

# 1 John 2 - Growing as a Disciple

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Preacher: Malcolm Jarrett

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning everybody. Now, as a man, I can only do one thing at a time. So I've got my wife sitting there to put the screens up! So they come up at the same time as what I'm actually saying to you.

So we work as a team. If it doesn't come up, then I've got someone to blame. Now, yesterday we woke to some devastating news.

And I wondered how you made that feel. How did it feel to you about this war in Iran? Were you frightened or worried?

You know, we shouldn't be frightened or worried because we know that God is in control. And he's working out his purposes. And he's preparing for Jesus Christ to come back again.

Now, the question is, are we trusting God? Now, as part of my talk this morning, we're going to be looking at spiritual growth, which I hope is up there.

[ 1 : 08 ] Yes, working on the first one. We're going to speak on the spiritual growth. But before we do that, I'm going to pray. Let's just pray. Father, may each one of us be ready for when Jesus comes back.

Give us that peace that you have promised your children to give us joy to know you have everything under your control and assurance along with the challenges that will move us forward in our Christian walk.

Give us listening ears, attentive hearts, so that we won't be listening to my voice, but your voice. So that in all things, our God will get the glory.

And it's in Jesus' name we pray. So, this morning, I want us to look at the experience of love, but particularly spiritual growth.

Love isn't just a human emotion, we stir it up. It is rooted in God's character, because God exemplifies love, and as we grow, he wants it to increase in us.

[ 2 : 18 ] I also want to set challenges for us, but also to encourage us. So, before we go any further, let's read from 1st Epistle of John, chapter 2, verses 1 through 14, which says, My little children, I am writing these things to you, so that you may not sin.

And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. The one who says, I have come to know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

But whoever keeps his word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in him, and the one who says he abides in him, ought himself to walk in the same manner as he walked.

Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment, which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard.

[ 3 : 35 ] On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

The one who says he is in the light, and yet hates his brother, is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

But the one who hates his brother, is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you, for his name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who has been from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know him who has been from the beginning.

[ 4 : 39 ] I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Now before we walk through these verses, I want to give you a brief reminder of who is writing this epistle.

The accepted author of all three letters is the Apostle John. The acceptance is based on the contents and the style, which is similar to John's Gospel.

It is also confirmed by external evidence, which is both early and substantial. And that's in Polycarp, Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian.

And there are many others who lend their authority and testimony to the authentic authorship of John's books. The first epistle to John was probably written from Ephesus, which is in the modern-day Turkey, and probably near the end of the first century.

Now it was apparently written to the church at large, as it has no greetings, farewells, or other personal allusions. And therefore it would be placed in the general epistles.

[ 5 : 54 ] It was written somewhere between AD 85 and AD 90. John mentions four reasons why he wrote this epistle to believers.

Firstly, in chapter 1, verse 4, John says, And these things we write to you, that your joy may be full. Secondly, in chapter 2, verse 1, to guard against sin.

And thirdly, chapter 2, verse 26, to warn them against false teachers. Fourthly, in chapter 5, verse 13, to strengthen their faith in Christ and to assure them of eternal life.

These letters should bring comfort to us amidst all the trials that we are facing. How wonderful our Lord truly is. The central theme is that God is life, God is light, and God is love.

John was the son of Zebedee, and he was among the first disciples called by Jesus. Along with Peter and James, and are often singled out as part of Jesus' inner circle.

[ 7 : 08 ] Now, John was present at key moments, and I'll give you three examples. The Mount of Transfiguration, which we read in Matthew 17, 1-2, and Luke 9, 28-36.

Secondly, the raising of Jairus' daughter, Mark 5, 37. And then the more intimate moments in Gethsemane, Matthew 26, 37, which we've been reading about in the past few weeks.

John also describes himself in his Gospel, John chapter 13, verse 23, as one of the inner circle. But he also says he's the disciple whom Jesus loved.

John wrote five New Testament books, the Gospel of John, the three epistles, 1, 2, and 3, John, and the Book of Revelation. However, today we are just looking at the first epistle of John, chapter 2, verses 1 through 14, which I've read.

