

Gardener and Warrior



Ronald D. Potts

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Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week One

You Are Here

Stage Two

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

Stage Three

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Introduction

How This Program Works

You've tried changing your life many times. You took on hard challenges like the "75 Hard" and the program went well, but afterwards you were just like you were before. You've consumed all the best self-help books, but here you are, in a life that needs changing.

You've started and done well, but eventually quit. Nothing sticks.

We try to pull external challenges into us to change us, but change only comes from within. I got into fitness thinking it would change me. I could pull it in and change me, but I struggled with consistency. It wasn't until I did work internally, seeking real healing from the Lord, that I could be consistent.

It was never going to work the other way round. I wasn't going to accomplish physical goals and be changed inside. I needed to change (heal) inside first. Praise the Lord, He has brought me here, in His Grace.

Luke 8 (NIV)

11“Now the parable means this: The seed is the word of God. **12**Those along the path are the ones who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. **13**Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in a time of testing fall away. **14**As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. **15**But as for the seed that landed on good soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word, cling to it with an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with steadfast endurance.

Stage One:

Dig Deep, Plant Seeds

This program starts by “digging deep” within yourself to find those things that keep holding you back, causing inconsistency, and the cycle of starting/ quitting.

The Keystone of the program is the Journal to bring self-knowledge.

There will be challenge in this program, but the first challenge is to dig deep within yourself to find the source of self-defeating beliefs that drive your inconsistency; which has created this life you now want to change.

After we dig deep into the soil of our hearts, we want to plant the seeds of the Word and Truth of God, so that we change our thinking and hearts to that of God's. Therefore we will live the life God has called us to in Christ Jesus.

Zechariah 4:10 (NLT)

10Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin...

Galatians (NIV)

6Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

7Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

8Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Stage Two:

Show Up, Do the Work

Having dug up the soil and planted seeds, in stage two we get to doing the work and taking on the challenge. In stage two we “Show up, Do the Work.” The principle of “Show up, Do the Work,” is a simple, workman mentality. Just like your job, you show up everyday and do the work that needs doing.

To create the life we are called to and want, we need to show up consistently, and do the work we can. What matters is we do the work we can. Not 100% today? It's okay, show up and do what you can. Over time this makes all the difference, if we do not give up!

Challenges, Change, and Commitment

Challenges are great, and they help orient our action and priorities, but Challenges don't change us.

Change comes from the inside and during the journey. You will need to commit to this program because it is challenging! You need to know once you commit to change, challenges to that commitment comes immediately. Prepare.

Virtue Practice

“The Act of Doing, Is the Act of Becoming”

In this program we will be doing a weekly Virtue. The Christian Character is one of virtue and duty, not of rule following (although there are some). God does not desire automatons who are told what to do in every situation, but people of mature character who can discern the right actions in each particular situation.

There is a list of Virtue in this program. You will select one each week, and consciously work to embody that virtue in your life. This is practice, and practice makes permanent.

By acting virtuously we will become virtuous people.

Weekly Goals

There are four weekly goals that will remain the same, and each week will have its own specific challenge.

The first four goals of filling out the Journal, getting 8,000 steps, workout 5x a week, and sticking with a nutrition plan remain the same throughout the program.

The 5th weekly goal will be different each week and will be a challenge that goes along with the week's work.

The Journal will be covered in week one. Steps are steps, if you don't have a step counter plan a 2 mile, intentional, walk. For a workout we're looking for at least 20 minutes of good effort to count, and nutrition planning just means eating what you've planned.

Things Required for the Program

- ❖ Journal Book or Program
- ❖ Devotional (enough days for the Program)
- ❖ Workout Plan
- ❖ Nutrition Plan
- ❖ Willingness to Allow for Faith

Weekly Goal Tracking

The basic goal of this program is to bring mindfulness and attention to your life. This is the purpose of the goal tracking. Especially Stage One is about about tracking. Do not judge yourself harshly about the checks or Xs. There's no doubt getting these goals into your days will take effort and change. You have 4 weeks to figure out how to fit them into your life. By tracking them you will have data to examine and a pattern to help to plan effectively. Be sure to track!

A Prioritized Life

```
graph TD; A[Jesus] --- B[Family/ Relationships]; B --- C[Career/ Vocation];
```

Jesus

Family/
Relationships

Career/ Vocation

Hebrews 12

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ²We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.^a Because of the joy^b awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Wake Up 30 min early, x2

This Week

What do I hope to accomplish in the next 12 weeks?

What will your Morning Routine look like?

Wake up early 2x this week.

Get a Journal.

**Find a Devotional/
Devotionals for 90 days.**

What areas do I need the most help in?

Add a 10 min walk to your daily routine.

Go to church this week.

Dig Deep, Plant Seeds

Next Week

The Program begins!

Plan to wake up early every day!

The Keystone: The Journal

The Keystone The Journal

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week One

You Are Here

Stage Two

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

Stage Three

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Wake Up 45 Min Early

The Keystone The Journal

This Program is founded upon the Journal. The Journal is a structured routine that will set our first intention of the day, our focus, our thinking, and our actions. The Journal is our roadmap and guide to the life we want and that God calls us to.

If you do not do the Journal this program won't work.

If you do the Journal, this program will work.

Most importantly, be ***honest***. You do not have to share the Journal with anyone. A man who cannot first be honest with himself cannot be honest with anyone. If you are not honest you will only be cheating yourself.

Psalm 143: 8 (NIV)

8 Let the morning bring me
word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust
in You.

Show me the way I should
go,
for to you I entrust my
life.

The Journal

James 1:5 (NIV)

5 If any of you lacks
wisdom, you should
ask God, who gives
generously to all
without finding fault,
and it will be given to you.

Date:

Journal

Meditative Prayer/ Prayer Walk Reflection:

Gratitude: List 3 things, major or minor, complex or simple

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Devotional Passage: Scripture used in devotional

Devotional Reflection: Reflection on the devotional writing and passages

My Prayer: Write out what you will be praying for. Add any reflection after, if there is any.

Virtue of the Week: How do you plan to practice this virtue today

Journal: A general journal entry. Write about your life, reflect on your feelings. Use this space to work through your thoughts.

Mission Statement: A “To-Do list,” but this is a “Mission Statement. Your day will not be complete until it is finished. Choose carefully. It’s better to get a few things done, then have many things undone.

Workout: Write out what your workout plan for the day is. Plan it, write it, do it.

Nutrition: Write out what you will be eating today. Try to eat only what you’ve listed..

1 Thessalonians 5 (NIV)

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray continually, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4 (NIV)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Journal Parts

The Journal is structured (and morning routine) in a specific way, a specific order, starting with the most important first. I have taken inspiration from the previous passages and the “Lord’s Prayer.”

Pray and listen, gratitude (which is a posturing of the heart, so that we may receive), to God’s word, self examination, and so forth. I recommend you start by using this structure, then adjust as you find necessary.

- ❖ Meditative Prayer/ Prayer Walk Reflection
- ❖ Gratitude (List 3 Things)
- ❖ Devotional Passages
- ❖ Devotional Reflection
- ❖ Prayer Journal (Written Prayer)
- ❖ General Journal/ Reflection
- ❖ Mission Statement for the Day (To-Do List)
- ❖ Workout for the Day
- ❖ Nutrition Plan for the Day

Mark 1 (NIV)

35Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Morning Routine

The Keystone to this program is the Journal, the first row we hoe is the morning routine. This is why the week one challenge is to get up 30 minutes early. As leaders of our house, either now or in the future, we should be the first ones up.

We want to wake up and set our first intention on seeking the Lord and His wisdom; before planning our day, having our own thoughts, and especially before we encounter anyone else. In doing this we submit our thinking to His, and fill our cup so that we may pour into others. We cannot pour from an empty cup.

Being the first ones up, meeting with the Lord, and starting our day we can become the thermostat of our house, rather than a thermometer. We set the temperature of the house, the culture.

1 Corinthians 16 (ESV)

13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. **14** Let all that you do be done in love.

Morning Routine

Suggested Routine

- ❖ Wake up early
- ❖ Water+Electrolytes
- ❖ 15 Minute Walk
- ❖ 10 Minutes Breath Prayer/ Meditation
- ❖ Coffee
- ❖ 20 Minutes Journal
- ❖ Lead Your Wife/ Partner in Prayer or Pray For Someone

In this program you have freedom to adjust the routines to fit your life. This program is meant to *serve* you, not be your tyrant. This requires honesty and accountability from you. You have to be honest in your effort, and accountable for doing the work. Literally no one can hold you accountable if you don't first decide to be accountable. The structure of this routine is thought out, and proven to work.

Psalm 5 (ESV)

1 Listen to my words, LORD,
consider my lament.

2 Hear my cry for help,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.

3 In the morning, LORD, you hear my
voice;

in the morning I lay my requests
before you

and wait expectantly.

This Week

**Setup and use
your Journal**

**Wake up early
enough to do
your Morning
Routine**

**What areas do I
need the most
help in?**

**What pain am I
avoiding?**

Seek the Lord

Dig Deep, Plant Seeds

Next Week

Getting our thinking right!

Morning Prayer Walk.

The Battlefield of the Mind

The Battlefield of the Mind

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

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Stage One

**Stage
Three**

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Morning Prayer Walk, 15 mins

Ephesians 6 (NIV)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the belt of

truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The Battlefield

Jesus has won the war, He is victorious! The Enemy ***IS*** defeated, yet he fights on.

Although the war is won, we still wage battle, and that battle is fought in our minds. When we declare our loyalty to Jesus we are automatically placed in the battleline, whether we choose or think we are.

THIS IS WAR!

Ephesians 6

10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11**Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13**Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14**Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15**and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **16**In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17**Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

2 Corinthians 10 (NIV)

1 By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away! 2 I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. 3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The Attack

The context of these passages is Paul's apostleship and authority are being questioned, in a church he established no less! There are those who question whether he has any authority over them or to teach them, and question his very character. Then notice Paul writes some of the most famous passages about spiritual warfare immediately following.

