



FIRST STEPS

STUDIES TO BEGIN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST
By Marlon Furtado

“Habits Worth Developing”

GROWING UP

Growth in the Christian Life is similar to growth in the physical realm. We enter life as newborn infants, totally dependent upon others to clothe us and feed us. The desperate need for the infant is to be loved and cared for by responsible and loving parents. That is why the materials in Book 1 were designed to give you information from the Bible so that you would know that you are loved and secure in your relationship with God through Jesus. In the spiritual realm the infant is the *New Believer*.

The material in this chapter is designed for you as a *Growing Believer*. You will gain a firmer grip on the Bible, as well as develop habits that will strengthen your relationship with Jesus throughout the rest of your life. It will require more effort on your part, but the energy you put forth will pay great dividends in your walk with Christ. God **expects** His children to grow up and not to remain spiritual infants. **Hebrews 5:12-14** reads,

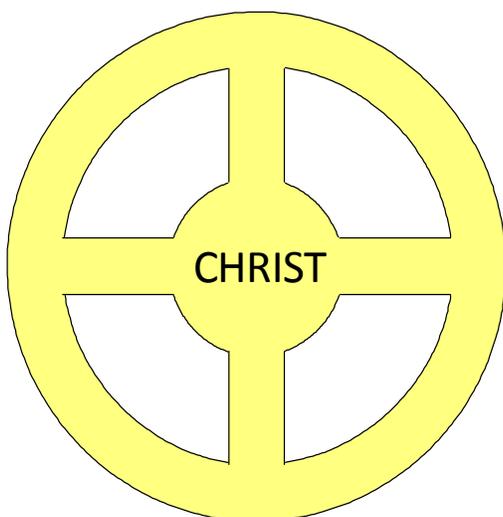
*"In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. **You need milk**, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But **solid food is for the mature**, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."*

THE WHEEL

This chapter revolves around a diagram called The Wheel. Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, created it to help clarify and illustrate what activities must be developed in every Christian man and woman who wants to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

CHRIST THE CENTER

The hub, or axle, of the wheel is the source of its power. If we are to live a victorious, Spirit-filled life, we must keep Jesus Christ at the center of all we do. He must be the greatest priority of our lives. He must be Lord of all we do.



John 15:5

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**"*

2 Corinthians 2:14

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him."

The Navigators is a ministry committed to making disciples of all nations, based upon 2 Timothy 2:2 - *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

Originally, Dawson Trotman ministered to servicemen. But today, The Navigators ministers around the globe, teaching men and women how to reproduce their lives in others.

www.navigators.org

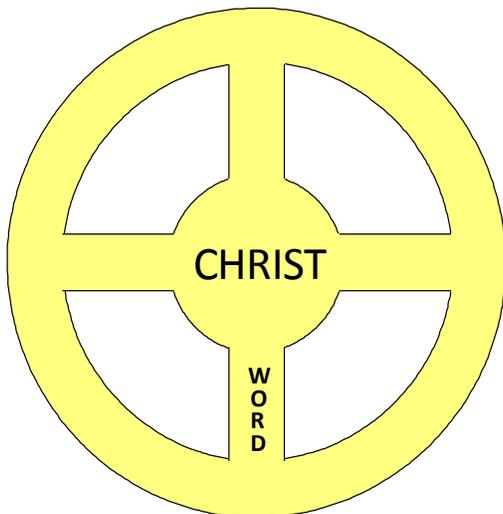
Just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it draws sap from the tree, so your *fruitfulness* as a Christian will be directly proportional to your drawing close to Jesus, depending upon Him, trusting Him, and following Him. You will grow as you continue to give Jesus Christ top priority in your life.

The spokes transfer power from the axle to the rim of the tire. The rim is where the "rubber meets the road," where we apply what we learn to our lives. If any of these spokes are imbalanced, the wheel will not roll smoothly. In a similar way, if we don't pay attention to all four spokes, our lives will be imbalanced and not reflect clearly the life of Christ. The two **VERTICAL** spokes deal primarily with our relation to God. The two **HORIZONTAL** ones deal with how we relate to other people.

THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible is the source of truth about everything that pertains to our relationship with God. Therefore we place it at the bottom to represent the foundation of our lives. Everything else is judged by it. It is the means by which Jesus communicates with us.

When babies are born, there is an automatic desire for milk. Likewise, God has placed inside every spiritual newborn a thirst for the Bible. Often, before a person places their faith in Jesus Christ, they have no desire to open the Bible, let alone live according to it. But after Jesus comes to live in them, He gives them a hunger and thirst for the Scriptures.



1 Peter 2:2-3 says,

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

In **Colossians 3:16** Paul charges us to...