These verses, I hope, will encourage and also challenge us as to where we stand in our Christian lives. and to ask ourselves the question whether or not we are actually growing in our Christian faith or remaining static.

[ 8 : 31 ] This letter was written to believers, so we know it is relevant for us today as well. When you sin, don't hide. Run to Jesus.

John begins, 1 John 2, 1, My little children. I write these things to you so that you may not sin. Now John here is tender, not patronising.

John uses the address of my little children in verse 1 in a warm, fatherly way. My dear children, by now, John was a very old man and he had spent the majority of his life in ministry and many of his readers were indeed his spiritual children.

He's telling them to avoid sinning. But if they do sin, that they have an advocate with the Father and through Christ's shed blood they can have forgiveness, which still applies for us today.

But then comes one of the most comforting sentences in the Christian life. 1 John 2, verse 1. Now notice, it is not saying we don't sin, but when we do.

[ 9 : 56 ] But don't despair, we have an advocate. The devil loves to accuse. He loves to whisper. For example, he might say, well, if you were really saved, you wouldn't struggle like this or God is finished with you.

But John says, when you feel guilty and condemned, don't give up hope. Your advocate is Jesus Christ. John continues in 1 John 2, verse 2.

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world. So here's a reminder to the unsaved.

He died for the whole world so that everyone has the opportunity to have forgiveness. To people who are feeling guilty and condemned, John offers reassurance.

He says, when you feel this way, don't give up hope because the best attorney in the universe is pleading your case. And that is Jesus Christ. He is your advocate.

[11:02] And he's also the judge's son. He has already suffered yours and my penalty. He took our place and paid the price for our sins.

So we can't be tried again for sin that no longer exists against us. When you are united with Christ, you are as safe as he is. Jesus is not only our advocate, he is also the one who has dealt with our guilt.

John says later, 1 John 4, verse 10, this is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

There was no love from us. We didn't instigate it at all. It was God who first loved us. And that's sometimes difficult to grasp, isn't it? Why should God love me?

Well, that's where grace comes in. He gives us his unmerited love. Jesus stands as our mediator.

His death on the cross has satisfied the wrath of God who hates sin and demanded that a price had to be paid so that justice and truth are met.

[12:14] 1 John 1, 9 says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins. So the message is not that a Christian never sins, but it is a Christian knows what to do when they do.

I'm going to repeat that just in case you didn't get it. It is not that a Christian never sins, but it is a Christian knows what to do when they do sin.

Unfortunately, we still have our old sin nature and so we're all prone to sin. How can I be sure I belong to Christ?

Christ. We can read about that in 1 John 2, 3 to 6. Many of us have known seasons of doubt and I remember as a young man, a young Christian thinking, well, was I really saved?

Did I, was he accept me? So I asked Jesus into my heart again. But the truth is God heard the first time. Doubt often isn't humility, it's an attack.

[13:22] the devil loves to sow seeds of doubt and it started here on earth with Adam and Eve. So John gives us a test. 1 John 2, 3 to 4 it says, we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.

Whoever says I know him but does not do what he commands is a liar. And then 1 John 2, 5 to 6 says, but if anyone obeys his word love for God is truly made complete in them.

Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. Now John is not saying we earn salvation by good works or good behaviour.

He's saying genuine salvation produces a new direction, a desire to obey. And what does God command? 1 John 3, 23 and this is his command to believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ and to love one another.

And that's the heartbeat. Faith in Christ and love for one another. Thankfully I haven't found a verse in the Bible that commands me to like everybody.

[14:39] Sometimes that's hard. My wife doesn't like me all the time but she does love me. thankfully. Love is a choice.

It's something we do because God commands it. In 1 John 2 the main Greek word for love is agape the noun and agapeo the verb.

But instead of relying on changing modern definitions scripture shows us what it means and for example John 3, 16 says for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

So here we have agape gives God so loved that he gave agape sacrifices 1 John 3, 16 he laid down his life and agape obeys.

