

# BECOMING A FULLY DEVOTED --- FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

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At McLean Bible Church, our vision is to make an impact on secular Washington with the message of Jesus Christ. All our ministry activities are designed intentionally to turn that vision into reality. While our worship services, radio programming, and outreach programs are all important, the most powerful resource we have to impact our city is the people of our congregation. This is why we say, “The goal of our ministry is to transform people into fully devoted followers of Christ” (Core Value #3) ... fully devoted followers who make an impact on their families, friends, neighborhoods, schools and workplaces.

Just how are people transformed into fully devoted followers of Christ?

Transformation starts with God, who made it possible for us to be reconciled to Him through Christ’s death on the cross. When we receive His gift, not only do we become a new creation, but we also have the opportunity to become a vital part of the ministry of reconciling the world to God (see 2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

After accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, a person begins an amazing adventure with God, a lifelong process of transformation from new believer to fully devoted follower.

The transformation is the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives.

The transformation is also partly our responsibility (see Philippians 2:12-13). We must learn to identify the leading of the Holy Spirit and respond in obedience. It is only as we are filled with the Holy Spirit that we can follow Christ, surrender to His Lordship, be conformed to His likeness, and become fully devoted followers.

At McLean Bible Church, we believe that learning to identify the leading of the Holy Spirit, yielding

our will to His, and responding in obedience requires discipline.

Specifically, we believe that four spiritual disciplines are essential to becoming a fully devoted follower of Christ. Therefore, we encourage and challenge every believer to practice these four disciplines:

- **Grow** in your relationship with Jesus Christ
- **Connect** in Biblical community
- **Serve** in your God-given ministry
- **Share** the message of Jesus Christ

As we develop and exercise these disciplines in our daily lives, we experience both personal fulfillment as well as fruitfulness for His kingdom! The four disciplines are interconnected components of the growth process, not independent activities. They work together to prepare you to successfully navigate your spiritual journey, make wise decisions, and withstand the hardships along the way.

Let’s examine each of the four disciplines in detail:

# GROW IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST

*The first discipline of fully-devoted followers of Christ is growing in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.*

The Bible declares without equivocation that Jesus rose from the dead and that He's alive forevermore. Because Jesus is alive, He can enter into personal relationships with people. When you accept Christ as your personal Savior, you enter into the most intimate type of relationship two people can have with one another. We become God's adopted children, and He becomes our personal Heavenly Father. John 1:12 tells us that to every person who believes in Jesus Christ, to them God gives the right/authority to become children of God. Galatians 3:26 echoes this, "For you are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ." God already knows everything about you (Psalm 139). Now it is your turn to get to know Him, and grow into a fully devoted follower.

Fully devoted followers exhibit healthy, growing and vibrant relationships with Christ. God desires growth from every living thing He has created, whether it is a mustard seed or a Christ-follower. The Apostle Peter put it this way, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..." (2 Peter 3:18). And so it is our goal to help every person grow spiritually and move forward on his or her spiritual journey.

In order to have this type of intimate relationship with Christ, we must realize that such a relationship is possible. There are enormous segments of Christianity where this truth is not taught, encouraged or believed. But what God wants us to experience is to know Him, understand His heart, walk with Him and talk with Him like your best friend each and every day about everything.

We also have to hunger and thirst for such a relationship with God. In Matthew 5:6, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." David and the Apostle Paul wrote of such a relationship with God, yet we need to be willing to pay the price for such a relationship.

First, we need to be reading, studying and meditating on God's Word.

1 Peter 2:2 tells us to, "Long for the pure milk of God's word, so that by means of it, you may grow." Second, we should be memorizing Scripture. David memorized Scripture and wrote of it in the Psalms – "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). We will be amazed at our rapid growth in Christ as we fill our minds and hearts with God's Word. Third, we must spend time communing with God in prayer. Just like any personal relationship, we cannot grow to know one another or build a healthy relationship without quality communication. The same applies to our relationship with God. In Psalm 62:8, David urges us to "pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge." Conversing with God, communing with him at the deepest levels of our soul and listening to his voice are non-negotiable elements of spiritual growth. Lastly, we need to be growing in obedience, not just in knowledge. In 1 Samuel 15:22, we learn that "to obey is better than sacrifice," and James 1:22 urges us to be doers of God's Word and not merely hearers. Jesus adds, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching" (John 14:23).