The reason for this is the first thing the Enemy is going to attack is your identity in Christ. Indeed, it's really his only play. However, for the one whose gaze is firmly on Jesus and locked in on their identity, vocation, and authority in Christ Jesus, what does the enemy have to afflict such a person? Perhaps physical death, but we have the witness of Jesus' resurrection over death (1 Corinthians 15:55)!

All of this isn't to say it's easy, but it is the truth of Scripture.

Examine Your Thoughts

Not every thought is actually your own. We don't know where thoughts come from, exactly, and we don't have to take ownership of every thought that occurs to us. Some thoughts are specifically from demonic sources attempting to lead us astray, the "old man" before Christ, or both together.

Logismoi (Strong's)

1. a reckoning, computation.

2. a reasoning: such as is hostile to the Christian faith, 2 Corinthians 10:4(5) (**vain imaginations**).

3. a judgment, decision: such as conscience passes, Romans 2:15

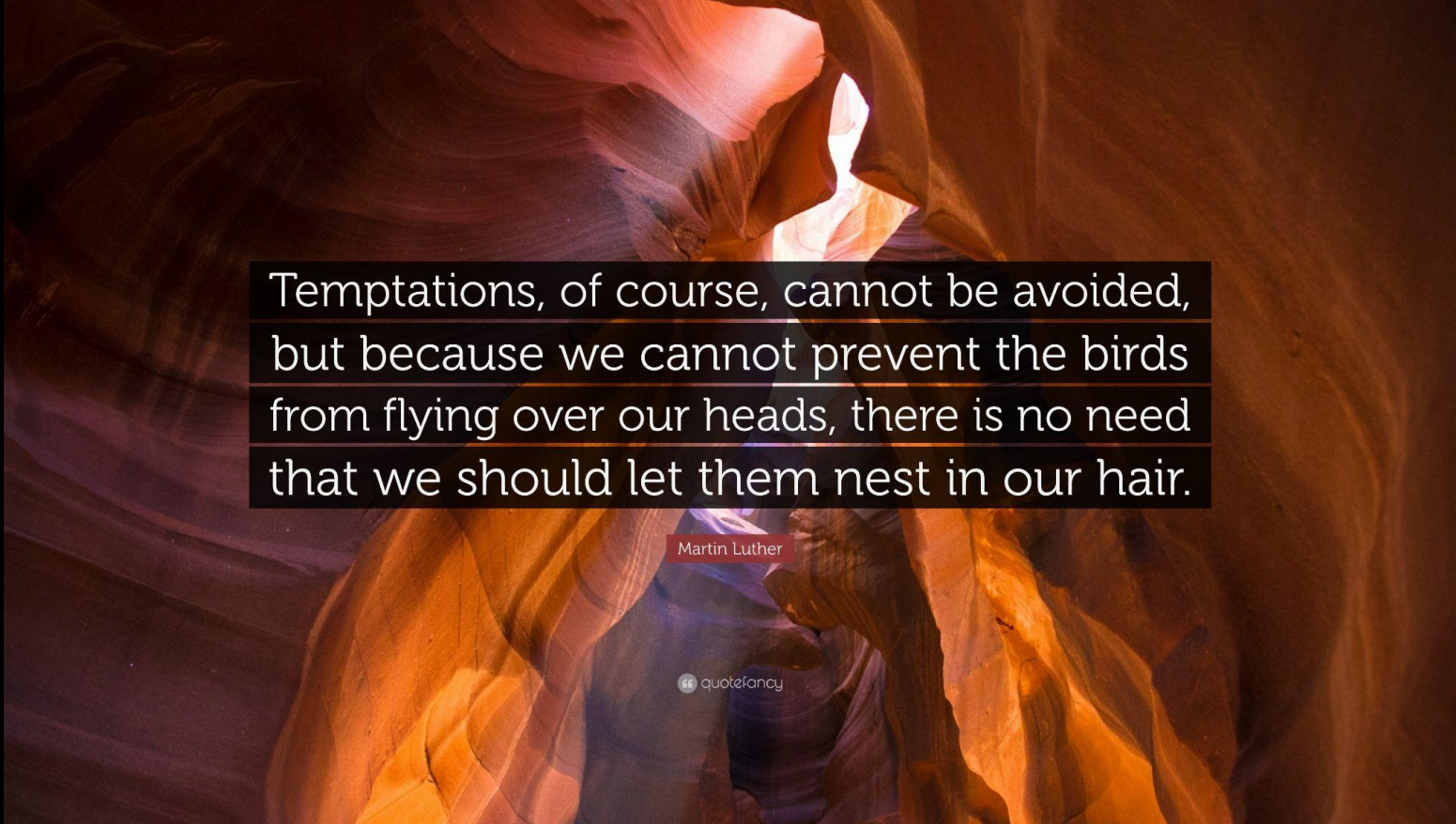
Logismoi

There is a long Christian tradition and teaching of “Logismoi” as assaultive thoughts that tempt us to sin. These are not thoughts we should necessarily take ownership of, and they may not even be our own; especially that of the “new man” that is in Christ.

Five Stages of Thought

- ❖ **Assault** - the *logismoi* first attacks a person's mind
- ❖ **Interaction** - a person opens up a dialogue with the *logismoi*
- ❖ **Consent** - a person consents to do what the *logismoi* urges him to do
- ❖ **Defeat** - a person becomes hostage to the *logismoi* and finds it more difficult to resist
- ❖ **Passion or Obsession** - the *logismoi* becomes an entrenched reality within the heart/ soul of a person

Examine every thought that tries to take us captive. Does the thought agree with the truth of Scripture? Or is the thought edifying or building up? It might be convicting, but if it's tearing down it's not from God. We don't have to *consent or agree* with every thought that arises.



Temptations, of course, cannot be avoided, but because we cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, there is no need that we should let them nest in our hair.

Martin Luther

quote fancy

Patterns of Thoughts

Many of us are familiar with the “7 deadly sins,” but we often think of them as rule of conduct. They descend from the “8 patterns of evil thoughts,” and are more about your thought life.

8 Patterns of Evil Thoughts

Gluttony

Fornication

Avarice

Sorrow

Discouragement

Anger

Vainglory

Pride

7 Deadly Sins

Gluttony

Fornication

Avarice

Sloth

Anger

Pride

Envy

Philippians 4

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. **And the God of peace will be with you.**

Set the Right Target

What you set your mind to you will pursue. On Christ? Righteousness, Mercy, and Love. On things of this world, or sin? You will sin and stumble and fall.

Hebrews 12: 1-3

1Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, **2fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.** For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3**Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Colossians 3: 1-3

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.** **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your ^a life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

1 Corinthians 10: 21-22

21You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. **22**Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy?

Virtue List

What you set your mind to you will pursue. We want to practice intentionally setting our minds upon virtue. Below is a list of virtues. You will focus on one virtue per week.

You will need a daily plan and reflection on the virtue.

Philippians 4: 8-9

Endurance

Enthusiasm

Forgiveness

Hope

Hospitality

Humility/ Love?

Integrity

Kindness

Patience

Presence

Self-Control

Service

See Virtue List explanation [here](#)

Scriptures for Meditation

Guard your mind with the Truth, and the Truth of Christ as witnessed in Scripture and through prayer. Renew your mind daily, or hourly, or by the minute whatever it takes. Guard your mind from the lies of the Enemy.

Passion/ Obsession:

James 1: 13-15

Romans 7: 20-25

Guarding Your Mind

Ephesians 1: 1-7

Philippians 4: 4-9

Ephesians 6: 10-18

2 Corinthians 5: 16-21

1 Corinthians 2:16; 10:21

Renewing Your Mind

Romans 12: 1-2

Romans 5: 1-5

Acts 10: 15

1 Peter 1: 3-9

Galatians 5: 7-8; 6:9

1 John 1: 8-10; 2: 1-3

Philippians 3: 14-15

1 John 3: 2-3

2 Corinthians 5 (NIV)

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: ^a The old has gone, the new is here!

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin ^b for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This Week

Journal

What's your
virtue this
week?

What lies about
my life have I
believed?

What patterns
of thinking
have kept me
from obtaining
my goals?

Do I examine
my thoughts?

Submit your
thinking to the
truth of
Scripture.

Each day
reflect on your
virtue of the
week and how
you will
practice it.

Dig Deep, Plant Seeds

Next Week

Bringing intention to our lives!

Phone Fasting.

Intention, Attention, and Worship

Intention, Attention, and Worship

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week Three

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Cultivate

Stage One

Stage Three

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Phone Fast, Intentionally, 2 hours a day

Proverb 4 (NIV)

26 Give careful thought to the ^c
paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your
ways.

27 Do not turn to the right or the
left;
keep your foot from evil.

What Do You Worship

What is Worship?

My favorite definition of worship, is “that which we give our uttermost attention to.” If we are not intentional with our attention, it’s hard to predict where our attention will go. We live in a very busy world and most of us have very busy lives. There are many things grabbing at our attention, and now more than ever. I have been working to live a more intentional and present life by removing distractions. As I have worked on this it has occurred to me “how can I say I worship the Lord when I’m constantly distracted and busy?” We are constantly stimulated by some input or something to do. Worship requires attention, but attention is captured when there’s not enough space for reflection, intention, and decision. Too often we’re on autopilot.

If you do not set intention to it, you will not attend to it.

Read more [here](#)

Creating Space

I have found when I have no **Space** in my life to reflect or catch my breath it becomes a mighty challenge doing the things I already know and accept are good, but when I have **Space** I will do those things almost naturally.

Practices for Creating Space

- ❖ **Waking up early:** For the busy person they have little control of their day when it starts, but if we get up early we can gain control of that **Space**
- ❖ **Buffer Zones:** Allow a small time to transition between spaces in your day. This can take as little as 30 seconds of breath work or prayer
- ❖ **Fasting:** From food or phones/ devices, social media, TV, etc. Taking time from these activities can create **Space** for the things you need
- ❖ **Exercise:** Exercise will give you more energy and help your body handle all stress better
- ❖ **Rest:** This isn't "zoning out," but intention rest from work, unloading stress, and sleep

1 Peter 5 (NIV)

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **9** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Distraction and the Devil

The most effective tactic the Enemy has is simply distraction. He will actively attack us, but that isn't always his best tactic or strategy. We must ruthlessly eliminate distractions and busy.

