

ALGORITHM

Experiencing Personal Revival

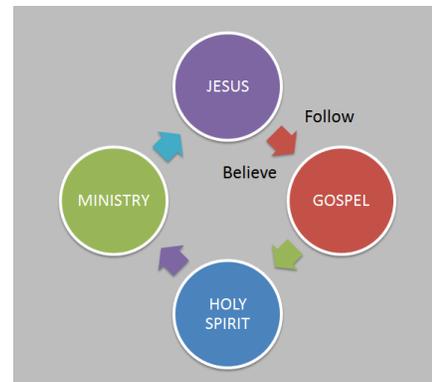
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We'll be taking the next few weeks to dissect what it means to "live out our faith". This simple statement can get awfully complex in a sea of messages, books, authors and speakers - to the point where you just might want to throw up your hands and wonder, "What the heck am I doing and how can I ever figure this out?" We are going to approach this problem with an algorithm; a step-by-step process, with hopes that new connections and relationships will connect the dots in a powerfully transformative way.

JESUS IS LIKE NO OTHER

You may recognize the diagram from an earlier series on "fueling revival" in our *communities*. We'll refer to it again as we dive into *personal* revival. Our thought process always starts with Jesus; He is the cornerstone of our faith to which everything else aligns. Contemplate the truth claim, "Jesus is like no other". He was fully man and fully God; the Lord of the entire universe and the exact image of God. No other man has beaten death.



Colossians 1:15 (NIV)

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

Hebrews 1:3 (NIV)

The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.

Acts 2:32 (NIV)

God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this.

Jesus' identity is the foundation of our faith and our reference point. We interpret the Old Testament and New Testament through the lens of Jesus. He is the context through which we have better understanding of the scriptures. C.S. Lewis put it this way:

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

Discuss/Journal

1. Give it some thought; is there anyone else in all of history that even comes close to Jesus? Feel free to even expand your search to mythical and fictional characters.
2. Examine the truth claim, Jesus is the Son of God and is God and has authority over EVERYTHING. Do you believe this? Yes or no, why do you believe this?
3. If your answer is yes, what does this mean for you personally? What are the implications?
4. If your answer is no/maybe/not sure, what are the implications? What do you believe and how does it play out in how you live life?

CALLED TO FOLLOW

About 80% of the Gospels cover the ministry of Jesus and there can be an inclination to view this as just the precursor to the death and resurrection. But they are rich in guidance and demonstrations of Jesus' life, ministry, and values. He called us to do more than just believe in Him; He called us to follow Him, and He led by example. Tens of thousands literally followed Jesus from place to place during his ministry. They followed Him to be fed, healed, and amazed (read **Mark 8: 1-10, Luke 7: 11-16, Matthew 12:22-29**). But when challenged to follow His life, many left Him (read **John 6:66**). When it became too costly, too hard, and too at odds with what they desired, the crowd turned away. When following Jesus is a means to an end, like a quid pro quo, the pressure builds and expectations tighten around you like a boa constrictor, squeezing the life out of you; life that God wants for you that is full of peace, joy, and love. The life of discipleship, following Jesus comes with a promise, the loving and intimate relationship with God the Father.

John 14:21 (NIV)

²¹Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

Discuss/Journal

1. There's a definite fork in the road for believers. Do you choose the way that follows Jesus because of what you want him to do for you, or do you choose the way that follows Jesus because you love him?
2. What do you think is God's heart in this promise (**John 14:21**)? Do you hear an invitation? What do you think about the invitation, what or where are you being invited?

LET GO

Sometimes our heads believe something our hearts can't accept. Our minds tell us we can trust Jesus, our minds want to trust Jesus, but our hearts hold back. It's incredibly hard letting go of control over our lives. We are scared of what will be asked of us. Will it be hard? Scary? Uncomfortable or weird? We might be afraid of letting go of something or someone we really love and have to trust them to Jesus. We may even be overwhelmed and skeptical of our ability to follow Him. The desire may be there, but we feel inadequate to follow through. We might be trying but frustrated and wondering if we are even doing what God wants us to do. As we trust Him and persevere, Jesus is faithful and will reveal Himself to us. Transformation **will** happen.

Discuss/Journal

1. Read **2 Samuel 24: 18-24**. King David refused to make an offering to God that cost him nothing. What is "costly" to you: lifestyle, social status, respect, promotion, and/or relationships? Would you still follow God if it cost you one of these, perhaps even all of these? How would your life look different?
2. Read **Luke 14.25-24**. What does bearing your own cross mean to you? Is it sacrifice, tolerance, obedience, or something else? What cost are you counting?

ACTIVATION

Go into the Gospels and make a list of what Jesus tells us to do and make a list of what Jesus says He's going to do. Ask him to help you increase your trust in him for what He says He's going to do. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you some very specific areas, where you need to trust Him and where you need to follow Jesus. Share one specific area with another person for support, perhaps even go it together!

ENCOURAGEMENT

Jesus understands our fear and gives us this promise in **John 14: 26-27**:

"²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Share a few testimonies about how aligning your life with Jesus has drawn you closer to God, transformed you, how God has revealed himself to you.

DEVOTIONAL

As a small group, access the Weekly Devotional by going to www.chapel.org, go to the **GROW** link at the top of the page and select **WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS** from the dropdown and then select **ALGORITHM: WEEK ONE**.

PROVIDE US WITH FEEDBACK

We are excited about the potential these studies have to help each of us process the weekend message at a deeper level, and to see God change our lives in significant ways. In order to make these guides as helpful as possible, we would love to hear which elements are most helpful, which are least helpful, as well as any other comments, questions or suggestions. Feel free to send your feedback directly to Jon Holmberg at gabrielslyric@msn.com.

REFERENCES

1. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/cslewis162523.html>