Just as with human families, a child that acts defiantly interrupts your feelings of closeness and intimacy, so also disobedience deeply affects our relationship with Christ.

A fully devoted follower is a person who is growing in their relationship with Christ and is being passionate about getting to know God better through studying God's Word, memorizing Scripture, prayer and obedience.

**Resources to help you grow**

McLean Bible has many ministry resources to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

McLean University is a progressive series of courses that helps people begin their spiritual journey and then equips them to grow. The two introductory courses are Christianity 101 – Knowing God in a Personal Way, and Christianity 201 – Growing in Your Relationship with Jesus Christ. These courses are the foundation of everything we do at McLean Bible Church, and we encourage everyone to complete them.

We also offer Community Bible Study, Precepts, adult electives, such as How to Study the Bible, workshops, AWANA, and much more to help you grow. In-depth Bible study is a regular part of the small group and community group experience as well.

In addition to our many educational offerings, McLean Bible has many other resources available. For example, the MBC BOOKstore carries a full line of study Bibles, commentaries, devotional books, study tools, worship CDs and much more. Recordings of Lon's teaching are available on CD, cassette, or online at [www.mcleanbible.org](http://www.mcleanbible.org).

# GROW IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.  Yes  No
2. I have been baptized since becoming a follower of Christ.  Yes  No
3. I spend time with God regularly through prayer, Bible reading and worship.  Yes  No
4. I regularly study the Bible and use it as my guide for daily living.  Yes  No
5. I am cultivating a habit of memorizing Scripture.  Yes  No
6. I am living a life of obedience and submission to the Lordship of Christ.  Yes  No
7. I am learning to identify the leading of the Holy Spirit and respond in obedience.  Yes  No
8. I trust God during the trials in my life, knowing He is using them to strengthen me.  Yes  No
9. I have completed foundational training, such as Christianity 101 and 201.  Yes  No
10. I am helping others grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.  Yes  No

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## NOTES

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## ACTION PLAN

# CONNECT IN BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

*The second discipline of fully devoted followers is connecting in Biblical community. This is such an important spiritual discipline that it forms one of our 10 core values here at McLean Bible Church - Core Value #6: "Every Christian needs a caring community."*

Every fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ needs to have strong and vital relationships with fellow believers. There is no such thing as a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ who lives in isolation. This concept is particularly difficult to grasp and live out in Washington, D.C., where so many people are individualistic, isolated and detached.

Yet our need as people for connectedness goes back to the very beginning of the human race. In Genesis 2:18, God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." God Himself is a relational being who lives in vulnerable community with the other relational persons in the Trinity. In Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let us make man in our image." Because we are created in God's image, we also need to be in community and in relationship with others.

Although we tend to exalt the self-made man, rugged individualist, in reality, people who are relationally isolated in this way are not healthy. In contrast, the Bible says that healthy people are people who are connected with other people in intimate, vulnerable community. Many leaders who have "crashed and burned" have done so by emphasizing their capacity for performance apart from the foundation of healthy relationships.

Jesus modeled Biblical community for us by spending the majority of His time with His disciples – teaching, encouraging, and correcting them. They lived, ate, traveled, prayed, and served together. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

Likewise, connecting with other followers of Christ is an essential part of our transformation. True Biblical community is more than just having Christian friends. It is a spiritual discipline focused on helping one another become fully devoted followers of Christ. It involves relational intimacy, transparency, vulnerability and accountability. Romans 12:5 tells us, "so in Christ, we (believers) who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." As with our physical body, so it is with the body of Christ – when one part suffers, all suffer. God has designed and gifted our fellow believers in Jesus Christ to perform unique and vital services for you to help you. Some of these services include being devoted to one another, serving one another, accepting one another, instructing one another, bearing one another's burdens, forgiving one another, comforting one another, encouraging one another, and looking out for the interests of others, just to name a few!

Fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ are in communities where they are both receiving and giving these things to people on a regular basis. Getting to this level does not happen naturally, it is the result of disciplined Bible study, prayer, and caring for one another. As Lon Solomon says, "Christianity is a team sport!"

## **Resources to help you connect**

McLean Bible has many ministry resources to help you connect in Biblical Community – principally through our many different types of groups.