- ❖ Reflect and define your priorities
- ❖ Do your actions reflect what you say are your priorities?
- ❖ Be proactive so you get a say in your time, make a plan, trust the plan. An early start give you more time to yourself
- ❖ Fill your cup first, so that you can pour into others
- ❖ Create **Time Blocks** throughout your day.
 - Multitasking is a lie, focus on a single task per **Time Block**
 - Focus on the present task during the **Time Block**
 - Make the **Time Block** fit your focus time

Recommended Reading: The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

James 1 (NIV)

19 My dear brothers and sisters,
take note of this: Everyone
should be quick to listen, slow to
speak and slow to become angry,
20 because human anger does
not produce the righteousness
that God desires.

Buffer Zone

What is a **Buffer Zone**? It's simply a small space we allow between environments to do a quick reset. If we don't use **Buffer Zones** then all of the experiences of the day or week or however long since we've allowed since a reset get smashed together, and this overwhelms our emotions. This is how you have a bad day at work then you're blowing up on your kids or wife because they did something small and annoying. It can take as little as 30 seconds.

Practices

- ❖ Prayer
- ❖ Breath work
- ❖ Meditation
- ❖ Scripture Meditation

Use this practice every time you change environments, from home to work, or work to home, when you go to bed, etc

Matthew 6 (NIV)

16“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **17**But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18**so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Fasting

Most of us are aware of what fasting is and we do it every day while we sleep, that's why it's called breakfast. Fasting is mentioned often in the Bible, usually along with prayer.

I have found the benefit of fasting is space because we don't realize how much time we spend on thinking about food. I have found the greatest benefit of fasting is you're choosing to put yourself in a weakened state and, knowing this, form a plan of how you will respond when tested.

Practices

- ❖ Intermittent Fasting (fasting most of the day)
- ❖ Full Fast (fasting for 24+ hours)
- ❖ Restricted Fast (ie: a "Daniel Fast")
- ❖ Other Fasting (to "fast" from something, like phones, devices, TV, alcohol, etc)

Exercise

Consistent exercise will help us create space in our lives, but will have to first create space in our lives for exercise. The ROI is compound.

Exercise will give you more energy in your battery, and more efficient use of energy by your body. The time you exercise is a good time to fill your own cup, as well. Since the Lord gave us this body, building it up is an act of worship, and can be used as a time of prayer. Also, the fundamental definition of fitness is your bodies ability to handle stress, therefore exercise **Creates Space** by handling stress better.

Benefits

- ❖ Creates self-love, respect, confidence, and trust
- ❖ Trains self-control
- ❖ Creates mental clarity
- ❖ Can be an act of worship

Mark 2 (NIV)

27 Then he said to them,
“The Sabbath was made
for man, not man for the
Sabbath. **28** So the Son of
Man is Lord even of the
Sabbath.”

Schedule a Sabbath

We all “know” the Sabbath is a day of rest. On the seventh day God rested from His work. However, like everything else we want to rest with a purpose, with ***Intention***. The Sabbath is not a day to do nothing at all. Think of it more as a rest from your *labor*.

For the Christian a Sabbath Day is not a command, but it is still given us for our own good. It is important to rest and recover, even in the busiest season. Not least of which so that we don't burnout. Protect the Sabbath Day. Schedule it, and place hard boundaries around it. Communicate that to those who are in your life. There will be times to give it up, assuredly, but protect and preserve your Sabbath, it is a priority. One day away from your labors will not destroy progress, but it can preserve progress.

Sabbath Practices

- ❖ Worship
- ❖ Hospitality
- ❖ Rest
- ❖ Play

This Week

Journal

What's my virtue this week?

What are my priorities? What do my actions say about my priorities?

What has my attention, intention, and my worship?

What do I think about first in my day?

What do I think most about in my days?

What practices will I use to create space?

What do these practices look like in my day to day life?

How will I create space in my life?

Dig Deep, Plant Seeds

Next Week

Prepare to share your thoughts!

Evening Journaling.

Week of Reflection

Week of Reflection

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week Four

You Are Here

Stage Two

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

**Stage
Three**

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Evening Journal

Proverb 4 (NIV)

7The beginning of wisdom is this: Get ^a wisdom.

Though it cost all you have, ^b get understanding.

Why Reflection?

Gaining information and knowledge is a good thing, but we must give ourselves space to reflect on the information so we can integrate it into our own knowledge. By reflecting on the information we can make it our own, and gain wisdom, which is knowledge that is usable to us.

There are two types of wisdom:

Received Wisdom: This is wisdom we are taught by others. We will find times we can use this

Revealed Wisdom: This is wisdom we have integrated into our own wisdom, and belongs to us. This only happens through reflection.

Rhythm of Reflection

We need a rhythm of reflection, so that as we learn and practice we integrate new knowledge into our own wisdom, making it usable to us and giving us true, usable knowledge. This is how we embody our knowledge, wisdom, and beliefs in our lives.

This is why weeks of reflections are built into this program.

What to do this week:

- ❖ Reflect on the practices and lessons, how have they been useful in my life?
- ❖ How do I integrate these practices into my life?
- ❖ How have I been successful in this program?
- ❖ How have I failed with this program?
- ❖ How can I do better?
- ❖ Do my actions and priorities align?

Matthew 5 (NIV)

37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Stage Two

Next week we enter **Stage Two**, and we will focus on **Show up, Do the work**. Our priority because doing. **Stage Two** adds an **Evening Routine** and **Evening Journal**.

Evening Routine:

By now we should have our morning routine worked out, but it's probably still a bit of a struggle to get it in. A successful morning routine really starts with a good **Evening Routine**. Next week we commit to an **Evening Routine**

Evening Journal:

We begin and **Evening Journal** next week. This is a quick reflection on our day. What worked with our plan? What didn't? How can we do better? The **Evening Journal** will also bring **Proactive Planning** for the next day. Then we will start our day knowing exactly what needs doing.

Evening Journal

This week we will begin an Evening Journal entry. This is not another whole Journal page.

The Evening Journal is a reflection and review addition to your standard Journal page and should take no more than 15 minutes. We are reflecting on the day, and the execution of our planning.

Topics for Reflection:

- ❖ **Virtue Practice**
- ❖ **Mission Statement**
- ❖ **Nutrition Plan**
- ❖ **Workout Plan**

Questions for Reflection

- ❖ **How well did your plan work?**
- ❖ **What didn't work?**
- ❖ **How can you improve your planning**
- ❖ **Whatever you didn't get done on your Mission Statement carries over to tomorrow**
- ❖ **Proactive Plan for tomorrow**

Evening Routine

We have been practicing a Morning Routine for 3 weeks. They say 21 days to set a habit!

This week we are adding an intentional Evening Routine. A great morning routine is set up by a great evening routine. Write it out, check the boxes.

Keystone Habits:

- ❖ Set out clothes for tomorrow, including workout
- ❖ Lock-in bedtime
- ❖ Setup/ program coffee pot
- ❖ No screens at least 1 hour before bed
- ❖ No heavy thinking, non-fiction reading 1 hour before bed. Fiction is good.
- ❖ Take a few minutes to visualize your morning, then set it aside from your mind.
- ❖ Have your Mission Statement on your evening journal, and forget it until the morning.
- ❖ Pray

2 Corinthians 1 (NIV)

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

This Week

Journal

What's your
virtue this
week?

Practice your
Evening
Journal

How is the
program
going?

Where am I
failing? Where
am I doing
well?

Start Evening Journal

What will my
evening routine
look like?

Set out your
cloths for the
next day

Dig Deep, Plant Seeds

Next Week

Show Up. Do the Work!

Intermittent Fasting.

Christian Living: Embodied Faith

Christian Living: Embodied Faith

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week Five

Stage Two

You Are Here

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

**Stage
Three**

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Intermittent Fasting, all week

Genesis 1 (NIV)

26Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, ^a and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. **30**And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.”
And it was so.

31God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Created for a Purpose

In the beginning...

The first words of most Bible translations. God decides to create with intention and purpose.

Not only does He create the work and animals, but mankind, you and me (Genesis 1: 26-31). He has known you since before you were born (Jeremiah 1:5), and you are created by His very hands. He has a purpose for you!

God created Adam with an intention, and for a purpose. He chose to create for Adam a body. Does God create only to destroy? Does He create without purpose?

God chose to create Adam, you, and me with a body. This body is given us by God's very hands, fashioned in our mother's womb. Surely, He has blessed us, and we must take care of that blessing.

Hebrews 2 (NIV)

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, **he too shared in their humanity** so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—**15** and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. **16** For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. **17** For this reason he had to be made like them, **fully human in every way**, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. **18** Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

The Incarnate Christ

Jesus came as God Incarnate, the Eternal Son, born of a woman. Jesus came as God in our flesh, fully sharing our humanity, choosing to take on our weakness to redeem the full human being.

We know Jesus was fully human (and fully God), yet he was without sin. Therefore, we cannot say the body is filthy or bad, although it is weak. Jesus came to redeem the full human being, mind, body, soul.

“The phrase “what is not assumed is not redeemed” was coined by St. Gregory of Nazianzus in response to the idea that Jesus had to have been fully human in order for Him to redeem humanity. This means that Jesus had to assume every aspect of what it means to be human, including the mind, soul, body, or spirit, in order to redeem every part of man. If Jesus was somehow less than fully human, then the parts that were not “assumed” were not “redeemed””

St. Gregory of Nazianzus

John 1 (NIV)

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning. 3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^a it.

14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1 John 1 (NIV)

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our ^a joy complete.

Gnosticism: An Early and Present Enemy of the Church

Early in church history an enemy arose through Greek philosophy known as “gnosticism.” Some of the Epistles in the New Testament seem to specifically rebuke these enemies, and certainly many of the early Christian writers did directly.

Gnosticism was never a formal sect or movement, but there were common themes:

- ❖ Hard dualism between physical and spiritual, where all physical is bad, only spiritual is clean
- ❖ Salvation through secret knowledge (gnosis)
- ❖ The material world is evil, so the Father is evil
- ❖ Denies Jesus is fully human, as flesh is sinful, so denies the Incarnation
- ❖ Still has influence today, even for well meaning Christians. Jesus redeemed the whole person
- ❖ Several “Gnostic Gospels” in the 2nd century, contrary to the Bible. They were not removed, but never were in the Bible. Forgeries.

