

How to Grow Closer to God: Simple Practices That Make a Difference

Do you ever sit and wonder how you can grow closer to God? I know I do sometimes, and over time, I've discovered a few things that have really helped me strengthen my relationship with Him.

The first thing I did was start reading my Bible every day. Getting into the Word daily can have a profound impact on your relationship with God, especially if you allow the Word to truly feed your soul. The Bible is what cleanses our minds and teaches us about God's commandments. By reading it daily, we learn what we were created to be as children of God.

Another thing I've made a habit of is praying. Prayer is one of the most important aspects of building a relationship with God because it's how we communicate with Him. Talking to God is beautiful because it's in those moments that we get to hear His voice. Prayer can become very intimate when it's not done out of ritual or for show. When you approach God with a raw and open spirit, that's when you can truly hear what He wants from you. Even if it's just a simple prayer like, "Lord, I need You. I want You in my life.

Let me become who You want me to be." God loves prayers that come from the heart, so speak to Him openly and listen for His response.

Something else I've found helpful is practicing gratitude. Every morning, my mom and I share three things we're grateful for. It may seem like a small thing, but it adds up! Even during the toughest seasons, it serves as a reminder that we are blessed and that God has been so gracious to us. Gratitude helps me shift my perspective, even when life gets difficult. So, I encourage you to try it—whether it's writing down three things you're thankful for or sharing them with a loved one. It's a simple but powerful way to remind yourself of the many blessings in your life.

One thing the Bible makes abundantly clear is that forgiveness and love are central to being a Christian. Forgiving others and loving them might seem easy when everything's going well, but when someone hurts you, it can be incredibly difficult. Yet, forgiveness and love are what God commands us to do. I know there have been times in my life when I've struggled to

forgive someone for what they did, but I've come to realize that holding on to unforgiveness creates a barrier between God and me. Unforgiveness is a sin, and we can't grow closer to God if we're harboring sin in our hearts.

Sometimes, I have to remind myself that, yes, Christ died for me—but He also died for every other person on this earth, including those I find it hardest to forgive. When I remember that, I ask myself: What right do I have to hold on to unforgiveness? Unforgiveness is a root of sin, and the enemy uses it to pull us away from God. If you want to grow closer to Him, I encourage you to repent of any unforgiveness and pray blessings over the people who have wronged you.

Being close to the Lord is the most amazing thing in the world. There's nothing more incredible than having a deep, personal relationship with God, and I hope this gives you some practical ways to draw nearer to Him. It's made a real difference in my life, and I pray it helps you too.

By: Ruth Wash

"Love is a never-ending act of forgiveness. It's the way we choose to see the best in one another, and the way we hold each other up when times get tough. On Valentine's Day, we don't just celebrate love in its sweetest moments, but in its growth, its patience, and its strength."

— Leo Buscaglia

Riddle of the month - by Ian Kim

If you combine 2 names, it becomes 1 name. What name is it?

Annabelle!

Combines "Anna" and "Belle"!

Exciting Things Coming Up at CCS This February!

February is shaping up to be an exciting month at CCS! We're kicking things off with the much-anticipated production of *Newsies*, which will be performed from February 5-7 at Emmanuel Church. The cast and crew have poured their hearts into this performance over the past couple of months, and we can't wait to see their hard work come to life!

Later in the month, CCS is hosting a Family Skate on February 21 at the Optimist Arena. Join us at 2pm for some fun on the ice, along with hot chocolate, cookies, and plenty of good times!

That's all for February—wishing you a fantastic month ahead!

Canada Prepares to Fight Back Against Tariffs in an Escalating Trade War

In response to Donald Trump's tariffs on Canadian goods, the Canadian government has announced a series of retaliatory tariffs on American imports. Starting Tuesday, February 4, 25% tariffs will be applied to American products such as food, appliances, and motorcycles. This list includes over \$30 billion worth of American goods, and in 21 days, a second round of tariffs will target \$125 billion

worth of American products. These measures have been strategically chosen to put economic pressure on key sectors that are likely to impact the Republican Party. As the trade war intensifies, Trump has threatened to further increase tariffs, which could have a significant impact on citizens in both the United States and Canada. Ultimately, both sides stand to lose from the ongoing

trade conflict, with everyday goods becoming more expensive for consumers on both sides of the border.

By: Mackenzie Duthie



Understanding Korea's Traditional Age System

By: Ian Kim

In Korea, when a baby is born, they are considered 1 year old instead of 0. On New Year's Day, Koreans add 2 years to their age if it's before their birthday, and 1 year if it's after their birthday. This is because, in the traditional Korean age system, everyone's age increases by 1 on New Year's, regardless of their actual birthday. So, it's as if everyone

shares a birthday on January 1, and people could be 1 or 2 years older than their international age.

However, in June 2023, due to the confusion caused by this system, Korea officially adopted the international age system. As a result, Koreans suddenly became "younger" by 1 or 2 years.

