

**GROWING
STRONG**
IN GOD'S FAMILY

This book belongs to: _____

GROWING STRONG IN GOD'S FAMILY

A COURSE IN PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WALK WITH GOD



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Growing Strong in God's Family: A Course in Personal Discipleship to Strengthen Your Walk with God

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CONTENTS

MY COMPLETION RECORD	7
INTRODUCTION	9
For Those Already Familiar with THE 2:7 SERIES	9
For Those New to THE 2:7 SERIES	9
Where to Use THE 2:7 SERIES	9
Group Leaders	10
Navigator Resources Available to You	10
Abbreviations for Bible Versions	10
SESSION 1	13
Based on Colossians 2:7	13
General Comments	14
Why Read and Mark a Bible	15
Ways to Mark Your Bible as You Read	15
Choosing Where to Read in Your Bible	17
What to Mark	18
Reading and Marking Exercise	18
Scripture Memory Overview	19
<i>Beginning with Christ</i> Explanation	20
Proven Ways to Memorize a Verse Effectively	24
SESSION 2	27
Introduction to Bible Study	27
<i>Beginning with Christ Bible Study</i>	28
SESSION 3	33
An Effective Way to Review Memory Verses Together	33
<i>Tyranny of the Urgent</i> , by Charles E. Hummel	34
Summarizing <i>Tyranny of the Urgent</i>	39
Prayer: Part 1 (Bible Study)	40
How to Use <i>My Reading Progress</i>	42
SESSION 4	45
Prayer: Part 2 (Bible Study)	45
The Wheel Illustration	49

SESSION 5	55
Practical Suggestions on Prayer	55
How to Use <i>My Reading Highlights</i>	59
Why Use <i>My Reading Highlights</i>	60
The Word (Bible Study)	61
SESSION 6	69
The Hand Illustration	69
The Quiet Time	71
Quiet Time, Reading Plans, and Bible Study	72
SESSION 7	75
Christ the Center (Bible Study)	75
SESSION 8	81
Why Have an Evangelism Prayer List	81
Setting Up Your Evangelism Prayer List	82
Getting to Know Non-Christians	82
The Wheel and The Hand in Your Life	83
Guide to Conversational Prayer	84
SESSION 9	87
Obedience (Bible Study)	87
SESSION 10	93
Fellowship (Bible Study)	93
SESSION 11	99
Why Memorize Scripture	99
Witness (Bible Study)	100
Keep Growing	104
APPENDIX	107
NOTES	155

MY COMPLETION RECORD

As you complete each item, ask someone in your group to sign off for that item with his or her initials and the calendar date.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY	INITIALS	DATE
<i>Beginning with Christ (BWC)</i> memory verses:		
"Assurance of Salvation" (1 John 5:11-12)		
"Assurance of Answered Prayer" (John 16:24)		
"Assurance of Victory" (1 Corinthians 10:13)		
"Assurance of Forgiveness" (1 John 1:9)		
"Assurance of Guidance" (Proverbs 3:5-6)		
Optional outreach verse (John 5:24)		
Quoted all <i>BWC</i> verses at one sitting		
Reviewed all <i>BWC</i> verses for 7 consecutive days		
QUIET TIME		
Completed <i>My Reading Highlights</i> for 7 consecutive days		
BIBLE STUDY		
Session 2— <i>Beginning with Christ Bible Study</i> (pages 28–32)		
Session 3—Prayer: Part 1 (pages 40–42)		
Session 4—Prayer: Part 2 (pages 45–49)		
Session 5—The Word (pages 61–66)		
Session 7—Christ the Center (pages 75–80)		
Session 9—Obedience (pages 87–91)		
Session 10—Fellowship (pages 93–98)		
Session 11—Witness (pages 100–104)		
BOOKLET STUDIED		
<i>Tyranny of the Urgent</i> (pages 34–38)		
"Summarizing <i>Tyranny of the Urgent</i> " (page 39)		
MISCELLANEOUS		
Completed an evangelism prayer list (page 82)		
Completed "The Wheel and The Hand in Your Life" (page 83)		
Completed "Why Memorize Scripture" (pages 99–100)		
LEADER'S CHECK		
Five entries on <i>My Reading Highlights</i>		
Graduated from <i>Growing Strong in God's Family</i>		

INTRODUCTION

FOR THOSE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE 2:7 SERIES

This updated version of THE 2:7 SERIES replaces the 1999 edition, which was the most current version through 2010. About 90 percent of the content is the same, but it has been sharpened and updated.

FOR THOSE NEW TO THE 2:7 SERIES

THE 2:7 SERIES consists of three excellent workbooks designed for your group to work through and discuss. The three books are most effective when completed in sequence. Book 2 builds on the work completed in book 1, and book 3 builds on what your group has accomplished in the first two books. You will enjoy each book's biblical and practical approach to discipleship. As many others have, those of you participating in a 2:7 group can expect to experience positive life changes as you study and apply this time-proven material. Here is the main content of the three courses.

BOOK 1: *GROWING STRONG IN GOD'S FAMILY*

Learn ways to spend personal time with God in the Bible and in prayer. Discuss helpful Bible studies and memorize key verses on principles for Christian living.