Mark 12 (NIV)

29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and

with all your soul and with all your mind

and with all your strength.’ 31

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁹

There is no commandment greater than these.”

1 Corinthians 6 (NIV)

18Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does.

For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. **19**Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, **20**for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

Embodied Worship

Jesus and Paul assumes that our worship includes our body. Paul even says to offer your body up as worship. The Christian Faith is not only mental, emotional, and spiritual, but also an embodied Faith. Jesus has redeemed us mind, body, and soul.

It is this revelation that has brought me a commitment to fitness of body. The Lord has given me this body, and redeemed it. I see fitness as worship.

Paul even specifically call sexual immorality a sin against our bodies, and a particularly egregious sin. Elsewhere, Paul talks about warring against the flesh.

The mind is the battlefield, and the body is the frontline of this war. Will we be ruled by our flesh or will we rule over it and submit our bodies to God?

Romans 12 (NIV)

1Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, **to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.** 2Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Physical Challenge and Training

This week we set a physical challenge goal and intention in our workouts (ie: training). What is that physically challenges for you?

Choose something specific, an event, and put it on the calendar. You can choose an official event and sign-up, or run your own race as long as it is a tangible goal with a specific date.

Let this event dictate your workouts, this is training. You're working out for a purpose, to accomplish something specific. What does that training look like in the day-to-day? Set a plan, and work the plan.

Intermittent Fasting

Intermittent Fasting, sometimes called **OMAD** (One Meal a Day) is eating in a small window of time each day. This “feeding window” can vary, but generally Intermittent Fasting is not eating for 16+ hours a day.

There's some evidence Intermittent Fasting has significant benefits for health.

These are the purposes of this program the use of Intermittent Fasting:

- ❖ To practice self-control and discipline.
- ❖ To develop awareness of our eating habits and when we're truly hungry, rather than eating habitually.
- ❖ To create space in our lives. You'd be surprised how much space our search for food takes up.
- ❖ A restricted feeding window will naturally (at least more easily) reduce our overall calorie intake, promoting weight loss.

Luke 14 (NIV)

28“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. **Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?** 29For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, 30saying, **'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'**

Counting the Cost

I want you to set your physical goal high! I want you to aim for more than you think you can do, or have do. However, before you decide this you need to sit down and count the cost.

Any plan that doesn't count the cost is not a good plan. You may be motivated right now, but motivation will fade. The cost will not only include what you will have to give, but also what you will have to give up!

This is especially important in the self-improvement space! How often have we begun a self-improvement phase, told everybody, and failed!? One reason for this is we only thought about what we would gain, but didn't really think about what we'd have to give up.

Will you give up doughnuts to lose weight? Will you give up late nights for early mornings? Will you give up Netflix for Bible reading? Will you give up control to trust God?

Read more here about [Counting the Cost](#)

This Week

Journal

What's your virtue this week?

How will I embody faith?

What is my physical challenge goal?

What will training for that look like?

What will that training cost?

Setup your evening routine, use Proactive Planning

What's your Intermittent Fasting plan?

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

The 5 Foundational Christian Habits!

Daily Bible Reading.

Christian Living: The Habitual Life

Christian Living: The Habitual Life

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week Six

Stage Two

You Are Here

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

Stage Three

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

30 min Bible reading

The Ritual of Life

It is said we make an average of 35,000 decisions every day. That's a lot of decisions to make! Of course, we're not making 35,000 conscious decisions a day, but the vast majority are semi-conscious or unconscious. These decisions will be determined by our life experiences and habits. This is what I call the "ritual of life." If we are to change our lives it is important to become aware of and to focus attention. If we're seeking change, we will need to disrupt bad habits and enact good habits, or rituals.

I think of habits as rituals because we understand a ritual has steps to it. So do habits. Before you act out a habit there are steps leading up to it that make your body/mind ready to act out the habit, just like a ritual. If we become aware of the steps, we can disrupt the ritual or cause ourselves to act out the ritual. When we are aware of this, we can make the decision to pursue habits that build the character and life we desire, whether we feel like or not. We can bring our heart along for the ride

Revelation 12 (NIV)

10 Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens,

“It has come at last—

salvation and power

and the Kingdom of our God,

and the authority of his Christ.^a

For the accuser of our brothers and sisters^b

has been thrown down to earth—

the one who accuses them

before our God day and night.

11 And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb

and by their testimony.

And they did not love their lives so much

that they were afraid to die.

12 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens!

And you who live in the heavens, rejoice!

But terror will come on the earth and the sea,

for the devil has come down to you in great anger,

knowing that he has little time.”

Remember to Remember

Take some time to reflect and recall you own testimony. Be intentional. Recall how you felt, and what you believed when you first believed. Refresh your memory. Remember the joy of your Salvation, and you “hallelujah” in Christ is the same from the beginning, just a different melody as your life changes.

My Testimony:

Revelation 2 (NIV)

1“To the angel ^a of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

4Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. 6But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

5 Basic Christian Habits

There are 5 basic habit every Christian naturally engages in when they first believe, but as we go along, for various reasons, we stop doing them or do them less frequently. I have also noticed these are the 5 habits believers quit when the deconvert". When we first come to love Jesus, we also love his people, and that love fills us to love others.

Christian Habits

- ❖ Prayer
- ❖ Bible Reading/ Study
- ❖ Fellowship
- ❖ Charity
- ❖ Service

1 Thessalonians 5 (NIV)

16 Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

19 Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. 20 Do not scoff at prophecies, 21 but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. 22 Stay away from every kind of evil.

23 Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 24 God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.

Hebrews 4 (NIV)

12For the word of God is alive and **powerful**. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. **It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.** **13**Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

5 Basic Christian Habits

Prayer

If you find prayer awkward or struggling with words do not worry yourself. Your Heavenly Father knows what you need, and prayer isn't an incantation where you're trying to say the right sequence of magical words. You get better at praying by praying. If you need someone to focus on in prayer, I suggest you pray for three people: your brother/sister, a friend, and someone who has a big need (healing for sickness, facing a big change or decision, etc.). And don't forget to pray for yourself.

Bible Study/ Reading

Even just reading the Bible is an edifying habit to form. You cannot know if you never are told or have never learned. I encourage you to adopt a habit of reading the Bible even if you don't quite understand everything you're reading, because the Lord will guide you to all necessary wisdom, and sometimes we interrupt ourselves trying to figure everything out as we go. Remember to trust the Lord as you seek the wisdom He has revealed to us in the Bible.

1 John 4 (NIV)

7Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

11Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 12No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

13And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. 14Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. 16We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

5 Basic Christian Habits

Fellowship

Fellowship is also vital because each of us is equipped with unique experiences and skills to help each other grow, and to do the Lord's work. It is through the Church, the Body of Christ, that God's message of reconciliation and salvation is delivered to the world, and there's no backup plan for that mission.

Remember there is one Spirit in all who believe in Jesus, He works in each of us, and the more closely you fellowship with others you will see Him working in each of us.

Service

One of the greatest concepts ever delivered is the Lord Almighty came in the flesh, as Jesus Christ, and said he did not come to be served, but to serve! The Lord Almighty came and served, gave himself as ransom, and told us to go and do likewise. We are to serve others not for our own benefit but for their own good, seeking no reward or payment for that service. We are to serve from and in love. In this way we will reflect our Father, who is in Heaven, to others.

Mark 9 (NIV)

33After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, “What were you discussing out on the road?”

34But they didn’t answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. **35**He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, “Whoever

wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.”

Mark 10 (NIV)

45For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Proverbs 19 (NIV)

17 If you help the poor, you are
lending to the LORD—
and he will repay you!

24 Give freely and become more
wealthy;
be stingy and lose everything.

5 Basic Christian Habits

Charity

Just as the Lord says to Abraham, we are blessed by the Lord to be a blessing to others. What we have, and what we have been given, we have been given by the Lord. Let this truth create gratitude in your heart. For all things belong to the Lord, including whatever things we may have. You can be confident God will reward all charity, and, for you, all charity that comes from a giving heart, will bless you. Christian charity, however, is never from compulsion, so this habit naturally entails pursuit of gratitude.

These are the 5 Basic Christian Habits. The habits should be the foundation of our lives. These 5 Basic Christian Habits will increase our faith.

How do we form habits?

Zechariah 4 (NIV)

10 Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin...

Habit Formation

Start Small, Win Big

Many of us only pursue change when we're motivated. When we're motivated we set big goals, infused with energy. Motivation fades quickly, and takes that energy with it. It is better to start small, and sustainable. When adding habits to our lives we should add just one habit at a time, get that habit locked in, then add one more.

Habit Stacking

This is commonly known as "Habit Stacking," made popular by James Clear in "Atomic Habits."

You get one habit locked in, and add another on top, and over time you create sustainable change in your life. It seems so simple and small, but it really works.

Remember, the Lord rejoices to see the work begin!

Galatians 6 (NIV)

7 Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. **You will always harvest what you plant.** 8 Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. **9 So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.** 10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

Sowing and Harvest

What you sow in your life is what you will reap. If you sow into good habits you will reap a good life, but if you sow into negative habits you will keep a life you want to change.

Stack the positive, not the negative.

Compounding Effect

As you stack habits in the positive direction, the investment will slowly compound. If you keep depositing into the positive then withdrawing it to deposit in the negative, you will never compound the interest. You will have to keep making new deposits, and this is why it seems so hard to establish habits.

Sowing and Harvest

What you sow in your life is what you will reap. If you sow into good habits you will reap a good life, but if you sow into negative habits you will keep a life you want to change.

Stack the positive.

Habit Swapping

This simple practice is to replace one habit with another. You never quit a habit, but replace it with a better habit. Quitting a habit without replacing it is why you keep going back. Sow into the life you want.

Compounding Effect

As you stack habits in the positive direction, the investment will slowly compound. If you keep depositing into the positive then withdrawing it to deposit in the negative, you will never compound the interest. You will have to keep making new deposits, and this is why it seems so hard to establish habits.