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

To mature in your walk with the Lord, it will be vital that you take responsibility for yourself to feed on God's Word. It's normal for parents to spoon-feed their infant, but they expect that as he grows, he will learn to handle utensils and get the food to his own mouth.

Many Christians are malnourished because they haven't taken responsibility to read and study the Bible on their own. They depend upon being spoon-fed by the pastor or teacher on the weekend.

But as you take responsibility to build your life upon the foundation of God's Word, the Spirit of God will mature you, guide you, build you up and strengthen you.

Acts 20:32

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

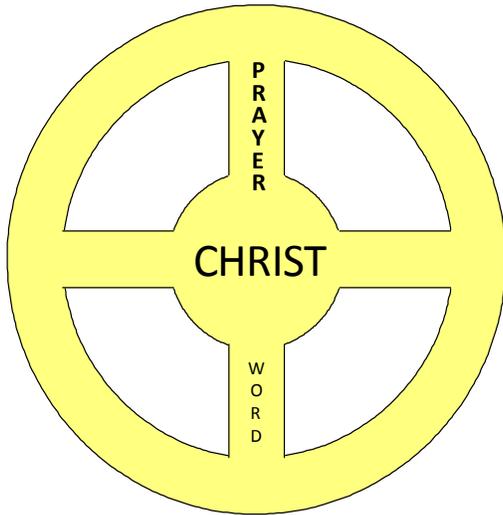
Ezekiel 36:27

"And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

PRAYER

As a *Growing Believer* you will find yourself talking with God more and more throughout your day. It's not uncommon, though, for new believers to feel self-conscious praying out loud in front of others. But that will change and you will soon find that it is actually enjoyable to pray with others.

It's important to pray on our own, much like a musician will practice his or her instrument in private. But it's always enjoyable to gather with the rest of the orchestra to perform. In much the same way, praying with others combines your hearts and minds to make music to the ears of God.



Philippians 4:6-7 encourages us to pray about everything.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The early church was known for praying together.

Acts 1:14 *"They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."*

Acts 2:42 *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*

In Acts 3 and 4, Peter and John heal a cripple man in the name of Jesus. Many of the people repent and turn to Jesus. But the religious leaders who had led the charge to crucify Jesus are infuriated. They order Peter and John to stop preaching Jesus. When Peter and John refuse to be intimidated, these leaders threaten them again and finally let them go. What is important to notice is what Peter and John did immediately upon their release. They sought out other believers and prayed together.

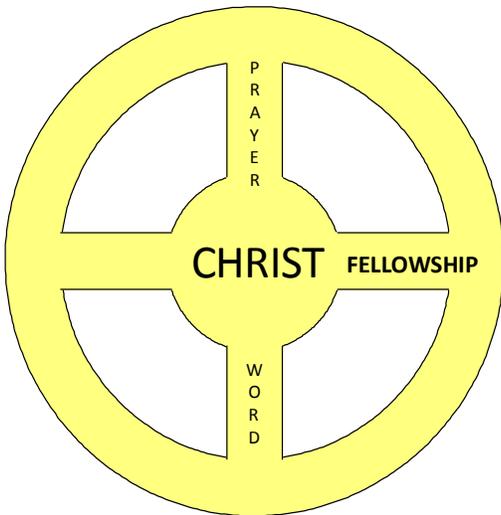
Acts 4:23-24

*"On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, **they raised their voices together in prayer** to God."*

FELLOWSHIP

You won't often hear the word "fellowship" used by people to describe getting together with their friends. They'll say something like, "We had friends over for a party." or "Let's get together for dinner or coffee." or "Let's go to the game together." But Christians speak of having "fellowship" because it carries a much deeper meaning than just hanging out together.

The original meaning of the word conveys "sharing life" with your brothers and sisters in Christ. You share one another's hurts, burdens, joys and victories. There is a deep devotion to one another. This kind of relationship moves deeper than surface conversations about the weather or sports. Biblical fellowship revolves around your mutual love for Christ.



One of the best pictures of this "fellowship" is described in **Acts 2:42-47**:

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were **together** and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to **meet together** in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and **ate together** with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

In our society, there is a great value placed on *individualism*. But the Bible declares loud and clear that within the church we need *interdependency*. We need one another. It is not a sign of weakness. It is a mark of a mature Christian who knows he needs to share life at a deep and authentic level with other followers of Jesus. These friendships will grow strong as you encourage each other in your walks with Christ.

