

FOCUS AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. Gospel-Saturated:

Prayer of Gratitude: Prayers of gratitude express thankfulness to God. It's a prayer of humility, recognizing the gifts God has given you as a good Father. Gifts can include salvation, sanctification, God's Word, God's character, or various aspects of your life (job, housing, family, etc.) To pray a prayer of gratitude, reflect on the gifts God has given you, even try writing them down, and spend time thanking God for them.

Celebration / Worship through Song. Celebration in its simplest form is praising God for his goodness. It's remembering what God has done and believing he will continue to prove himself faithful. You often participate in celebration when you gather corporately to sing to God on Sundays, but it's more than this: It's enjoying God and his creation through singing, dancing, enjoying a meal with friends, laughing, or anything that cultivates true joy.

Witnessing & Sharing the Gospel. A "witness" is someone who sees or hears something important and shares it with others. When you're a witness of the good news of Jesus, you share about his death, burial, and resurrection, as well as what he has done in your life. You witness both with your words, giving verbal testimony, as well with your life, a living testament to the work of Christ.

Preaching the Gospel to yourself. Everyone needs the gospel every single day. The gospel tells us the truth about ourselves and about God: we are sinful and unable to save ourselves, and God, in his grace, sent his Son Jesus to live the life we could not live and die the death we deserved. Through his death and resurrection, forgiveness and new life are offered freely to all who trust in him (Romans 10:9-10). This salvation isn't based on anything we've done or will do. Once a person is saved, they're always saved.

To preach the gospel to yourself is to return daily to this truth—prayerfully reminding yourself that you're fully forgiven, deeply loved, and completely dependent on God's grace. As you pray, thank God for what Christ has already accomplished for you, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you believe, apply, and experience these truths today—not by striving harder, but by trusting more deeply as God continues his work of sanctification in you.

2. Bible-Revering

Observation. Observation answers the question: "what does the text say?" It's slowing down and noticing the details before determining what the text means. To observe, first ask who, what, when, where, why, and how questions about the passage you're studying. (e.g. "Who is speaking, being spoken to, or might be nearby listening?") Every answer should be backed up by a verse reference, and your answers shouldn't be guesses or inferences—they're simply observations. Answering these questions can also mean, reading the passage slowly, looking for key words, repetition, comparison, contrast, relationships, general/specific, word order, patterns, or any other details.

Interpretation. Interpretation answers the question: “what does the text mean?” It’s first discovering what the author intended the passage to mean for the original audience, and then relating this interpretation for life today. To interpret the text, look at your observations, consider the context as well as the whole of Scripture, and use reliable resources to confirm your conclusions. This is when additional resources like study Bibles or commentaries come into play.

Contemplative Reading. Contemplative Reading (often called “divine reading”) is a practice that helps us slow down with Scripture to meet with God, not just learn about him. Rather than rushing to cover more text, this approach invites us to linger and listen through four simple movements—Read the passage carefully, reflect on what stands out and why, Respond to God in prayer, and Rest in his presence—trusting the Spirit to use his Word to shape our hearts as well as our minds. To pray in this way, clear your mind and focus on God’s presence. Then, simply enjoy being with him, dwelling on his love and resting in his goodness.

Meditation. Meditation is the discipline of soaking in God’s Word. It is slowly and intentionally reflecting on the truth of Scripture. To meditate, pray for God to help you, read the passage, and deeply reflect on the passage. Write the Scripture down, read it repeatedly, or recite it out loud, all while considering its truth and the character of the one who wrote it. When you find your mind wandering, draw it back to God and his Word.

Scripture Memorization. When you memorize Scripture, you hide God’s Word in your heart. Knowing God’s Word deeply helps you resist temptation, remain steadfast in trials, and recognize God’s sovereign hand in your life. You can memorize a verse, but it may yield even greater fruit to memorize a paragraph, chapter, or even a book of Scripture. Challenge yourself, it will only lead to blessing. To memorize, practice the Scriptures out loud, use an app, write flashcards, or read the verse repetitively until it sticks.

3. Praying

Intercessory Prayer. Intercessory prayer is praying to God on behalf of other people. This begins with Christ, who is the ultimate mediator between us and God (Romans 8:34, 1 Timothy 2:5). God, in his infinite wisdom, then calls you to pray for others, whether that be groups of people (churches around the world, pastors, unbelievers etc.) or individuals. You can pray for their salvation, personal needs, or growth and maturity in Christ, but ultimately intercessory prayer is about persistently presenting the needs of another to God and trusting him entirely with the outcome.

Praying Scripture. Praying Scripture is using God’s Word to form the content of your prayer. It is taking the Bible and speaking it back to God. It is more than reading, it is taking the meaning of the Scripture and applying that to your life and prayer. This could include praise, confession, petition, etc. To do this, take your daily reading and phrase by phrase, pray them to God. Either say them directly or use them to inspire what you say.