John's gospel 14, 21 keeps my commands. So in this chapter love is not mainly a feeling it is a chosen devotion to God that produces obedience and it expresses itself in real practical love towards believers.

[15:59] John says in 1 John 3, 24 the one who keeps God's commands lives in him and he in them. So here's a challenge we can't dodge. How is love showing up in our lives?

Are we serving needs? Are we walking as Jesus walked? Obviously I don't mean copying his first century culture. One of the things which I love about this church and the fellowship here is the love

reaction between us as a family of believers.

But are we copying his obedience his humility his truth and his servant hearted love? Love is old and love is new.

1 John 2 verses 7 to 11 says beloved I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard.

On the other hand I am writing a new commandment to you which is true in him and in you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

[ 17 : 18 ] The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

So here John is saying love command is both old and new. It's old because it's in the Old Testament Leviticus 19 18 love your neighbor as yourself I am the Lord and it's new because Jesus raised the standard and became himself the measure of love and that's because he is love.

John's gospel 13 34 to 35 says a new commandment I give to you that you love one another even as I have loved you that you also love one another by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another do you know that the world watches us it watches how we treat each other how we speak to each other how we react under pressure do we honour Christ or do we give people reasons to doubt him even Christians are watching I clearly remember when as a family we were going through a particularly challenging time in Falmouth and a Christian couple told us afterwards that they had been watching us just to see how we handled the trial and I thought thanks Jesus defines love like this

John's gospel 15 verse 13 greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for his friends and he goes even further not just friends but enemies Matthew 5 44 says but I say to you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you now that matters because persecution isn't theoretical in the most recent report I've seen which must be worse now open doors the world watch list reporting year they estimate about 380 million plus Christians face high levels of persecution 4,476 were killed for their faith in 2024 and there were 209,771 Christians forced from their homes and into hiding or exile and I'm sure the next set of figures will be worse so yes we should pray for the persecuted church we should let them really sharpen our obedience and not just our opinions love must be the identifying mark of the

Christian community because we cannot grow spiritually while we hate others as I said earlier Christian love is not just a feeling it's a decision to treat others as God commands and to do them good and when we choose that God helps us live it remember you and I can sometimes be unlovable too but God doesn't give up on us John's encouragement to believers at different stages in their Christian life let me read 1 John 2 12 14 I'm writing to you little children because your sins have been forgiven you for his name's sake I'm writing to you fathers because you know him who has been from the beginning I'm writing to you young men because you have overcome the evil one I've written to you children because you know the father I've written to you fathers because you know him who has been from the beginning I've written to you young men because you are strong and the word of

[ 21 : 20 ] God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one now here John is writing to different believers at different spiritual ages so we have babies the babies in Christ those who are saved but little or no growth from a baby it goes to a child those who are growing but are still fairly immature and not showing much headway they still need a lot of help and then to a young adult!

Christian those who are serving and growing but still need to grow stronger in their faith knowledge and experience and also to have a desire to mature and then hopefully we get to an adult Christian those who have a good depth of biblical knowledge and are experiencing a walk with God and are active in his service so that leads perfectly into the next section of my message looking at the stages of Christian maturity and what needs to change so we can grow so where are we in our spiritual life physical age is immaterial as sadly it is possible for some to have given their lives many years ago and not moved on while other perhaps in the youth are on fire for Jesus and are growing well so let's start with the babies this group should affect all of us as we are either babies in Christ or we need to be those who should be encouraging the babies in Christ as a father of five daughters and a grandfather of 16 grandchildren and a great grandfather to three great grandsons

I've been privileged to be part of their babyhood from changing nappies to playing with them to soothing them to sleep and of course disciplining them the one thing we notice is how quickly they grow they're eager to be fed for me it often seemed to be more in the middle of the night I have some pictures here of just one of our grandsons Caden is a baby in the first photo grown to age five in the second and 21 in the third we're on tap there as our grandchildren have grown they have pushed boundaries and tried to do things that as grownups we know aren't right this next slide here we can see when one of our granddaughters decided it would be fun to climb into a tumble dryer she didn't realise the dangers of course so we need to train babies to do what is right and to keep them safe when we first accept