This is what moved the writer of **Hebrews** to pen **10:24-25**,

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

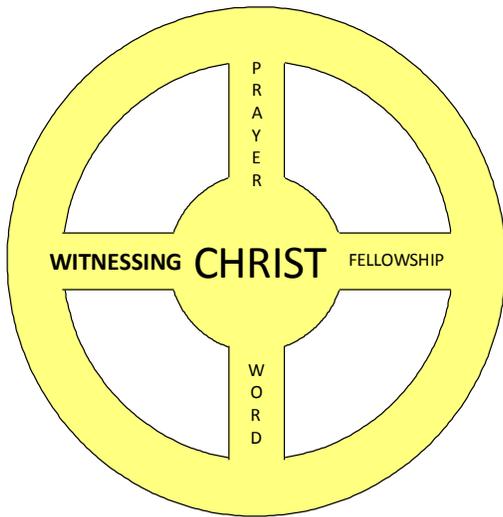
Solomon expressed the wisdom of close friendships in **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**.

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

These friendships usually do not form if you only attend the larger church services. You need to participate in a smaller group that meets to study the Scriptures, to lift one another in prayer, to serve together and to play together. These groups may meet on your church campus or in homes.

WITNESSING

A witness in a courtroom is not asked to convince the jurors or the judge of anything. He is only required to tell what he has seen or heard. In the same way, a crucial spoke will be sharing with others what we know about Jesus.



Acts 1:8

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

1 John 1:1-3

*"That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we have **looked** at and our hands have **touched**—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have **seen** it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have **seen** and **heard**, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."*

The Fellowship spoke dealt with how we relate to other Christians. This spoke reminds us that we have a great responsibility to those who have not yet come to Jesus. God has left us on this earth to tell the lost that Jesus died for them and wants them to come to Him. We are to do this with our words and our actions.

Colossians 4:5-6

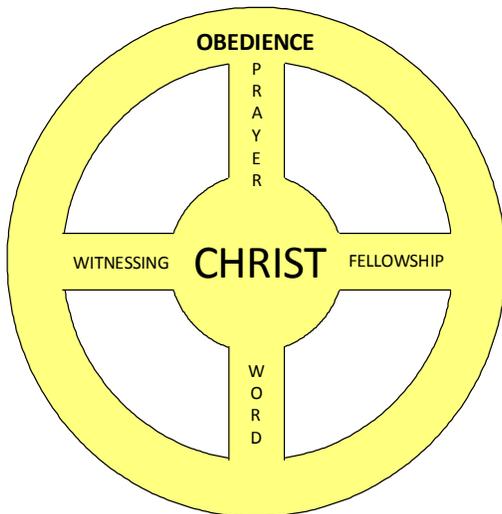
"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

OBEDIENCE

Obedience is where the rubber meets the road. It represents the application of the Bible to daily life, making the Bible the actual authority for how we live. The Bible was never meant simply to be a source of *information*, but the means for *transformation*.



John 14:21 (Jesus speaking)

*"Whoever has my commands and **obeys** them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."*

James 1:22

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

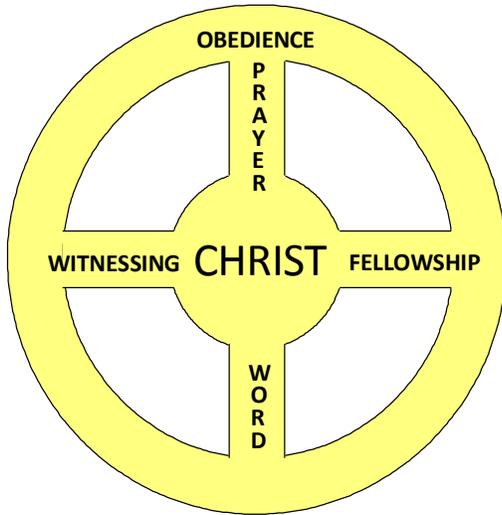
Matthew 7:24-27 (Jesus speaking)

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

We give evidence that we love Jesus when we surrender control of our lives to Him and *obey* His commands, when we put them into practice. In effect, we are admitting that Jesus knows what's best for us and we are willing to follow His leading.

SUMMARY

The Wheel is a great tool to help you evaluate your walk with the Lord.



What would happen if one of the spokes were broken or shorter than the rest? What would happen if the tire was flat (no obedience).

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to help you keep your life with Him in balance.

HUB:

Are there any areas of my life that I struggle to allow Jesus to have His way? Am I finding more and more that I want His will more than my own?

VERTICAL SPOKES:

Am I daily taking steps to have intake of the Word into my life?
Is the Bible having an impact on my thoughts and convictions and purposes?
Am I talking to God more and more through the day?
Am I finding myself asking God for help and direction in my daily affairs more and more?
Am I praying with and for other people?

HORIZONTAL SPOKES:

Is Jesus becoming a greater focus of my conversation with other Christians?
Am I taking opportunities regularly to talk to lost individuals about Jesus?

RIM:

Is there any apparent area of my life in which I am disobeying the Lord? Am I finding I seek His will instead of my own more and more.

PRACTICE

Draw The Wheel as though you were explaining it to someone else.