Keystone Habits

Along with Habit Stacking and the Compound Effect, we want to focus on Keystone Habits.

Keystone Habits are habits, individually, have a Compounding Effect in your life.

The Morning Routine is a Keystone Habit. If you are going to have a successful Morning Routine you must prioritize your evening.

Sticking to your training for the physical challenge will dictate many things in your life, if you're committed to the training you will prioritize sleep, not drinking alcohol, and your nutrition.

The 5 Christian Habits are Keystone Habits for all Christians. These are the habits that drive the life of faith and compounding into every area of our lives.

This Week

Journal

What's your virtue this week?

Commit at least 30 min to Bible reading, daily

Which of the 5 Christian habits am I lacking the most?

What habits will you swap?

How will you build the 5 Christian Habits into your life?

What do these practices look like in my day to day life?

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

How to improve in every season!

ZAP! Zeros Aren't Permissible.

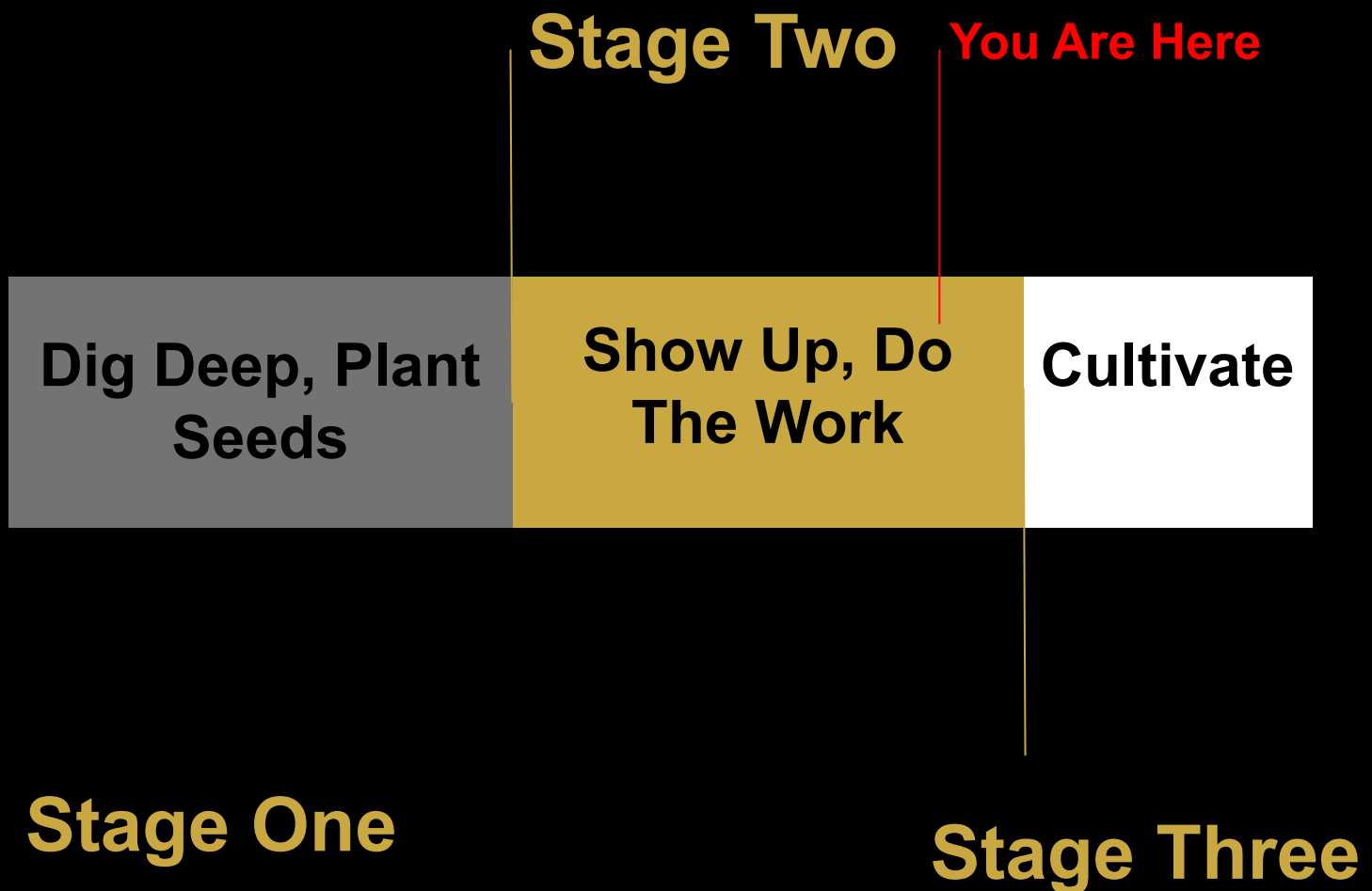
Seasons of Change: Setting the Baseline

Seasons of Change: Setting the Baseline

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week Seven



Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

ZAP (Zeros Aren't Permissible)

What is the Baseline?

The Baseline is the daily minimum that will carry us to our goals. The Baseline is maintenance. We cannot stand still; we're either going forward or backwards, no matter how fast (or slow). The Baseline keeps us moving forward.

The truth is we're rarely at 100%, but we can almost run at 50%. It's easier to start from halfway than from zero. The Baseline prevents us from digging ourselves into a hole.

I cannot overstate the importance of the Baseline. Get this right, and you will not only change your life but will live the life you want!

Establishing the Baseline keeps us always moving forward. Where you're at is never as important as where you are going!

12 When you walk, your steps will not be hampered;
when you run, you will not stumble.

Proverb 4

Proverb 16 (NIV)

9In their hearts humans plan their course,
but the LORD establishes their steps.

James 4 (NIV)

13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. 17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

Seasons of Change

We are currently in a Season of Change! We are trying to change our lives. Life will often take us through Seasons of Change, with or without our consent.

The seasons of our lives are always changing! What worked in one season likely won't work in the next season, and can even be the opposite. Although many things in our lives will change in the different seasons, there are a few things that remain the same.

This is the Baseline. What are the habits that will maintain our goals in these vital areas?

- ❖ Spiritual Life
- ❖ Personal Health and Improvement
- ❖ Relationships and Career

Ephesians 3 (NIV)

14For this reason I kneel before the Father,
15from whom every family ^a in heaven and on
earth derives its name. 16I pray that out of his
glorious riches he may strengthen you with
power through his Spirit in your inner being,
17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith. **And I pray that you, being rooted
and established in love,** 18may have power,
together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp
how wide and long and high and deep is the
love of Christ, 19and to know this love that
surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to
the measure of all the fullness of God.

Rooted Habits

We spent the first 4 weeks planting the seeds of our morning routine, and now is the time for those habits to become rooted!

Are you rooted in Christ and God's Word? Have you done the work? Today is the day! What habits do I need to cultivate so I set deep roots in my life to have the life I want?

- ❖ Am I staying in prayer and the Bible?
- ❖ Am I Journaling?
- ❖ Am I maintaining my fitness goals?
- ❖ Am I maintaining my relationships?
- ❖ Am i maintaining my career?

The Rooted Habits will keep us grounded in any season or storm, even seasons of great change!

Luke 8 (NIV)

11“Now the parable means this: The seed is the word of God. **12**Those along the path are the ones who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. **13**Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in a time of testing fall away. **14**As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. **15**But as for the seed that landed on good soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word, cling to it with an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with steadfast endurance.

Cultivating the Soil

The goal of the first 4 weeks was to Cultivate the Soil so that the seeds we've planted could take root, grow to maturity, and produce fruit.

It takes a fruit tree 3-5 years to produce fruit. You're not behind schedule! Even if you haven't been doing the work, plant today!

Start Small, Win Big!

Focus on building upon small wins, stacking them up, and they will lead you to big wins! Keep going, and you will build momentum!

Zechariah 4:10

10 Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin...

1 Corinthians (NIV)

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Setup Sunday

If we fail to plan we ARE planning to fail. For most of us Sunday is a great day to set the intention for our week.

Plan for the week ahead:

- ❖ Take a few hours and meal prep for the week
- ❖ Are you fasting this week? When? How long?
- ❖ What family/ job obligations do you have?
- ❖ What is your workout/ training plan?
- ❖ What is your Virtue this week?
- ❖ Review your calendar

If you have a spouse, be sure to bring them into this planning. Make this an opportunity to develop communication. Share with them your goals and practices of this plan, and how that will impact your time this week.

ZAP and Check Downs

Something is better than nothing! Think of your school days. What was the single worst thing for your grade? A zero. A zero devastated your grade, or average. A 50% would certainly hurt your grade, but a 0 would devastate it!

ZAP: Zeros Ain't Permissible

A simple concept. Don't post a zero. Can't get your full workout in? Do half, it's okay for today. Can't get that 4 miles run? Run for 20 minutes. Can't read that chapter of the Bible today? Spend 15 minutes on it.

Check Downs

Related to ZAP are Check Downs. If you can't execute the full plan, have an alternative plan you can fit-in. Check Downs.

Can't get your full workout? Plan a quicker workout you can keep in your back pocket and bust out when necessary. ZAP! Don't post a zero!

This Week

Journal

What's your virtue this week?

Challenge: Hit every habit and goal each day! Don't post a zero! Do something!

How will you execute ZAP?

What is your Check Downs, so that you don't post a zero?.

What does your Baseline look like?

Plan your week carefully, execute the plan.

Purposefully practice using a check down

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

Recommit Yourself!

Lectio Divina, Sacred Contemplation.

Week of Reflection

Week of Reflection

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week One

You Are Here

Stage Two

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

**Stage
Three**

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Lectio Divina, 30 minutes

Why Reflection?

Gaining information and knowledge is a good thing, but we must give ourselves space to reflect on the information so we can integrate it into our own knowledge. By reflecting on the information we can make it our own, and gain wisdom, which is knowledge that is usable to us.

There are two types of wisdom:

Received Wisdom: This is wisdom we are taught by others. We will find times we can use this

Revealed Wisdom: This is wisdom we have integrated into our own wisdom, and belongs to us. This only happens through reflection.