Prayer of Lament. Brokenness, suffering, and grief are a normal part of the Christian life. To process, God asks you to bring your pain to him. Prayers of lament express fear, frustration, or deep sadness to a kind and loving Father who cares about your pain. Modeled in the Psalms (Psalm 13, 22, 44, etc.), God shows you how to lament. First, talk to God. Second, make your complaint, explaining why you are hurting. Lastly, listen for a response and, if you are able, close by expressing your trust in His bigger plan.

Journaling Prayer. Journaling prayer is putting pen to paper to express your thoughts and feelings to God. It is a technique that both helps you focus your attention by writing and gives record of your prayers and how God has answered them. If this is a new or difficult task for you, start by setting a 5-minute timer and trust that God can and will use this time for good.

Fasting. Fasting is a biblical practice of intentionally abstaining from food—or another good gift—for a set time in order to seek God with greater focus and dependence. Fasting isn't about earning God's favor or demonstrating spiritual strength, but about humbly acknowledging our need for him and creating space to pray, repent, and align our hearts with his will.

4. Spirit-Led

Confession. Biblical confession starts with God, acknowledging your sin against Him and asking for forgiveness. The next step is sharing with believers (James 5:16). This can be for encouragement and accountability or their forgiveness if you sinned against them. Confession happens once at salvation, and then continually for our sanctification. The purpose of confession is releasing the sin of the past so you can change by the power of the Holy Spirit moving forward.

Listening Prayer (or “Discerning God’s Guidance”). Listening prayer is grounded in the idea that God speaks to us on a regular basis in a way we can hear and understand. Our job is to listen. This may not be an audible voice, as it could be a deep awareness or impression that God is prompting you to do something or cling to truth.

To practice, quiet the noise around you. Bring your requests and prayers to God. Then, spend time in silence. If your mind wanders, bring it back to the Lord as often as you realize it. If you believe you heard from the Lord, consult Scripture and the counsel of community before acting. For deeper study on discerning God's voice, [check out this graphic](#) or Module 4.

Examen. Created by St. Ignatius of Loyola, examen prayer is a reflective exercise. It is a way to recognize the presence of God as you think about the day past and to ask for his help in the day to come. To practice examen, come before God in prayer. Review the events of your day, noticing the feeling that surface as you do so. Talk to God about these feelings. Then, look forward to the day ahead, inviting God into any emotions that might arise as you do. God cares about your every moment of your every day; include Him in it all.
(Ignatianspirituality.com; Spiritual Disciplines Handbook)

5. Missional Church

Acts of Service. Mark 10:45 says, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Jesus served in love, and as his follower you are called to do the same. You can serve the lost, the church, friends, your community group, or family. However, “who” isn't as important as “how.” Serve with love (John 13:35) and people will know you belong to the King. Now, simply start: Cook a meal; mow a neighbor's yard; greet before the Sunday service. Let each opportunity point people to Jesus.

Praying for Unreached People Groups. An unreached people group lacks access to the gospel and must rely on an outside witness to share the good news ([Frontier Missions, East West](#)). When you pray for unreached people groups, pray specifically. Visit the Joshua Project online to discover the name, facts, and obstacles to thousands of groups of unreached peoples. Pray that God would send workers to those who have never heard His name so they can be saved.

Sharing Your Testimony. If you've encountered Jesus, and placed your faith in him, then you have a story to share. When sharing your testimony, consider your life in terms of "Before Christ," "Trusting Christ," and "After Christ."

"Before Christ," prompts you to share about your sin and life before you trusted Jesus. Next, share how you came to trust in Jesus—be sure to include the gospel (life, death, resurrection). Lastly, share how your life has changed since you chose to follow him and how he is currently working in your life. Your story doesn't have to have a perfectly buttoned up ending. It's okay to acknowledge that God is with us in the hard parts of life! Lastly, remember, no matter how mundane or extraordinary your story, the salvation of any lost person is a miracle that only God can do. That is something worth sharing.

An Interest Creating Testimony. An Interest-Creating Testimony is a brief, intentional way of sharing how God has worked in your life that invites curiosity and relatability. Instead of telling your whole story, you highlight a specific way Jesus has changed you—creating natural opportunities for gospel conversations by pointing others to what God has done and is still doing. Typically, an interest creating testimony involves seeking the Spirit's guidance as to what part of your story might be most relevant to the person you're sharing with.

Highlighting Missionaries. A missionary is one who has been sent to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost. Their stories of bravery, strength, and obedience to the mission of Jesus Christ can breathe life into your walk with the Lord. Soak up their example and ask God to give you radical faith, just as they had, wherever you are today.

6. Maturing Church

Application (Obedience Step). Application answers the question, "How do I respond to Scripture?" Accurate application is grounded in a correct observation and interpretation of the text. It is when you move from, "what did this mean for them (the original audience)?" and instead ask, "what does this mean for me today?" It is a step of obedience, where the reading of Scripture becomes transformational. James 2:17 says, "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." Without consistent application of God's Word to our lives, our faith is also dead.

Another way to approach application is to prayerfully ask, "How is the Spirit guiding me respond to what I just read?"

