



GRAVITATE

A FOUR-WEEK STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP JOURNAL



**A FOUR-WEEK STUDENT
DISCIPLESHIP JOURNAL**

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

Gravitate: A Four-Week Student Discipleship Journal

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STARTING NOW

Are you drawing near to God or drifting away?

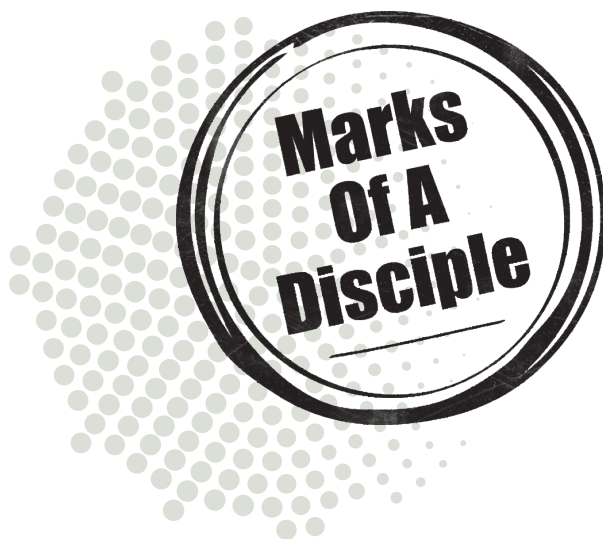
Because of our sinful nature, we often want things that will satisfy or fulfill our sinful desires. We are selfish and naturally want to benefit and glorify ourselves. But God desires to pull us to him instead and went to great lengths to take the first step in moving toward us. When we choose to follow Jesus and begin to gravitate toward God, he will move even closer to us and strengthen that pull toward him. Drawing near to God also glorifies him and encourages others to draw close to him.

HOW IT WORKS

This book has four weeks of journal pages to help you learn more about the truth that when we draw near to God, he draws near to us! Each week takes you through seven days of questions to get you thinking, Bible studies to shift your perspective, and challenges to stretch you out of your comfort zone. Then, on the seventh day of the week, you'll get a break to recharge for the next week. It'll help you get into a rhythm of learning, growing, and putting that knowledge into action.

Throughout this journal, you'll also find the **MARKS OF A DISCIPLE**. These are things that Christ-followers are committed to and have in common, like connecting with God through prayer, applying his Word to our lives, serving without personal agendas, managing God's gifts, and many other things.

Remember, you'll get out of this book what you put into it. The challenges you'll encounter won't always be easy—they're designed to stretch you! Take a risk and use this journal to run hard toward God. When we make ourselves available to him, he'll transform us and use us in ways that will blow our minds!





GRAVITATE

WEEK 1

THE NATURAL DRAW OF SIN



INTRO

Our natural desires drag us away to sin and death—and away from Jesus, who is ready to save all who accept his gift of salvation. Our hearts trick us into thinking other things besides a relationship with God will satisfy our hungry souls, but in reality, our hearts are deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17:9). Following our desires will only lead us to more sin and ultimately death! We will miss out on the freedom and life Jesus offers to everyone. Even the Israelites—God’s chosen people—had difficulty remembering God’s faithfulness and choosing to trust his ways over their own.

DAY ONE

Rubbernecking

While driving, you've probably encountered a bad accident scene that everyone slows down to look at as they pass. Some people call this a "gapers' delay," while others call it "rubbernecking," and still others call it a "Lookie Lou." Whatever phase you have for it, the pull to slow down and look is common. We have a desire to satisfy our morbid curiosity by staring at pain and sadness. In a similar way, the sinful nature we all have wants us to slow down and stare at evil. This pull toward sin is a sad reality of our fallen nature. But once we turn to Jesus in faith and repentance, we are free from being pulled in and staring at what displeases God. We have the Holy Spirit within us and now have his power to fight off our sinful desires and choose what is right!

"'The flesh' is the old self-reliant, faithless me. This is what died when God saved me. God clamped the arteries on my old unbelieving heart of stone. And when it died, he took it out and gave me a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26)."

— John Piper¹

As we jump into the week, take some time to reflect on these journal questions:

What do people your age “slow down to stare at”?

What is some evidence that your heart (or people’s hearts in general) is deceitful and wicked?

What helps you fight off your sinful desires?

How do you feel when you fight and win?

How does it encourage you to know you’re not fighting alone?