We are a large church. While our large size can be intimidating, it has many benefits. For example, we have hundreds of different groups

of all shapes and sizes to meet your needs. These groups are categorized into seven areas:

1. **Small Groups.** Small groups (generally 6-12 people) are best for people looking for a geographically-based, age-based or gender-based group. Some small groups meet in homes, some at other locations such as the church. MBC has hundreds of small groups meeting all over the city.
2. **Community Groups.** Community groups are best for people looking for a larger, life-stage based environment that meets at the church building. We have community groups for couples, singles, seniors, men, women, internationals, high school students and much more.
3. **Study Groups.** Study groups are for people who are looking primarily for an in-depth Bible study. These include Community Bible Study, Precept Upon Precept, men's and women's discipleship groups, and more.
4. **Serving Groups.** Serving groups are for people looking primarily for an action-oriented experience. Dozens of serving groups exist, such as the Usher Ministry, Parking Ministry, Community Captains, Daily Bread food pantry, Share and Shop clothing ministry, KidsQuest, Access Ministry, and many others.
5. **Marketplace Groups.** Marketplace groups are best for people who wish to participate in a group that meets during their workday. Groups are meeting all around the city in organizations like AOL, BoozAllen, FreddieMac, EDS and others.
6. **Outreach Groups.** Outreach groups are for people with a passion for evangelism. MBC's City Impact ministry offers a variety of groups such as Operation Kindness,

Angel Tree, Thanksgiving Turkey Outreach, etc. Our Global Impact ministry offers the opportunity to connect in community via short-term mission trips.

7. **Support and Therapy Groups.** Support and therapy groups are best for people dealing with specialized issues in their life. We offer support groups for people dealing with cancer, grief, sexual addictions, and other situations requiring specialized spiritual, emotional and practical support. Therapy groups are led by trained professionals and are offered through the MBC Counseling Center.

You can learn more about these groups in The Connect Room (#1605) after every service. Our dedicated "Connect Team" works to help every person find the group that is best for them. Since connecting to community is essential to becoming a fully devoted follower, we consider our job undone until everyone who calls McLean Bible their church home is connected to at least one group.

Although being part of a group clearly fulfills the connect component of The Four Disciplines, it also provides avenues to carry out the other three disciplines as these groups grow, serve and share together.

Formal church membership is also an important part of the connect process. If McLean Bible is your church home, we encourage you to make a commitment by becoming a member. Members participate in congregational meetings and vote on important issues such as the election of elders, the acceptance of new members and the annual budget. In addition, membership is required for certain positions, such as teachers and Stephen Ministers.

# CONNECT IN BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. I participate regularly in one of MBC's worship services.  Yes  No
2. Committed relationships with other believers are an essential part of my life.  Yes  No
3. I have at least one person who prays for me regularly and helps me keep my commitments to Christ.  Yes  No
4. I am actively involved in at least one small group or community group at MBC.  Yes  No
5. My group is a safe place that encourages vulnerability and transparency.  Yes  No
6. My group is a caring community that supports one another in times of need.  Yes  No
7. My group is helping me understand and apply God's word.  Yes  No
8. My group is serving others together.  Yes  No
9. I have expressed my commitment to MBC by  Yes  No
10. I am helping others get connected in Biblical community.  Yes  No

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## NOTES

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## ACTION PLAN

# SERVE IN YOUR GOD-GIVEN MINISTRY

*The third discipline of fully devoted followers is serving the Lord and others in ministry.*

It was Jesus who exemplified service when he took a towel and a basin of water and washed the feet of his twelve disciples (John 13:5). He said so clearly, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...” (Matthew 20:28) and “I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:27)

Every great leader in the Bible exemplified service to God. The Apostle Paul’s most common title for himself was “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.” Peter, James, Jude, John, Daniel, Elijah, Nehemiah and Isaiah all called themselves the same thing. Mary, when presented by the angel with the news of Jesus’ upcoming birth, responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said” (Luke 1:38).

Revelation 4:11 says, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” It is this worthiness of God that lies at the heart of everything and is the preeminent reason why we serve Him.

In Romans 12:1, the Apostle Paul writes, “I urge you, therefore, in view of God’s mercy to you, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice to God, which is your reasonable service of worship.” In light of Christ’s sacrifice to us on the cross and his mercy to us, serving Jesus Christ with all of our hearts and doing so with joy is our only reasonable response to Him.