BOOK 2: *DEEPENING YOUR ROOTS IN GOD'S FAMILY*

Memorize several classic Bible verses that you will use for a lifetime. Experience an extended time alone with God. Think through your own spiritual history so that you can express it to someone not yet committed to Christ.

BOOK 3: *BEARING FRUIT IN GOD'S FAMILY*

Discuss Bible studies related to Christian character. Memorize verses you can use to explain the gospel to others.

WHERE TO USE THE 2:7 SERIES

Use it with adults; use it with youth or collegiates; use it with women; use it with men. You will find it effective for one-to-one ministry, small groups, and mentoring.

THE 2:7 SERIES deals with foundational discipleship issues. You can see God use it in many contexts. It deals with the basics of the Christian life. The basics are basic, but they are also essential—for every Christian for an entire lifetime. The dynamics in THE 2:7 SERIES help people establish or stabilize the Christian basics in their everyday lives.

GROUP LEADERS

You want one person to act as leader during each group meeting. This may be the same person each time, or the responsibility may be shared by two or three group members.

Leader's guides are available at the website www.2-7series.org for the three books in THE 2:7 SERIES. Suggestions in the leader's guides are specific and practical. It is very important to use the leader's guides as you facilitate one of these groups.

NAVIGATOR RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

On THE 2:7 SERIES website there are helps for group participants, group leaders, and church leaders who manage discipleship training. Learn approaches that others are using to make THE 2:7 SERIES discipleship training effective.

Two ministries within The Navigators also provide practical resources and help for developing disciples and disciplemakers in your church:

- **NavPress** (www.navpress.com)—The NavPress mission is to advance The Navigators' calling by publishing life-transforming materials that are biblically rooted, culturally relevant, and highly practical.
- **Church Discipleship Ministry (CDM)** (www.navigators.org/cdm)—CDM partners with church leaders to develop generations of disciples in everyday life where they live, work, and play.

Both ministries continue to develop materials, tools, and training you can use in your personal or local church ministry. The mailing address is The Navigators, P.O. Box 6000, Colorado Springs, CO, 80934.

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIBLE VERSIONS

Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible: New International Version*. You can refer back to this list when you encounter unfamiliar Bible version abbreviations.

- (AMP) The Amplified Bible
- (ESV) English Standard Version
- (KJV) King James Version
- (MLB) Modern Language Bible: The Berkeley Version in Modern English
- (MSG) The Message
- (NASB) New American Standard Bible
- (NCV) New Century Version
- (NIV) New International Version
- (NKJV) New King James Version
- (NLT) New Living Translation
- (NRSV) New Revised Standard Version
- (PH) The New Testament in Modern English (J. B. Phillips)

SESSION 1

OUTLINE OF THIS SESSION

1. Open the session in prayer.
2. Get acquainted with other members in your group.
3. Read “Based on Colossians 2:7” (pages 13–14) and “General Comments” (pages 14–15).
4. Learn how to make your Bible reading exciting (pages 15–18).
 - a. “Why Read and Mark a Bible” (page 15)
 - b. “Ways to Mark Your Bible as You Read” (pages 15–17)
 - c. “Choosing Where to Read in Your Bible” (page 17)
 - d. “What to Mark” (page 18)
5. Complete the “Reading and Marking Exercise” (pages 18–19).
6. Discuss “Scripture Memory Overview” (pages 19–20).
7. Glance through “*Beginning with Christ* Explanation” (pages 20–24) in preparation for its corresponding Bible study in session 2.
8. Read “Proven Ways to Memorize a Verse Effectively” (pages 24–25).
9. Read “Assignment for Session 2” (page 25).
10. Close the session in prayer.

BASED ON COLOSSIANS 2:7

Rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

—COLOSSIANS 2:7

What is the purpose of THE 2:7 SERIES? What the Holy Spirit expresses through Paul in Colossians 2:7 clearly describes the specific goals of this training:

1. **For a Christian to become *built up in Christ and strengthened in his or her faith*.** This series of courses includes instruction in practical Bible study, Scripture memory skills, how to sharpen one’s devotional

life, and how to be more effective in evangelism. The objective is to become consistent in these disciplines rather than to just accumulate Bible knowledge.

2. **For a Christian to learn to *overflow with thankfulness in everyday life.*** The series will help an individual learn to experience and enjoy a stable and consistent daily walk with Christ.
3. **For a Christian to be *taught.*** The learning that strengthens our life does not come from lectures. Over time we see life transformation if we stay consistent in Scripture, listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and applying what we learn. The discussions can impact every member of a group in positive ways.

What are some results of THE 2:7 SERIES? Many who have worked through this series have developed qualities enabling them to assume greater responsibilities and become more effective in their local churches. Marriages and families have been helped as individual members have grown spiritually and become firmly established in their daily walk with God. After graduating from this series of courses, these maturing Christians have acquired additional tools for helping others with their growth in Christ and in reaching out to those not yet committed to Christ.