DAY TWO

The Thief vs. the Good Shepherd

Our culture recognizes the fundamental differences between the devil and God, but often, they are simply reduced to red horns or a halo. The devil is so much more evil, and God is so much more good than what mainstream culture pushes or understands. The devil is described as a thief in the passage we'll look at today, and all he wants to do is steal, kill, and destroy us. Thankfully, our Good Shepherd (Jesus) came and died in our place so that we could not only *live* but have *abundant* life! The devil will do his best to drag us away from God and would be thrilled if we never turned to Jesus in repentance, but God wants us to come to him for salvation. Instead of running toward other things that look good in the moment, run to Jesus, who gave up his life so that we could come close to God.

Study the verses in **John 10:10-11** carefully using the **OPA method** for Bible Study: Observation, Principles, and Application. *Helpful tip: the more effort you put into making observations, the easier the principles and application will be to see.*

OBSERVATION

Compile all the facts found in the passage. Try to make 10-15 observations about what you read.

PRINCIPLES

Draw a few principles from the observations you made. What is God trying to teach you in this passage?

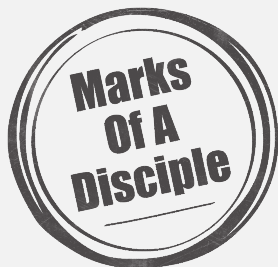
APPLICATION

How will you apply these principles to your life? Be specific—a good application will tell who, what, and when.

DAY THREE

Consequences

As a child, you probably had consequences for doing or not doing certain things. Hopefully, you learned—and are learning (as we all are)—to say no to sin and yes to God's right ways. Choose one area in your life that you find difficult to fight off your sinful desires. Maybe it's hard to fight off your desire to participate in gossip, maintain physical boundaries within a dating relationship, control judgmental thoughts, only speak the truth (nothing more, nothing less), or contain your rage when something doesn't go your way. Whatever area you struggle in, there are natural consequences to sin—both in your life and even in the lives of others around you!



**DISCIPLES OF CHRIST UNDERSTAND
THAT THERE IS NOTHING GOOD IN
THEM APART FROM JESUS**

MARK 10:18

What I'm struggling with:

Journal below about the area that you struggle with and what consequences have come from it or might come from it if you do nothing about it.

DAY FOUR

The War Within

Do you sometimes feel like there's a tug-of-war game going on in your soul? One side is pulling you toward sin, and the other side is pulling you toward God. For a Christ-follower, this is common. Our sinful nature wasn't deleted when we became Christians, but we are no longer slaves to our sinful nature. We are free, and we can choose to follow God's right and pure paths that he laid out in Scripture for us. As we grow in our understanding of his Word and obedience to it, we will sometimes battle with the "flesh." If this is your experience, be encouraged! The worst thing to do is not care or shrug and give in, content with your sin. That's a sign you might still need to repent and turn to Jesus for forgiveness and salvation!

"Conflict in your soul is not all bad. . . . Serenity in sin is death. The Spirit has landed to do battle with the flesh. So take heart if your soul feels like a battlefield at times. [One] sign of whether you are indwelt by the Spirit is not that you have no bad desires, but that you are at war with them!"

— John Piper²

CONSIDER THE QUOTE ON PAGE 11 AS YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What has your experience been with the “tug-of-war game” in your soul?

What happens when we are indifferent to our sin?

What happens when we choose to follow God’s right and pure paths?

DAY FIVE

Freedom!

Christ set us free from sin—not so that we can sin *more*, but so that we can be free from it and its painful consequences and sin *less*! Whoever is a child of God now has the power of the Holy Spirit to say no to the desires of their sinful nature and follow the holy, pure ways of God. Don't let yourself be controlled by sin anymore, but be free! God removes the burden of sin and replaces it with a light and easy “burden” (Matt. 11:28–30). God is with us through the Holy Spirit, and in his grace, he helps us say no to our sinful desires, choose the paths of righteousness (Ps. 23:3), rely on his grace and forgiveness when we do fail, love God, and serve others with our newfound freedom.

Read **Galatians 5:1, 13–14** and use the **SPECK method** of Bible study to dig deeper into this passage. *The acronym SPECK is simply a way to help you remember this Bible study technique so you can use it to learn from other passages later.*

SINS TO AVOID

Make a list of any sins—wrong actions, attitudes, or thoughts—mentioned in the passage.