In Matthew 10:39, Jesus points out that whoever wishes to save his life [by not serving Christ] will lose it – but whoever loses their life for my sake will find their life.” Jesus was saying that the person who loses their life in the service of Christ

will find the real meaning for their existence and a true joy and satisfaction in living that nothing in this world can duplicate.

To serve in this way requires discipline, time management and prioritization. It also requires humility and a sacrificial attitude. Servants know that the ultimate objective of all service is to become a fully devoted follower of Christ and to help others to become the same.

Serving God does not end when we leave the church building – in many ways, it is just beginning. As Paul commands us, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart ...” (Colossians 3:23). Therefore, fully devoted followers sacrificially serve God everywhere – at work, at home, at church, in their communities, and with all of their life – their time, their talents, and their treasure. Don’t waste your lives pursuing the “trinkets” of this world – money, power, prestige, notoriety – instead pursue true meaning and satisfaction in life in the service of the Risen Messiah!

## **Resources to help you serve**

McLean Bible has many resources to help you serve in your God-given ministry.

God has uniquely given each follower of Christ at least one spiritual gift for the purpose of advancing His plan (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). In addition, everyone has unique abilities and experiences that help define how they will serve others.

In order to help you discover your unique ministry and cultivate the discipline of serving, we offer a variety of resources such as Christianity 401 and The Spiritual Gifts Workshop. Each ministry maintains a list of serving opportunities that can

be searched online at [www.mcleanbible.org](http://www.mcleanbible.org). In addition, our Volunteer Ministry is available to assist you in identifying the serving opportunity that is best for you.

We also offer a range of serving opportunities designed specifically for groups. These enable you to discover the joy of serving while building community at the same time.

Another way that people serve is by giving financially. For example, regular giving allows McLean Bible to serve thousands of people each week. Special giving supports a range of

causes, such as benevolence, Turkey Outreach, and the food pantry. Giving to the building fund enabled us to acquire our current facility, and is contributing to reducing the mortgage debt via our Finishing the Wall campaign.

To help people develop good financial disciplines, we offer Christianity 501 which teaches the Biblical principles of stewardship of their time, gifts and financial resources. In addition, our Financial Counseling team assists with budgeting, debt reduction and general financial management.

# SERVE IN YOUR GOD-GIVEN MINISTRY

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. I know that every believer, including me, has a God-given ministry.  Yes  No
2. I understand that I received at least one spiritual gift when I accepted Christ as my Savior.  Yes  No
3. I know what my spiritual gifts are, and I am working to develop them to their fullest potential.  Yes  No
4. I am actively serving in my God-given ministry.  Yes  No
5. I see serving God as a privilege, not a chore.  Yes  No
6. My desire is to serve God everywhere – at work, at home, at church, and in my community.  Yes  No
7. I believe that serving is an essential part of my Christian growth.  Yes  No
8. I am serving God by being a good steward of my financial resources.  Yes  No
9. I have completed training on how I can use my gifts to serve Christ, such as Christianity 401.  Yes  No
10. I am helping others learn how they can serve in their God-given ministry.  Yes  No

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## NOTES

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## ACTION PLAN

# SHARE THE MESSAGE OF JESUS CHRIST

*The fourth discipline of fully devoted followers is sharing the message of Jesus Christ with those who do not yet know Him personally.*

The Bible makes it clear that sharing our faith is a non-negotiable part of being a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ. In Mark 16:15, Jesus tells us to go into all the world and preach the message of Jesus Christ to every person. In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul instructs Timothy and us to “preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season,” and in 2 Tim 4:8 to “do the work of an evangelist.” The risen Lord Jesus himself told us to go share his message with people, and his orders supersede all other orders.

Every human being that is alive is facing God’s judgment for sin. Romans 3:9 tells us that Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin, and Romans 3:23 tells us that we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. None of us can escape God’s judgment by human performance. Romans 3:20 teaches us that “no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by observing the Law,” and the only way to escape God’s judgment and gain eternal life is through Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21-22 says that now, God offers us a righteousness from Himself, apart from human performance, through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Those who do not accept Christ are left to face God’s judgment unprotected and face eternal punishment in hell. The early church had an unflinching commitment to sharing this truth, and we need to do the same.

Jesus is our role model for the discipline of sharing. Jesus spent three years meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs. He commanded people to repent and place their faith in Him. He modeled the discipline of sharing for his disciples and commanded them to do likewise.