Journaling Spiritual Growth (Personal Reflection).

Journaling is tool God can use, with prayer, to help you grow in your walk with him. It is a means of intentional processing and reflection as a part of your sanctification journey. Often, it is wise to read the Scripture for the day and then journal in response. Two helpful prompts to start with are: "How am I feeling today and why?" and "What does God's Word have to say about how I am feeling?" Invite God into this space with you and see how He might use it.

Practicing Presence. Practicing the presence of God means having a continual awareness of him in your life. It is bringing your mind to God often, reflecting on and resting in his character, and being sensitive to the Spirit's guidance throughout your day. How might you do this? Brother Lawrence, a 17th century monk, said that we practice God's presence "by continually conversing with Him. That it was a shameful thing to quit His conversation, to think of trifles and fooleries." (*The Practice of the Presence of God*)

Silence and Solitude (Maturing). We live in a noisy world. The acts of silence and solitude are about quieting the noise, calming the chaos, and drawing your mind to Christ. To do this, retreat. Go somewhere other people are not, such as a walking path or a room in your home where you will not be disturbed. Make sure to leave technology behind and eliminate as many distractions as possible. Then, meditate on Jesus. Whether these practices last minutes or hours, the blessing of time alone with Jesus can be exponential.

7. Shepherding Church

Praying for Elders & Ministry Leaders. While we are instructed in Scripture to pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-4), praying for your elders and leaders should go beyond obedience to this command. It should be rooted in love, grounded in an understanding of the difficult task God has called them to, and a hope to see them thrive in their role. To do this, pray for their relationship with the Lord, that their love for God would grow more every day. Consider also praying for their character, relationships, and wisdom as they lead.

Reflection on Sunday Sermon. Each week the church sits under the teaching of God's Word. It is a time to learn what the Bible says, be convicted of sin and wrongdoing, and be encouraged and unified in your faith with the other believers in your local congregation. Reflecting on this teaching later in the week gives a chance for the message to sink in more deeply and allows us to respond in obedience if we initially went through the motions. To do this, you can listen to the message again or revisit any notes you took on Sunday. Then, spend some time in prayer asking God what he wants to show you or call you to.

Seeking Counsel & Accountability.

Wise counsel is advice grounded in God's Word. To accept wise counsel, you must have a humble attitude and desire to listen. Biblical accountability means having others who walk closely with you to help in your struggle with sin, encourage you, and pray for you. Seeking faithful accountability requires an admission of sin and willingness to be admonished even when it's hard. Both are ways of living out the one another's of Scripture and can be done within a small group, community group, or with other faithful followers of Jesus in general.

8. A Unifying Church

Prayer for Other Churches & Ministries. Prayer for Other Churches & Ministries in Your City is a practice of intentionally asking God to strengthen, encourage, and advance the work of gospel-centered churches and ministries around you. It reflects a commitment to the unity of the body of Christ, praying that Jesus would be made known through many faithful communities as God works through his people across the city.

Collaborative Service Opportunities. Collaborative Service Opportunities with Other Churches and Ministry Partners focus on joining together across congregations and organizations to meet real needs in the name of Christ. By serving side by side, we reflect the unity of the gospel, strengthen relationships within the broader body of Christ, and work collectively for greater impact in our city and beyond. Serving together with the purpose of sharing Christ's love with others not only demonstrates obedience to the Scriptures, but it cultivates lasting unity. Contact your local church to discover opportunities to serve on Sundays, throughout the week, and with external ministry partners. Serve prayerfully, asking for opportunities to share the hope of Christ. Serve humbly, recognizing your own need for Jesus. And serve joyfully, remembering the abundant life Jesus extends to all who believe.

9. Community Church

Fellowship Meal / Hospitality Night. Jesus spent countless hours around a table, eating with those he loved. Using his example, and the example of the early church, you too can fellowship with those you love over a meal. How? Simply gather. You can meet in a park, or someone's home. You can cook or have people bring something to share. It doesn't matter how small your space or how exquisite the food, neither are the point. The purpose is enjoying one another's company as you point each other to Christ.

Praying for Community Group Members. Your community group or small group is your church family, and praying for one another is vital to its health and wellbeing. Pray for one another when you are gathered: For unity, authenticity, and steadfastness through hard seasons. And pray for one another when you're apart: for the needs and requests of the individual members.

10. Sending Church

Fasting for Global Missions. Fasting in the Bible is refraining from eating food for the purpose of seeking God and His will. *But why fast if it's uncomfortable?* Hunger pains are signals designed to draw our minds back to the Lord in prayer. If you have never fasted before, consider fasting for one meal a week to start. During the time you would usually use to eat, pray. Allow your hunger to remind you to seek God. If you are unable to fast from food, consider fasting from something else that holds your attention throughout the day.

Giving to Support Church Planting. Giving to Support Church Planting is a tangible way to participate in God's work of expanding His Church beyond our local context. Through generous and faithful giving, we partner with God in sending and sustaining gospel-centered churches so that more people, in more places, can hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