Jesus as our saviour we are reborn we are spiritual babes in Christ we grow on the milk of the word we would be overwhelmed with deep theology normally new believers are filled with joy and want to learn and to grow but they also need to be helped and trained bear with me as I share a list of typical positions of a baby Christian they're helpless and need much care and protection Luke 12 Luke 2 12-16 and Acts 7-19 are we meeting the needs of those that have been led to Christ or even those that perhaps are here in our church family are we meeting their needs babies crave nourishment 1 Peter 2 verse 2 I was privileged to be part of a Billy Graham counselling team back in the 1960s that of course ages me sadly what happened was that many of those that went forward to be saved never got the follow up they needed to grow babes in

Christ need fellowship and a lot of encouragement with spiritual food and the spiritual food needs to be digestible babies are not yet able to handle meat or solid food 1 Corinthians 3 verses 1 to 3 and Hebrews 5 11 to 14 we must not try to overload a new believer with deep theology babies are easily deceived a new believer can easily be misled by all the different views of scripture so if you are a baby in Christ seek wise guidance go to the mature believer here and I think we as mature believers have a responsibility to gently and kindly correct any deceptions that they may have collected and picked up now from a baby we can then go to a young child you might recognize someone in these pictures 1 John 2 14 says

[ 26 : 29 ] I write to you children because you know the father the new testament translates four Greek words into the English word child but only three of them relate to this study I don't know if I pronounced these correctly technon paeus and paedon three facts about the word paeus should interest us first in addition to child this word can also denote a servant a young servant or a slave identifying the child as a servant rather than someone thrust into a position of leadership or authority remember after Samuel was anointed young David God assigned him to a position of a servant who was he serving King Saul 1 Samuel 16 verse 12 through 22 second paedou which comes from the same root word as paeus and that's the Greek word for chasten or discipline if we love our spiritual children we will kindly let them know when they are travelling down the wrong road thirdly paedia and there's the same root word again it is the

Greek word for training or instruction during this phase he or she needs to be taught learning the fundamentals of walking with the Lord firstly the child is still in need of their parents protection in this slide my wife is being taught by her mother how to steer the boat by a compass she needed guidance and instruction secondly a child needs provision they should grow mentally physically socially and spiritually thirdly Jesus uses a child to demonstrate the kind of spiritual humility necessary to inherit the kingdom of God we read Matthew 18 1 to 4 3 to 4 says truly I say to you unless you change and become like children you will not enter the kingdom of heaven so whoever humbles himself like this child he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven fourthly children are eager to come to Jesus

Jesus had a soft spot for them as well Mark 10 14 to 16 allow the children to come to me he said do not forbid them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these truly I say to you whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter at all and he took them in his arms and began blessing them and laying hands on them so a challenge are we eager to hear what Jesus has to say to us fifthly a child should obey their parents Ephesians 6 1 to 3 children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right honour your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise so that it may turn out well for you and that you may live long on the earth how often have we known the right thing to do and then done the opposite a child should respect his father and his discipline

Hebrews 12 9 to 10 says furthermore we had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them shall we much more be subject to the father of spirit and live for they disciplined us for a short time

as seen best of them but he disciplines us for good so that we may share his holiness now if we're honest none of us like to be disciplined we can certainly see in the UK at this precise time the result of lack of discipline discipline is for our ultimate good even if we don't think so at the time I know that times we've grown the closest to the Lord have been the times when we've been going through trials seventh the child can recognise the majesty of the Lord openly and unashamedly glorifying him read that in Matthew 21 15 another challenge are we sometimes ashamed to even admit we are