A lifestyle of sharing the gospel requires discipline. We must learn to clearly articulate our

testimony and answer questions and objections to Christianity. While we don’t have to have all the answers, we should strive to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15).

We must intentionally cultivate relationships with non-believers and pray for their salvation. We must have the courage to obey when the Holy Spirit prompts us to speak up, even in uncomfortable situations. We must lead lives of character and integrity, since our actions speak louder than our words.

Jesus declared in John 14:6, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” So sincerity, zeal for God or good works will never be the basis by which one gains eternal life, and we must share this news with everyone we meet. John 3:36 echoes this, “whoever believes in the Son (Jesus Christ) has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains” on that person.

Romans 1:20 teaches us that “since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen....” The Bible tells us that that there is enough about God revealed in the natural world and in creation, so that every human being alive should recognize that there is a mighty creator God in the universe.

Fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ know that apart from Jesus Christ, every single person they pass every day is separated from God, under God’s judgment and headed for disaster when they enter eternity. Fully devoted followers of

Jesus Christ are passionate about reaching these people – we want you to be, too.

**Resources to help you share**

McLean Bible has many ministry resources to help you share the message of Jesus Christ.

For example, McLean University offers Christianity 301, which helps you articulate your testimony, identify your evangelistic style, and learn to answer basic questions and objections to the Christian faith. *How to Spot Error and Stand Up for Truth* will help you address the tough questions that followers of Christ encounter in a secular culture. It will help you gain new skills to share your faith in Christ at a whole new level and to respond to difficult questions from skeptics and doubters.

In addition, we hold many events and worship services that are specifically designed for you to invite friends who do not yet know Christ. These include special services at Christmas and Easter, and evangelistic events such as Christmas concerts and outreach breakfasts.

Also, our Global Impact Ministry sponsors short-term mission trips that allow you to share the message of Jesus Christ in cross-cultural settings.

Our City Impact Ministry sponsors dozens of outreach oriented ministries that provide you with opportunities to share the message of Jesus Christ.

# SHARE THE MESSAGE OF JESUS CHRIST

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. I can explain the plan of salvation and lead someone in a prayer to receive Christ.  Yes  No
2. I can clearly articulate my personal testimony.  Yes  No
3. I have identified my evangelistic style.  Yes  No
4. I can answer basic questions and objections about the Christian faith.  Yes  No
5. I intentionally cultivate relationships with non-believers and pray for their salvation.  Yes  No
6. I regularly invite non-believers to church services and events.  Yes  No
7. I am willing to share my faith, even in uncomfortable situations.  Yes  No
8. I have a growing passion for sharing Christ with those who don't know Him.  Yes  No
9. I have completed evangelism training, such as Christianity 301.  Yes  No
10. I am helping others share the message of Jesus Christ.  Yes  No

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## NOTES

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## ACTION PLAN

## WHY BECOME A FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWER?

The transformation from new believer to fully devoted follower – as with anything worthwhile – requires discipline. We believe that the motivation for the journey comes from many sources, including love, obedience and a focus on heavenly rewards:

1. **Love.** “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died” (2 Corinthians 5:14).
2. **Obedience.** “Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him’” (John 14:23).
3. **Heavenly Rewards.** “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free” (Ephesians 6:7-8).

## SUMMARY

At McLean Bible Church, our vision is to make an impact on secular Washington with the message of Jesus Christ. Our desire is for you to join God in making this vision a reality. We believe that the best way to impact our city is for every person we touch to become a fully devoted follower of Christ.

Becoming a fully devoted follower is the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives and our personal spiritual disciplines which help create an environment to facilitate our growth. Specifically, we believe that The Four Disciplines – growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ, connecting in Biblical community, serving in your God-given ministry, and sharing the message of Jesus Christ work together to transform believers into fully devoted followers.

Regardless of whether you have been a Christ-follower for 24 hours or 24 years, there is always an opportunity for growth. Therefore, we suggest that each person assess their own transformation using our Spiritual Development Plan. The Spiritual Development Plan uses The Four Disciplines model, allowing you to identify areas for improvement and to map out specific action steps to become even more fully devoted.

At McLean Bible Church, we offer a wide range of ministry resources designed to help you implement the Four Disciplines in your life. We look forward to traveling the journey with you.