Rhythm of Reflection

We need a rhythm of reflection, so that as we learn and practice we integrate new knowledge into our own wisdom, making it usable to us and giving us true, usable knowledge. This is how we embody our knowledge, wisdom, and beliefs in our lives.

This is why weeks of reflections are built into this program.

What to do this week:

- ❖ Reflect on the practices and lessons, how have they been useful in my life?
- ❖ How do I integrate these practices into my life?
- ❖ How have I been successful in this program?
- ❖ How have I failed with this program?
- ❖ How can I do better?
- ❖ Do my actions and priorities align?

2 Corinthians 13 (NIV)

5Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

Reflection and Audit

Now is the time to ask yourself some important questions, and it is vital you be honest with yourself. You don't have to tell these answers to anyone else, although that could be helpful, but you must be honest with yourself!

- ❖ How is the Program going?
- ❖ Are you doing the work?
- ❖ Are you tracking your habits?
- ❖ Are you Journaling?
- ❖ Are you sticking to your Devotional?
- ❖ Are you sticking to the Virtue Practice?
- ❖ Are you doing the Workouts? Are you sticking to your Training Plan for your physical Goal?
- ❖ Are you sticking to your Nutrition Plan?
- ❖ Are you meeting the weekly Challenges?
- ❖ Are your plans working? Are you adjusting where they fail?

Psalm 139 (NIV)

23 Search me, God, and know
my heart;
test me and know my anxious
thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive
way in me,
and lead me in the way
everlasting.

Follow-Up Friday

Follow-up Friday is the weekly reflection of Setup Sunday's planning. How did your plan for the week go?

- ❖ Did you get up early and do your Morning Routine? How many times?
- ❖ Did you Journal? How many times? Review your Journal entries.
- ❖ How was your Virtue Practice? How was the plan?
- ❖ How well did you execute your Mission Statement?
- ❖ Did you do the Workouts? How many?
- ❖ Did you stick to your Nutrition Plan?
- ❖ How can you improve your planning for success?
- ❖ What habits or actions are keeping you from your Goals?
- ❖ What habits and actions will obtain your Goals?

2 Corinthians 1 (NIV)

20For no matter how many

promises God has made, they are

“Yes” in Christ. And so through him

the “Amen” is spoken by us to the

glory of God.

Isaiah 30 (NIV)

20 Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. **21** Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

The River Banks

I first encountered the idea of “keep it between the river banks,” in theological discussions. There’s few, primary theological beliefs the Christian must believe to truly be Christian, but there’s much outside of that which we can have different understandings. In that space, this “river” we can have freedom of difference, but if we go too far to the left or right we crash on the banks of heresy.

The same with our habits we’re working on here. We may have some workouts that are better/ harder than others, and some workouts that aren’t so good. It’s okay as long as we don’t crash on the river bank (miss or quit working out).

In this case, our Baseline as the river. We may not always go down the middle of the river, but it’s okay as long as we keep in the river and travelling.

Keep it between the River Banks!

Breath & Meditative Prayer

Breath prayer is a combination of “breath work,” meditation, and prayer/ Scripture. This is not a modern invention, but a practice that has a long history in Church history. Meditative prayer, also, has a long history in Christianity.

Breath Prayer:

- ❖ Use some sort of breath work (controlled, conscious breathing), like “box breathing”
- ❖ As you breath, focus your mind on a line of prayer or Scripture in rhythm with your breath.
- ❖ Examine your thoughts, not grabbing hold of them.

Meditative Prayer:

- ❖ Pray, giving your question/ petition to God or reading a passage of Scripture.
- ❖ Be quiet in thought and action, and passively examine your thoughts.

Lectio Divina

This week's practice is a spiritual practice. As we reflect on what we've already worked on, this practice reflects on Scripture.

The Latin probably gives away that this is a tradition that is largely Roman Catholic. At least, the name is and certain codified practice is, and comes largely from monastic roots. All good Christian practices should be available to all Christians. This is not an intellectual study of Scripture, but a coming to the Scripture as the living Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit through human authors, and a message to all of God's people for all time.

Read a short passage of Scripture, typically from the Gospels, an Epistle, or a promise of God passage. Lectio Divina is done in four steps:

Lectio Divina Steps

- ❖ **Read** the passage of Scripture three or more time. Read it carefully and focus on the passage.
- ❖ **Meditate** on the passage and what it says. Consider it as having been spoken to real people in a real time. Consider it being spoken to you.
- ❖ **Pray** over the passage with these four things in mind
 - This is true because it's the **Word of God**
 - This must be true because it's the **Word of God**
 - This is true for me because it's a **Promise of God**
 - This is true for me at this time/ in my situation
- ❖ **Contemplate** what it means for you and your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the meaning of this passage. Contemplate what it would mean for you life that these passages are real and true. This is a silent contemplation.

This Week

Journal

**What's your
virtue this
week?**

**Follow-up
Friday**

**Which of God's
promises do I
need in my life?**

**What is the
result of your
Audit?**

**Define the River
Banks.**

**Where do I
need to adjust?**

**Recommit
yourself to the
Program and
Goals**

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

How to Permanently Defeat Failure

5k Ruck!

Embrace the Process

Embrace the Process

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week One

Stage Two

You Are Here

Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds

Show Up, Do
The Work

Cultivate

Stage One

Stage Three

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

**5k ruck, 20lbs,
x1**

1 John 3 (NIV)

1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, ^a we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Sanctification

Consider the Christian process of Sanctification. To be “sanctified” is to be set apart for a purpose, to be made Holy. Sanctification is the process in a Christian’s life to be changed into the “image of Christ.”

Most of us are familiar with the idea. Some things to consider:

- ❖ How long does Sanctification take for the Christian? When does it end?
 - Never, it is a lifelong process through which we grow and become what we will be.
- ❖ We are not yet perfect, but are being made perfect through Sanctification.
- ❖ The trials we face are NOT for nothing, but that we should learn from the Teacher!
- ❖ Why do this work? What’s the purpose?

1 Timothy 4 (NIV)

10 That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

For This Reason We Carry On

There are times being strong is easy, and there are times we fail. Sometimes it even seems we fail more than we succeed. Either way, we carry on!

Why? Because Christ never quit, and Christ will never give up on you! I have learned, when He seems farthest away He is yet nearest. He never leaves nor forsakes the one who believes in Him! The Lord always meets us where we're at!

We are saved and being saved. We are already but not yet. We are not yet perfect, but are being made perfect by the Teacher.

Christ has blazed the trail and calls for us to follow! He has shown us how to be and what will be. There may be many trials and travails, but remember; "He who is in me, is greater than He who is in the world."

Romans 8 (NIV)

24For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? **25**But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Embrace the Process

I've spoken a lot about "the process," so, what is the process? This is what it looks like:

Concept → Reflection → Acceptance

Planning → Action → Failure

Reassessment → Reiteration

Failure/ Success

Process

Psalm 27 (NIV)

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked advance against me
to devour ^a me,

it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

3 Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;

though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

Fear and Failure Protocol

What are the habits you default to when you're under stress? When you're facing fear or failure (whether real, perceived, or projected)? What are the things you turn to when your brain switches off? This is your Fear/ Failure Protocol! Become aware of these!

Become aware of these! These actions are indicators can show you there are things you're ignoring or not dealing with! This awareness can help you stay on track!

With this awareness you can quit compounding the negative. This too shall pass!

Use your Baseline, keep it between the River Banks. In these trying seasons maintenance is progress!

When you're over the pit of failure do you hold onto the rope with all your might until you can't? Do you fall into the pit, or do you step back onto the ledge of Christ and rest in Him?

John 14 (NIV)

15 “If you love me, keep my commands.

16 And I will ask the Father, **and he will give you another advocate to help you and be**

with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The

world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. **But you know him,**

for he lives with you and will be ^c in you. 18 I

will not leave you as orphans; I will come to

you

Hills and Valleys

In our lives are ups and downs, or in Christian speak, hills and valleys. This is how we experience life. We all have ups and downs. Sometimes for a season, sometimes in the same day!

If we're experiencing big swings, up and down, the first thing to focus on isn't eliminating the swings. The first step is to make the frequency (how high/ how low) we swing. Second is to reduce the time in the down, but there is something to be said to "riding it out."

In the world nothing grows on the high mountain, but much grows in the valley. This applies in the spiritual life as well. The mountain is reward, but the valley is growth!

Above all, remember, the God of the mountain is still god in the valley, and He sticks closer than a brother. In the valley is where you will learn of His faithfulness.

Galatians 6 (NIV)

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Fruit of Embracing the Process: Consistency

When you Embrace the Process you cannot be defeated. Every failure is just another step in the process. Every success, also, is just another step of the process. Reassess and reiterate is your reaction. This produces the fruit of Consistency!

The conundrum of Consistency:

- ❖ You don't know the power of consistency until you've been consistent.
- ❖ You don't have the commitment to consistency until you know the power of consistency.

What to do?

- ❖ Keep going, keep iterating, and work harder.
- ❖ Believe it until you see it.
- ❖ Find someone who's done it, and will help you be accountable and encourage you through it.

Consistency IS the "secret sauce." That's the dirty secret of fitness and self improvement!

Ecclesiastes 5 (NIV)

18 This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot.

19 Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God.

It's NOT About the Goals

Yes, we want to achieve goals. Big goals! However, life, and faith, isn't about goals. It's about the Process! The goal cannot be the driver of our actions. The satisfaction is fleeting. Once we grasp the goal, we're immediately onto the next goal!

Challenges and Goals are good, but they are only waypoints for orienting our actions and priorities.

Goals don't change us, it is the journey to the goal that changes us!

Believing the next goal will change us is an excuse and a lie. A lie that is keeping you from the change you want, and spending endless time or money looking for the secret. If you continue believing this lie, all your searching and money spent will be in vain. You'll never be able to change by trying to pull in what you lack from the outside. Change happens from what you have within you - and if you believe in Jesus, *you have the Spirit of God in you!*

Rucking

You may ask “what is rucking?” In its simplest terms its walking with a backpack/ rucksack with weight in it. Think like military training, or “humping.” You could also just call it hiking.

