

Living Today: Firm Foundation Introduction

You have made a great decision. The fact that you are reading this indicates you have some level of interest in understanding who Jesus is, what He wants to do in our lives today and, most importantly, what this means to you.

This path of spiritual growth was born out of my desire to grow. I have put these principles to work and found that they produce results. You could get some results by just reading and following the text yourself. However, the way to maximize your own growth, producing the most results in the shortest time, is to have a personal coach or group to help you. Make no mistake, it is your path - yours alone. But, you don't have to walk it by yourself.

Whether you choose to walk this path with one coach or with a group, the key is to have people who are more mature in Christ who you can talk to about the issues raised in Firm Foundation. Discipleship is not a solo journey; we all need each other to develop as God intended. In fact, the interaction required in making disciples benefits everyone involved.

The path is called "Firm Foundation." Just as a building needs a firm foundation to be stable and effective long-term, you need a firm foundation spiritually, emotionally and mentally to have a stable and effective life. Firm Foundation is not a comprehensive, final study on your life in Christ. It is designed to build foundational truths into your heart, your mind and your daily life. You will build on these timeless truths from now on.

You are on your way to becoming the best you that you can be. As God's Word and His Spirit become woven into your daily life, you will begin to see growth in yourself. So, now is the time to begin. Turn to the next page and take the next step on your path of growth in Christ.

For His kingdom,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke underlining the name.

Steve Queen

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Table of Contents

Section 1: Your Relationship with God	3
Section 2: Your Relationship with Your Spouse	34
Section 3: Your Relationship with Your Children.....	43
Section 4: Your Relationship with Your Employer or Employees	53
Section 5: Your Relationship with Those in The Body of Christ.....	61
Section 6: Your Relationships with Those Outside The Body of Christ.....	81
Living Today: Firm Foundation Conclusion	85
Index by Section.....	86
Index by Subject.....	88

Section 1

Your Relationship with God

Many people wonder what is meant by a "relationship with God." If you think God is "a cosmic gas of good will" or "an aloof, impersonal being that created the universe then retired" or any number of other non-biblical ideas, then the thought of having a relationship with such a being is either far-fetched or just undesirable. However, the Bible reveals a much different picture of God. God is our Father, a caring, loving Father who truly wants the best for us. He wants us to grow; that is where ultimate life is found.

If He wants us to grow, why doesn't it happen automatically? You need to know that we are all born into a war between light and darkness (Acts 26.18). You can win in this war by God's Word and His Spirit. The war is over people leaving the darkness and coming into the kingdom of light. Once there, the battle is for our "joy and progress in the faith" and to "grow in grace and the knowledge of God."

How do you grow?

- Bible reading & study
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Practice (doing) the Word
- Interacting as part of a community of believers

This may be a new thing to you. The best way to grow strong, and grow quickly, is with a discipler - someone who knows this path and will be a coach for you. They aren't a drill sergeant, but they aren't just an encourager. They will help with loving accountability.

BIG ROCKS FOR THIS SECTION:

1. GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW HIM (Jeremiah 9.23,24; 2Pe 3.18)
2. YOU CAN KNOW HIM (Jeremiah 29.13; Matthew 7.7-11)
3. GOD'S WORD (THE BIBLE) AND HIS SPIRIT (THE HOLY SPIRIT) REVEAL GOD TO US (2Timothy 3.16,17; John 16. 13)
4. LIVING GOD'S WORD CAUSES US TO TRULY UNDERSTAND, TO GROW AND TO BE BLESSED (James 1.22; 1 Peter 2.2; Ephesians 4.16)

Day 1

Bible (10 minutes)	Read 1 Peter 1.3 - 9; 1 Peter 1.22 - 25; John 3.16; Colossians 1.13,14. - The New Birth
Meditation (3 minutes)	God's Word tells me I have been born again by my faith in Jesus. Because he rose from the dead, I have a living hope. I am a new creature in my spirit, the innermost part of who I am... the ultimate, eternal "me." My spirit, the real me, is no longer part of the kingdom of darkness. I am now a part of the kingdom of His Son, Jesus.
Prayer (2 minutes)	Thank you, Lord, for my new birth. I thank you that I am now your child. My identity is found in you. By your grace working in me, I will think today about how I am a new person. I'm still me, but I am fundamentally changed in my spirit. Thank you for helping me grow in my understanding of you. Thank you for loving me. I love you, Jesus.
Practice (through your day)	<p>God knows you have things to do today. He wants us to work, to have friends, to spend time with family, mow the lawn, etc. What He wants is for you to grow in your knowledge and understanding of Him and to love and serve Him each day.</p> <p>Today, as you have some time that does not demand all your attention, think about the fact that you really are a new YOU on the inside. If you liked a certain food, you still like that food. We are talking about a new you at the most fundamental level of your life, your spirit. You aren't in darkness anymore. You have a hope now that you did not have before, because of Jesus' resurrection and your faith in Him. Let that soak in... enjoy thinking about it. Thank God for the new birth through the day just because you want to, not because you have to.</p>
Evaluation (5 minutes)	<p>How was today? If you have only been born again a short time, you may have found that you sometimes thought and did things just like before you were born again. However, you may have noticed that some of those thoughts or actions made you feel uneasy inside. If so, that's your spirit causing your conscience to be sensitive to things that need to change. Don't worry! You don't change all behaviors and thought patterns overnight... and you don't do it by yourself. Stay with this plan for growth and you WILL GROW!</p> <p>Call your discipler/coach tonight just to let them know how you are. They want to hear from you. Before you call them, think for a moment about the new birth. Everywhere you went today, you carried the reality of God's kingdom on the inside of you. Some of your thoughts and words and actions were probably quite different than they used to be. That's you living from the inside out, letting the life of God come through you to touch other people. So, go ahead and call your discipler/coach. Tomorrow your growth will continue.</p>
	Notes/Questions:

Day 2

Bible (10 minutes)	Read Romans 10. 9,10; Ephesians 2.8,9. - The New Birth: How It Happens
Meditation (3 minutes)	God's Word tells me I have been born again by God's grace, through faith. That means God extended his grace (his pardon and power) to me; I received this gift of the new

	birth by faith (understanding and agreeing with what God said and embracing it as truth; committing myself to it). I could not, and cannot, save myself. Through Jesus' sacrifice for me, God has done what I could not do. I am a new creature in my spirit, the innermost part of who I am... the ultimate, eternal "me."
Prayer (2 minutes)	Thank you, Lord, for causing my new birth to rest on your grace and my faith. I thank you that I do not work my way into your grace. I could not earn my new birth; I could only receive it as a free gift from you by faith. Thank you for helping me to grow in my knowledge of you. Thank you for loving me. I love you, Jesus.
Practice (through your day)	Be mindful today that you did not earn the new birth. It was a gift. That's how you received it. That's how you began a real relationship with Jesus. That's how your co-workers, fellow students or any other people around you can have the new birth as well. Go ahead and let yourself dwell on the awesome reality of God's grace toward you. Let yourself be glad that you are His child, simply by believing Jesus was raised from the dead and confessing Him as your Lord (surrendering your life to Him, to live as He wants you to). You can trust Him to lead you because He loves you... always.
Evaluation (5 minutes)	How was today? You don't earn your way into God's family; you believe your way into God's family. Even so, God had to draw you to Himself, so He ultimately gets the praise for you being His child. He drew you, you responded in faith. It is essential that you understand how you were born again. Now is a good time to cover this with your coach/discipler. Also, briefly reviewing the Bible verses for today and the meditation and prayer sections will help you get established in these vital truths.
	Notes/Questions:

Day 3

Bible (10 minutes)	Read Ephesians 5.18; Acts 1.5-8, 4. 31, 6.1-7, 11.22-24. - A Spirit-filled Life: What It Means
Meditation (3 minutes)	God wants His Holy Spirit to fill me, to influence my life from the inside out. Just as being filled with wine influences what a person does, so being filled with the Holy Spirit will influence what a person does. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would bring power into the lives of his disciples. It was possible for the apostles to identify Spirit-filled people, like Stephen. Stephen and others waited tables, so it was not just the apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit. I want the same Holy Spirit to fill me.
Prayer (2 minutes)	Lord, I trust you with my whole life. Jesus, you gave yourself completely for my sake. I give you all of me. I want your will to be done in my life, today and every day. Your Word is clear that you want me to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want that, too. I yield myself to you and to the Holy Spirit teaching me and leading me in all my life. Thank you for saving me and helping me to grow. In Jesus Name. Amen.
Practice (through your day)	Living a Spirit-filled, or Spirit-directed, life is something we grow in. It is learning to live from the inside out, instead of letting the outside (your circumstances) control you. The

	<p>Holy Spirit leads us to live as Jesus did. That doesn't mean you have to wear a robe. It does mean that the character of Jesus is manifest in us as we yield to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not erase our identity; He expresses the life of God through us. You will learn a lot through this path of growth about how God wants to live in you and through you in a way that is truly "you".</p>
<p>Evaluation (5 minutes)</p>	<p>How was today? Did you become more aware that the Holy Spirit wants to live through you? The Christian life truly is a fundamentally different life than what the world knows. Living from the inside out, knowing God is pleased with you and with your growth, is enormously fulfilling.</p> <p>If you have not spoken with your coach today, go ahead and call them. They will probably have some short stories on how they have learned to live a Spirit-filled life. Those will provide some insight for you that will be useful.</p>
	<p>Notes/Questions:</p>

Day 4

<p>Bible (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Read Luke 24.36-49; Acts 2.1-4, 8.9-17, 10.34-48. - A Spirit-filled Life: Part Of The Gospel</p>
<p>Meditation (3 minutes)</p>	<p>Jesus told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they had been clothed with power. They waited, and the Holy Spirit came upon them in Acts chapter 2. Others in the book of Acts believed on Jesus as their Savior and afterward received the same Holy Spirit. In addition to the new birth, God wants me to receive the Holy Spirit, just as the believers did in the book of Acts.</p>
<p>Prayer (2 minutes)</p>	<p>Lord, I want the same Holy Spirit and the same power that the believers had in the book of Acts. I do believe Jesus was raised from the dead and I have accepted him as my Lord, so I am born again. Just like in the book of Acts, I want to receive the Holy Spirit. I know you want me to. I yield to you because I trust you. Thank you for leading me into all that you have prepared for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.</p>
<p>Practice (through your day)</p>	<p>God wants you to live in all the provision he has made for you. He wants the same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead to live in and through you. Today, practice being yielded to the will of God. That means to practice being mindful that Jesus lives in your heart by faith. This is learning to live from the inside out.</p>
<p>Evaluation (5 minutes)</p>	<p>How was today? Realizing that God has something for you after the new birth is exciting. He loves you and wants you to live in the reality of all he has provided for you. Re-read the scriptures for today. It will help your growth and prepare you for tomorrow!</p>
	<p>Notes/Questions:</p>