**“HE RESTORES MY SOUL. HE LEADS ME IN PATHS
OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE.”
– PSALM 23:3**

PROMISES TO CLAIM

Make a list of the promises in this passage. Promises give us confidence when we doubt God or face difficult times.

EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

What examples do you find in the passage? Is there a right way of thinking or acting described in the passage that you should take as an example for your life?

COMMANDS TO OBEY

Write out all the commands you find. If a passage encourages you to take a certain action, take it as a command and write it down.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD TO APPLY

What does the passage tell you about God that you can apply to your daily life? God's character shines throughout Scripture.

DAY SIX

Getting Our Attention

Today is an opportunity to do something about your sin. If you are not a child of God, you have the chance *today* to admit to God that you're a sinner in need of him—the Savior. You can repent of your sins and turn fully to God, trusting that he will cleanse you and make you his child! He's the only one who can free you from bondage to sin.

If you are a child of God, there are areas of sin and desires within us that God reveals to us so we can weed them out of our lives. God uses his Word to convict us and lovingly disciplines his children so that we can wake up and get back on the right path (Heb. 12:6). He doesn't want us to stay in our sin! These convictions and disciplines are meant to help us confess our sin to God and turn to him again and again for forgiveness and grace. Thankfully, when we confess our sins, God always pours out his grace in forgiveness. Jesus has paid in full the penalty we deserved for our sin (1 John 1:9, Eph. 1:7).

Use the space below to journal a prayer to God. Confess your sin, specifically the area you highlighted on Day Three, and then write out 1 John 1:9 and Ephesians 1:7. Take time to thank God for his grace and forgiveness.

God, I'm sorry for...

1 John 1:9

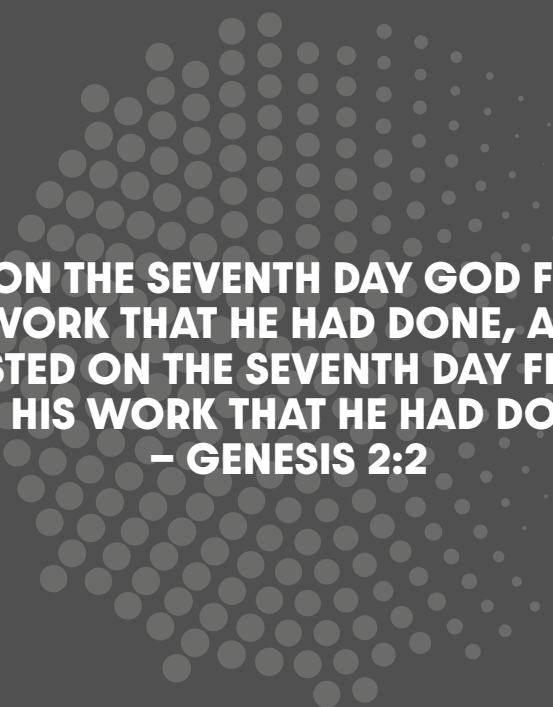
Ephesians 1:7

Thank you God for...

DAY SEVEN

Sabbath

Have you ever heard of someone refer to Sunday as the Sabbath? That means it's our day of rest. So today that's your challenge. Rest! Reflect on what you've learned so far, the challenges you did, or Bible verses that stuck out to you. Spend some time praying and talking with God. Recharge your batteries and refresh your mind. Then come back tomorrow ready to go deeper.



**"AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD FINISHED
HIS WORK THAT HE HAD DONE, AND HE
RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM
ALL HIS WORK THAT HE HAD DONE."
– GENESIS 2:2**

ARE YOU MOVING TOWARD GOD OR DRIFTING AWAY FROM HIM?

In this study, you will discover that each of us has sinful desires, but God desires to rescue his children. If you repent and turn to Jesus in faith, you'll begin to surrender your desires to God and live in such a way that others will notice. The four lessons include:

1. *The Natural Draw of Sin*
2. *God Draws Us In*
3. *Drawing Near to God*
4. *Drawing Others to God*

This study will dig into human nature, God's grace, and the importance of following Jesus daily. You'll have a chance to evaluate what direction you're gravitating—toward God or away from him—and what steps to take next.

GRAVITATE CONTAINS 4 WEEKS OF:

Bible Studies

Challenges

Thought-Provoking Experiences

Hard Questions

Marks of a Disciple

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YOUTH MINISTRY

D NOW
STUDIES

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