Next to walking and calisthenics/ body weight it's one of the lowest barrier to entries in exercise. It can be as easy as grab a backpack and throw weight in it. There are ruck specific equipment and it can be worth it, but isn't needed right away.

Rucking is great for general health improvement, especially if you can't yet run. You can get cardio benefits from it.

Depending on your fitness level, a great progression is walking>rucking>running.

As with everything else, start small. Do 10-15lbs and progressively increase. You can also vary intensity in pace or adding hills.

This Week

Journal

What's your virtue this week?

What are your default habit in response to stress, fear, or failure?

How can you use these actions to bring awareness?

Make a new Fear and Failure Protocol.

Schedule a 5k Ruck this week!

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

Serve Others, Serve the Lord

Morning Workouts.

A Life of Service

A Life Of Service

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week One

Stage Two

You Are Here

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

Stage Three

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Morning workouts, wake up earlier if necessary

Psalm 127 (NIV)

1 Unless the LORD builds the house,
the builders labor in vain.

Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the guards stand watch in vain.

I Once Built a House...

When my wife and I were married we didn't have a house of our own. I had inherited land, but there was no house on it. We also didn't have the resources to take a loan or mortgage, and I didn't want to take on a debt equal to nearly half my life.

I decided to build us a house! However, I had never built anything. Not even a shed. I was working at a lumber yard (not by accident). After a time of proving myself at work, I talked them into allowing me to charge up to \$10k.

Over 3 years I spent my life in the cycle of working 45+ hrs, working on the house until I needed to sleep, sleep a few hours, and go to work. I took very few breaks, and did about 80% of the work by myself. I also did all the electrical, plumbing, building, etc.

This is the greatest accomplishment of my life. I provided my family with a house, without debt, as it was paid off within 6 months of moving in!

Mark 10 (NIV)

41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. **45** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Galatians 5 (NIV)

13You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh ^a; rather, serve one another humbly in love. **14**For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ^b **15**If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

We Are Called to Serve

Jesus came as the Lord God Almighty in the flesh. If anyone had the right to demand service, it was Jesus. Yet He did not come to BE served, but to SERVE! Jesus is our example.

The example He has given us is to serve others at the cost of ourselves. He even served to the price of death! And He has said to us, “go, and do likewise.”

We are to serve others for their own good. Not for what we want them to do or what we would want from them. The people Jesus came to save crucified him!

As with all commands of the Lord this is also for our own benefit. When we serve others we are edifying ourselves. When we minister to others we are ministering to ourselves!

We serve without strings attached. We serve without expectation. When we do that we bless the Name of our Father, and our hearts are transformed into a heart like Christ's.

John 13 (NIV)

13“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. **14**Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. **15**I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. **16**Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. **17**Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

2 Corinthians 9 (NIV)

6Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”

Serve For the Right Reason

What is YOUR reason for serving others now? Are you looking to gain something from serving others? Appreciation? Love? Admiration? Money? Sex?

There are many wrong reason that we might serve, but there is only one right reason to serve. To benefit others. No thought of reward or recognition. For their benefit. This is the right reason!

When you serve others there will be those who don't appreciate it. There will be those who expect it or demand it. There will be those who take advantage of it. That should be nothing to you. That's on them!

What you do and WHY you do it is what matters. Remember, as Jesus hung on the cross he said, concerning those who crucified Him, "forgive them for they know not what they do."

Their response shouldn't matter. You serve out of love, and love is never wasted!

John 7 (NIV)

37 On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in

me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” ^c **39** By

this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Luke 9 (NIV)

23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. **24** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. **25** What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? **26** Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

What is Your Sacrifice?

Up to now we've added a lot of things to our lives throughout the program. Various habits, challenges, and practices. Not doubt it's been challenging to fit it all into our busy lives.

When we add things into our lives we need to give up other things. To give something up is a sacrifice, but what we're gaining is so much more! Commitment **REQUIRES** sacrifice!

You can't keep endlessly adding things to your life. You only have so much time and energy, or space. That space which is left over from your obligations is the Margin. How much Margin do you have right now? Mind the Margin! When we use up our Margin is when we burnout. If we mind the Margin we can know when burnout is coming, and act before we burnout. Take break before you **NEED** a break. Create space in the Margin so you can steadily move forward.

Hebrews 12 (NIV)

1Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

4In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son?

The Hero's Journey

My family is a “blended” family. My wife had 4 kids when we married (I had none). There were many challenges, and certainly I made many mistakes.

Building our house was my “Hero’s Journey.” I did it to prove my love for my family, and I thought I would get that hero’s parade (love and acceptance) when we moved into it. That didn’t happen.

Now, they were still quite young. They also didn’t know the cost I paid in building it (sacrifice). Long story short, it wasn’t their fault. They did know I was never around, though. That I never played with them or went and made memories with them. It wasn’t like I was off doing bad thing (even a very good thing!).

I sacrificed my life and body for my family to provide them a home that nobody could come and take from us, but was the way I did it the Right Sacrifice?

Luke 23(NIV)

34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." ^c
And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

How I Met the Savior

I built our house because I loved my family. At least, that is what I told myself. However, they didn't respond to that act of love and great sacrifice the way I thought they should!

The result was the very last thing I would've ever wanted. I started to develop hatred for my family. Of course I didn't want to! I didn't want to acknowledge it, and I even fought against it. However, this feeling kept consuming me, which resulted in a lot of self-destructive and aberrant behaviors.

In my travel through life I started reading the Bible for the first time. As I read the Gospels I met Jesus. Here was a man who had done no wrong before God or man, and he was crucified! And does he say with one of his final breaths? "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

This man, the Savior, he understood my pain, and my feeling of betrayal!

John 15 (NIV)

11I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12**My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

13Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Jesus, The Ultimate Teacher

There I was, a man who had tried his level best to provide for his family. A man who sacrificed himself for their benefit because he loved them, but trapped in bitterness and hatred. I met Jesus, the one person who had the authority to speak about my pain, who understood fully, and what he told me I'll never forget.

“If you had done it out of love, their response wouldn't matter.”

I had served my family, but did I serve for the right reason? I had made the sacrifice, but was it the right sacrifice. Even if it was the right sacrifice, did I do it the right way?

Whatever your situation, Jesus understands. He can speak to your pain, and into your pain, and redeem it, if you will seek him.

John 15 (NIV)

4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Fill My Cup, Lord

The follower of Christ is to have “rivers of living flow from within them.” Living water is water that flows. If that water is dammed up it becomes a stagnant pool and loses it’s living giving properties.

When we abide in the Lord, He will fill our cup with the waters of life. This flowing water fills our cup. The living water He gives us is for our own need, to be sure. However, if we continue to abide He will fill us to overflowing. It is from this overflow that the Lord pours into and out of us that we minister and serve others.

If we do not abide in Him, but continue to minister and serve others, we are pouring out of our own cup. This is when we are less effective and become tired and drained by others.

If we stay connected to the Fountainhead and let that flow we never grow tired or drained in serving others. It’s the only way. Abide.

Set the Margin

Now is a great time for another audit. Now is the time for us to run with endurance! Now is the time to set aside the things that hinder you! Now is the time to choose life, and you will live!

- ❖ What daily discipline am I struggling with the most to be consistent with?
 - What is the obstacle to being consistent? What do I need to remove to make that space?
- ❖ What has my actions revealed about my priorities?
- ❖ How can I reorder my actions to align with my priorities?
- ❖ What do I need to remove from life to have enough space (Margin) to keep going?
- ❖ Recommit today! Show Up. Do the

Matthew 25 (NIV)

34“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **35**For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, **36**I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

37“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? **38**When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? **39**When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

This Week

Journal

What's your virtue this week?

Commit to Filling Your Cup before you start your day

What do you need to give up for your goals?

What is the Right Sacrifice for your goals and family?

Look for volunteer opportunities.

How will I get my morning workouts in?

How do I need to forgive in order to serve for the the right reason?

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

Finding the Purpose for Your Life!

Write a 5 Year Plan.

My Mission

My Mission

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week One

Stage Two

You Are Here

**Dig Deep, Plant
Seeds**

**Show Up, Do
The Work**

Cultivate

Stage One

Stage Three

Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Write a 5 year plan

Micah 6 (NIV)

8He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly ^a with your God.

1 Kings 3 (NIV)

5At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

6Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

7“Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number

1 Kings 3 (NIV)

9 So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this.

1 Kings 3 (NIV)

11 So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, **12** I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. **13** Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. **14** And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."

Known and Created for a Purpose

Every person, regardless the circumstances of their birth, was made intentionally by the Lord! He knew you before you were born, when you were “knitted together in your mother’s womb (Jeremiah 1:5).” He created you with intention, attention, and for a purpose!

The circumstance of your birth nor the circumstances of your life and experiences (even your mistakes) determine your purpose or worth. The Lord does!

He has offered you a new life, to be wholly changed (2 Corinthians 5: 17), and given you a calling through Christ Jesus (Ephesians 4:1)!

Nothing you have done up to this point has disqualified you from His calling for you, and He hasn’t changed His mind about you! We have to change our minds to agree with Him! Seek Him first, and His wisdom, and you will find your Mission!

John 1 (NIV)

12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— **13** children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Ephesians 2 (NIV)

10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Numbers 23 (NIV)

19 God is not human, that he should lie,
not a human being, that he should
change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act?

Does he promise and not fulfill?

20 I have received a command to bless;
he has blessed, and I cannot change it.

Seeds of Your Mission

God is not hiding your Mission from you or hiding it behind His back. You don't need special knowledge (gnosis) to learn what your Mission is. He has planted the seeds of your Mission in you from the beginning!

Consider:

- ❖ What are your talents and weaknesses?
- ❖ What are the things that bring meaning into your life?
- ❖ What are the causes that burden your heart?

These things are not random! They were planted in you by God to help you seek and fulfill your Mission!

“Do more of the things you find meaningful,” sounds like a platitude, but it's not! These are the seeds.

- ❖ You will live a better life
- ❖ You will find your Mission
- ❖ You will not live in lack, bitterness or envy

It's not too late! The Lord hasn't changed His mind!

Romans 8 (NIV)

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who *have* been called according to his purpose.

