

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 25

Verses: Psalms 32:5

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 26

Verses: Psalms 32:7

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 27

Verses: Psalms 34:18

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Day 28

Verses: Psalms 36:7-8

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Day 29

Verses: Psalms 37:23-24

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Day 30

Verses: Psalms 37:4

Today's Focus: _____

My Thoughts: _____

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Date: _____

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

Galatians 5:22-25

Appendix

Resources page

References for each day's verses are listed in the journal. The scriptures are intentionally not printed out on the journal page because it's better for you to get used to opening your own Bible and reading from there. I like the New International Version, but there are many good translations. If you want to dig deeper on a certain focus, there are lots of tools available to help you study and learn God's word. They are more readily accessible today than ever before. Here are a couple of my favorites:

Bible Versions:

Sometimes a different translation or paraphrase can stimulate new ways of looking at a passage of scripture. A couple of my favorites are the New Living Translation and the Message.

Web Tools:

There are tons of web tools for Bible study and there are new ones that pop up all the time. My personal favorite is Bible Gateway for scripture look-up, key word searches and topical indexes. Bible Gateway has more than 20 versions of the Bible on the site including the New International, The Message and New Living Translations. You can type a word into the word search and get an instant list of every verse that contains that word. They also have 2 topical indexes for doing a deeper dive into key words and concepts. There is even a mobile app available. The best news … It's all free! Check it out at www.biblegateway.com

Phone a Friend:

Just like any journey, sometimes you've got to pull over to ask directions once in a while. Sometimes, talking to a friend can help you clarify what you are thinking and learning. Don't be afraid to ask someone who has been walking with God for a long time to help you with things you are discovering that are new to you. It never hurts to tell someone when you set a goal (like a 30 day worship journey) and give then permission to ask how it's going.

Frequently Asked Questions – Part 1

How long will this take each day?

It should take less than 1 minute to read through the verses for the day a few times. Then just meditate on (think about) the day's focus thought of the day. It's best to keep the journal with you so as you discover new things, you can write them down. It's also fine to write in the journal for a couple minutes at the end of the day.

Why 30 days?

It's a combination of a psychology rule of thumb and it's about a month. In 1960 Dr Maxwell Maltz published a book called *Psycho-Cybernetics* which was a best seller. He proposed that it takes "a minimum of about 21 days" to form a new habit. Over the past 50 years, the 21 day rule has been applied to just about every behavioral change imaginable. Further studies have shown that the number is highly dependent on the individual person and the complexity of the behavioral change. So, for lack of a better number let's just round the minimum up to a full month and call it sort of scientific. ☺

Should I do 30 days in a row?

You know yourself better than anyone. If you are someone who tends to forget things or start a lot of things then not finish, I would recommend 30 days in a row. If you are one of those disciplined people who schedules their next 3 haircuts and starts buying Christmas presents in July, then you can probably make this part of your weekday routine and take the weekends off without losing momentum. The most important thing is that you develop a pattern of communication with God and the discovery about God that becomes part of your life for the long haul. Do it in a way that is easy and beneficial for you. If you make it too regimented, then you will burn out.

Frequently asked questions – Part 2

What if I miss a day?

There are no bad questions, except for that one. Put that worry right out of your mind. The goal is to grow your relationship with God, not win a perfect attendance award. God's not keeping score, so don't get stressed about it. If you miss a day or 2 or 4 or 10, then just pick up where you left off and keep going. Oh yeah, and ignore that person that keeps asking you what day you are on; they are missing the point. They should be asking you what you discovered about God today. The goal is to form a habit of learning about God and talking to God, so I do recommend trying to keep a regular pattern for the 30 steps.

How were the verses selected?

I picked out the verses in these 30 steps by reading through Psalms and selecting verses that talked about different attributes of God and had some key words in them that you could latch on to for the day's focus. There is no pattern to the topics and if you want to work through them in a different order that would be just fine.

What do I do after the 30 days?

It's my hope that you will want to keep discovering more about our infinite God and growing in your relationship with Him. There is nothing magical about this journal. You can easily start your own journal in any notebook and pick out your own verses.

Are there other verse lists?

The current plan is to create some other editions of the journal with different verse lists and to create a version of the journal that has blank verse sections that you can fill in on your own. I'm also planning to put some other verse lists on the web at www.30stepscloser.com

Tips for your Journey

1. Make the day's focus 1 or 2 words only. This will help you remember the focus throughout that day.

2. Don't read the verses on your smart phone. Read the verses from your Bible with paper and words. I know, I'm addicted to my phone too, but it's a source of constant mental distraction.

3. Read the verses early in the day, morning if you can, by lunch time at the latest. Then you'll have some time to let it sink in.

4. Be totally honest and transparent with the thoughts you write down. This is a journal not a term paper. If you have questions it's ok to tell God. He wants you to seek Him.

5. Plan at least 5 minutes of intentional thinking time in your day. Take a walk or go to a quiet place if that helps you think. Go someplace where you can talk out loud to God without other people around.

6. Lock your cell phone in the refrigerator for 5 minutes. If you're a texting addict (like most of the US population), you need to physically remove your phone from your presence to be able to think deep, focused thoughts. If you forget and leave your cell phone in the fridge and it gets ruined, don't call me. Oh wait, you can't. ☺

7. Don't over stress about staying on schedule. If you miss a day, then you miss a day. Pick it up the next day.

8. Keep your journal with you or near you so you can write down significant thoughts when they pop in your head.

9. If you are very familiar with the verses that day, then read them in another translation. New words spark new thoughts.

10. Thank God for the attribute you are focusing on. Ask Him to show you more about how that attribute affects your relationship with Him.