Each of the three courses consists of eleven interactive sessions. The class sessions last one to two hours. You will find THE 2:7 SERIES to be an enriching relational experience, both with those in your group and with God Himself.

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Ideally there should be four to twelve people in a discipleship group (including the leader). A group of this size allows time for each person in the group to participate.
2. Individuals should not join the group after session 2, because catching up would require hurrying through the material.
3. Certain requirements need to be completed to graduate from this course. While not difficult, to benefit most from each course will require purposeful effort. Plan to finish strong.
4. Keep in mind that almost anything truly worthwhile may be costly in some way.
5. Most class sessions will require about one hour of preparation time.
6. Investing time in your lesson early helps you avoid the last-minute rush. When your homework is done well, you will find that you gain the most

- permanent benefit from the training.
7. It is best if you do not miss more than two sessions during this course. It becomes difficult to catch up once you get behind.
 8. This is not a lecture course. You will have an opportunity to participate in every session.

WHY READ AND MARK A BIBLE

One of the most valuable spiritual disciplines in the life of a healthy Christian is the regular reading of Scripture. Previous 2:7 groups have shown that people get more out of Bible reading when they mark ideas that catch their eye or touch their heart. You and those in your group will often experience great mutual encouragement or challenge when you share what you have read and marked.

You will find it helpful to choose an inexpensive contemporary translation or paraphrase for your reading and marking. Your group leader might suggest some options. You can also check www.2-7series.org.

WAYS TO MARK YOUR BIBLE AS YOU READ

One option is to use a highlighter to mark words, phrases, or sentences. Most Bible bookstores sell dry highlighters or colored pencils that work well for Bible marking. (Regular highlighters can bleed through the thinner paper often found in Bibles.)

Some people like to mark with a ballpoint pen. Following are some commonly used pen markings that you might want to choose from if using a ballpoint pen.

1. **Brackets**—

Brackets can be put around a phrase or even a sentence or two.

2. **Short diagonal lead-in**—

The short diagonal lead-in refers to the phrase that immediately follows it.

3. **Parallel diagonal lines in the margin**—

Parallel diagonal lines can be used when the passage being marked is longer than one verse.

4. **Circle**—

A circle can be used for repeated words within a passage or to indicate the people who are the principal characters in that passage.

5. **Vertical line in the margin**—

A vertical line in the margin refers to the phrase or sentence(s) beside it.

6. Underlining— _____

Underlining can be used for words, phrases, or a sentence. For a block of verses, other markings are less tedious than underlining.

The important point is to mark the parts of a passage that impress you either in your mind or in your heart.

The following four segments of Scripture show examples of how others have marked these passages as they were reading.

ISAIAH 11:1-7

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. ⁶The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

LUKE 5:15-17

¹⁵Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

¹⁷One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

1 KINGS 12:3-9 (MLB)

³When Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel arrived, they addressed Rehoboam, saying, ⁴“Your father made our yoke unbearable. Now lighten the unbearable service of your father and the heavy yoke he laid upon us, and we will serve you.”⁵He responded, “Give me three more days; then return to me.”

When the people left, ⁶Rehoboam conferred with the elders who had stood by Solomon when he was still alive, saying, “How would you advise me to reply to the people?”⁷They

advised him, “If you will be a servant to this people now and serve them and reply to them with kind words, they will always be your servants.”⁸ But he rejected the advice which the elders gave him. Then he conferred with the young men who grew up with him and stood by him. “What do you advise us to say to this people who petitioned me, ‘Make lighter the yoke your father laid upon us?’”

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-7 (AMP)

¹Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, to the assembly (church) of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah): [Grace (spiritual blessing and divine favor) to you and [heart] peace.]

²We are ever giving thanks to God for all of you, continually mentioning [you when engaged] in our prayers, ³recalling unceasingly before our God and Father your work energized by

faith and service motivated by love, and unwavering hope in [the return of] our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). ⁴[O] brethren beloved by God, we recognize *and* know that He has selected (chosen) you; ⁵for our [preaching of the] glad tidings (the Gospel) came to you not only in word, but also [in [its own inherent] power] and in the Holy Spirit, and with great conviction *and* absolute certainty [on our part]. You know what kind of men we proved [ourselves] to be among you for your good. ⁶And you [set yourselves to] become imitators of us and [through us] of the Lord Himself, for you welcomed our message in [spite of] much persecution, with joy [inspired] by the Holy Spirit; ⁷so that you [thus] became a pattern to all the believers (those who adhere to, trust in, and rely on Christ Jesus) in Macedonia and Achaia [most of Greece].

CHOOSING WHERE TO READ IN YOUR BIBLE

1. If reading the Bible is fairly new to you, you may find it helpful to start with a New Testament book such as John or Philippians.
2. It is better to finish reading all of one book before starting another.
3. For many, the two most difficult books in the Bible are Leviticus and Revelation. It is wise to put off reading these two books until after completing book 1 of this series.
4. Instead of reading the gospels consecutively, add variety by interspersing them with other books.
5. When you are ready to begin reading in the Old Testament, it might be helpful to start with one of the following books: Joshua, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Genesis, or Daniel.