Ephesians 4 (NIV)

1As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2**Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3**Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4**There is one body and one Spirit, **just as you were called to one hope when you were called;** **5**one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6**one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Finding Your Mission

Your Mission will bring meaning and purpose into your life. It may not pay, but do it anyways! If it is your Mission you will find meaning without money and the Lord will open doors. The Lord always provides what we need! He is Jehovah Jirah!

As you pursue your mission know that it is YOUR Mission, given to you. Don't demand or expect others to understand. Especially, don't place unfair expectations on them to see it or believe it. The Lord is your support!

This is your call to adventure! Just like Abram, the Lord calls you to get up and go! He will show you.

Be willing to try new things. None of it is wasted, for the Lord wastes nothing. Find trusted advisors, guides, and mentors. Find examples to follow (we have a long tradition). You're not late or behind schedule! The Lord knows where you are and where you've been. He can work all things together!

Ecclesiastes 12 (NIV)

12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them.

Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

13 Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:

**Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the duty of all mankind.**

14 For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.

Colossians 3 (NIV)

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, **24** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Who's the Boss

Everything we do is to be done “as unto the Lord.” It doesn't matter if it's your current job (vocation) or avocation (hobby, side-gig), your boss is the Lord Jesus and it is Him that you work for, in all things.

It doesn't matter who's the boss at work, who you're serving, or what you're doing for a living. It is the Lord we serve and what we do we do for the Lord.

Whether you feel what you're doing now is your mission or just some job, isn't important, or that you were made for more than what you're currently doing, it is the Lord Jesus who is your boss and whom you are working for, now.

Ephesians 4

4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;
5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6**one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

2 Timothy 4 (NIV)

5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Colossians 1 (NIV)

15The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Ephesians 4 (NIV)

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 Thessalonians 5 (NIV)

12Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13**Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. **14**And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15**Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

16Rejoice always, **17**pray continually, **18**give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

19Do not quench the Spirit. **20**Do not treat prophecies with contempt **21**but test them all; hold on to what is good, **22**reject every kind of evil.

23May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24**The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

This Week

Journal

What's your virtue this week?

What are my strengths and weaknesses?

What talents do I have to serve the Kingdom?

Seek the Lord in guidance every morning for guidance of your 5 year plan

Write a 5 year plan with hope and vision

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

Onward and Upward, to the Future!

24+ Hour Fast.

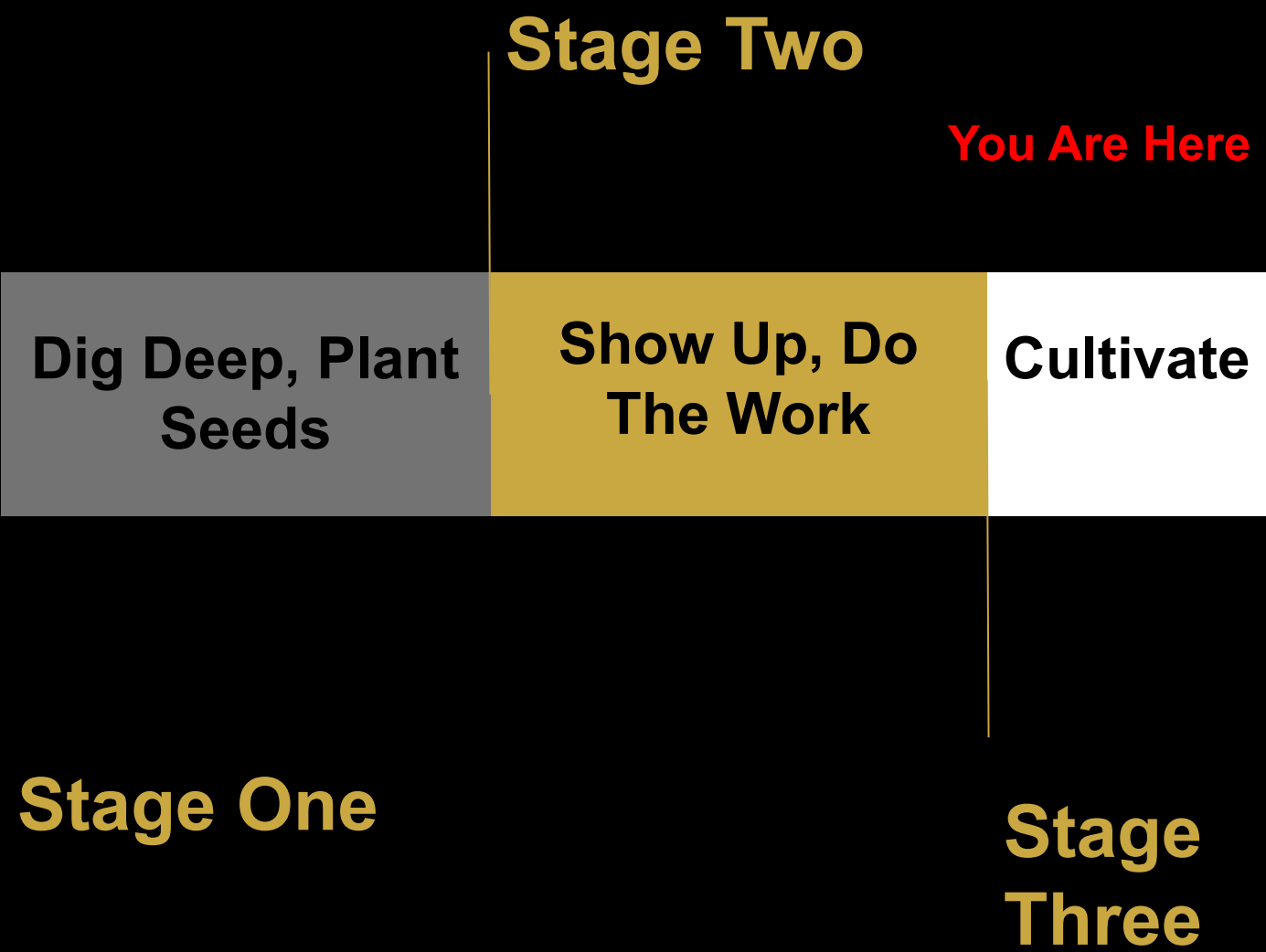
Week of Reflection

Week of Reflection

Ronald D. Potts

Planting the Garden: Luke 8:15

Week One



Weekly Goals

S M T W T F S

Journal

8,000 Steps

Workout, x5

Nutrition Plan

Schedule 24+ hour fast

Philippians 3 (NIV)

12Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

13Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14**I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

The End

This is our last week of the Program. Twelve weeks have passed, whether you have done the work or you didn't. Time always passes.

Did you **Dig Deep, Plant Seeds** of God's word? Did you find self-awareness? Did you find your brokenness, your weakness? The thing that keeps you from the life you want?

Did you **Show up, Do the Work**? Did you do what you said you'd do when you signed up for the Program? Did you follow the plan? Did you work the plan?

Regardless your answers, there's more work to do. This is just the beginning! During these 12-weeks you have gained many tools. You won't use every tool every day, but you have the tools to take on every day! Let these tools serve you! Having the best tool doesn't matter if you don't use it.

James 1 (NIV)

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror **24** and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Tools & Practices

The goal of this program has been to challenge you, but the challenge only serves to help you bring intention and awareness to your life. This isn't "75 Hard."

Throughout this program you have learned tools and practices to help you create life you want and that you are called for. These tools are to serve you, not rule you. They are designed and have been practiced for you to grab the right tool for the various situations of your life.

The best tool doesn't help if you don't use it. Likewise, the best tool doesn't work to solve the wrong problem. Apply these tools as needed.

The practice have been to help know how to apply them to your life in any season. There are foundational practices for every season, and season specific practices. The goal is to equip you for the rest of your life.

Proverbs 3 (NIV)

3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

4 Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;

6 in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight. ^a

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil.

8 This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.

Audit and Reflect

Consider the challenges, tools, and practices of this program.

- ❖ What elements of this program worked well in your life?
- ❖ What elements of this program didn't work well for you?
- ❖ How well did you apply the tools and practices of this program?
- ❖ In what way did you fail to apply the tools and practices?
- ❖ What tools and practices of this program will be foundational for your life going forward?
- ❖ Did you establish your Baseline?
- ❖ How will you maintain your spiritual life?
- ❖ Keep training for your physical challenge!
- ❖ What will your nutrition and diet plan look like going forward? Don't go back!
- ❖ How will you maintain your fitness/ active life?

1 Thessalonians 5 (NIV)

12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13** Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.

Live in peace with each other. **14** And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

How to Continue Working with Me

If you have gained anything from this you can do me a huge favor sending me a message letting me know! I would love to hear from you!

You can find more of my content or contact me:

Twitter/ X [@RonaldDPotts1](https://twitter.com/RonaldDPotts1)

Substack: [Son of Encouragement](https://sonofencouragement.substack.com)

email: ec.pottsr@gmail.com

I also offer several coaching options. I offer one free consultation call, one-off calls, or no-contract monthly coaching packages, paid monthly or a one time payment.

Once you join the Community Chat you're welcome to stay as long as you want! You can also join future Community Programs for free or at a reduced price!

2 Peter 1 (NIV)

5For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; **6**and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; **7**and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. **8**For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9**But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

Some Common Questions

By now you should understand how the Program works, its intent, and its purposes. With that in mind, you may have some questions:

- ❖ Does the Journal have to be done as written?
 - No, but there is a purpose for its structure
- ❖ Can I do a virtue more than once?
 - Yes, if you feel like you have a particular weakness you need to work on.
- ❖ Do I have to get up really early?
 - No, if it doesn't serve your life. I think it is important to get up early and set the culture/ environment of your home and day.
- ❖ Do I have to do the Journal twice a day? It's hard to fit in.
 - There is a purpose to the program. The real question is it a priority? What are you willing to pay for the life you want?

This Week

Journal

What's your virtue this week?

Prepare for the valley, overcome with endurance!

How will you maintain the ground you've gained?

How will you continue to improve your faith, life, and habits going forward?

Schedule to Fast for 24+ hours, and seek the Lord.

Let go further, together!

Show Up, Do the Work

Next Week

Dig Deep, Plant Seeds!

Show Up. Do the Work!

Let's Go Further Together!