Christians number eight yet he's still seen as deficient in spiritual understanding another grandson whose football team won an important soccer tournament in America now thinks he's good enough to train with spurs well he's probably right at the moment as we're trying to starve off relegation it's good to dream but we do need to listen to advice ask questions from those whom we trust who are more spiritually mature God doesn't take kindly to those who cause a child to stumble Matthew 18 6 says but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck and that he drowns in the depths of the sea so this is really a challenge for those who are more spiritually mature giving advice and sharing experiences are great but we need to be careful that we keep in context with what the Bible is actually teaching one of the things that's so great about our leaders here is that they stick completely to what the [ 32 : 17 ] Bible teaches and that's great for us before we go to a young adult I want to share an experience we had that exemplifies the tragedy of not maturing and growing when we lived in Falmouth in Cornwall we had the privilege of visiting a home for severely disabled children both the mentally and the physically it was one of the saddest experiences we had I mean the home itself was lovely in a beautiful position over looking the river but to see those children who had not grown some were in their teens still looking and behaving as if they were still under five the tragedy is that so many Christians are like this they are saved but there is no or very little growth and this is not God's plan he wants each one of us to grow so let's go on and see what he expects of us young adult 1 John 2 14 says

I write to you young men because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one the New Testament uses several words to designate young men all of which come from the same root word neo which means new not previously existent just now appearing in short new and young one of the primary characteristics of a young adult is that he or she is beginning to take on responsibilities young adults start to take their place as movers and shakers in society with some good results but also some not so good they continue to show a servant's heart not above doing the dirty work Luke 22 26 but it is not this way for you rather the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like the servant they are urged to maintain humility and proper respect for the elders 1 Peter 5 5-6 so younger men likewise be subject to your elders and all of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another because God is opposed to the proud but he gives grace to the humble therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so that he may exalt you in the proper time they are also urged to keep their lusts and passion in check now flee from youth or lust and pursue righteousness faith love and peace with those who call on the

Lord from a pure heart but refuse foolish and ignorant speculations knowing that they produce quarrels 2 Timothy 2 22-23 and Titus 2 4-6 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands to love their children to be sensible pure workers at home kind being subject to their own husbands so that the word of God will not be dishonoured likewise urge the young men to be sensible in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds with purity in doctrine dignified sounding speech which is beyond reproach so that the opponent will be put to shame having nothing bad to say about us and so lastly to an adult believer 1 John 2 14 says

I write you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning when one reaches this level of Christian maturity it doesn't mean we stop learning or maturing it only means we are now qualified to take on certain responsibilities and privileges many of which will enhance or accelerate our continued Christian growth we never stop learning there are three reasons to be well informed about what should characterise an adult Christian first if we know what an adult Christian looks like we'll recognise when our Christian friend reaches that level and we'll be able to relate to him or her appropriately secondly we'll be better able to see what our maturing Christian friend is lacking and perhaps be more efficient in helping them grow thirdly if we're ignorant of how an adult is supposed to act it will be virtually impossible for us to act like one therefore splintering our hopes of effectively

modelling the

Christian life for the benefit of the younger Christians so let's just look and I reduced it to ten adult characteristics one should be a grower a spiritual adult has made their relationship with God their top priority secondly a nurturer and cherisher a spiritual adult takes care of spiritual babies 1 Thessalonians 2 7 to 8 says but we prove to be gentle among you as a nursing mother who tenderly cares for her own children in the same way we had a fond affection for you and were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives because you have become very dear to us and that's what we should be doing as adult Christians is sharing our lives with the younger Christians and encouraging them and helping them thirdly a spiritual adult would seek to protect their disciples from bad outside influences and provide good guidance in the problems that they would face in life in 2

[ 38 : 27 ] Corinthians 12 14 Paul is reminding them that he considers them as his children and is prepared to go the extra mile to protect them and before he should be an interceder by that I mean a spiritual adult would be much in prayer for their disciple in 2 Kings 4 32 to 37 we read Elisha intercedes and prayed to the Lord for the son of the humanite woman number five should be a teacher a spiritual adult teaches younger Christians what they need to know to enjoy a viable relationship with God we should be a trainer a spiritual adult goes beyond mere education of younger Christians they take as much interest in their spiritual offspring as a real parent would their children number seven a discipliner a spiritual adult should be prepared to discipline their younger children if they see him or her going the wrong way going away from scripture and then gently and I say the word gently draw him or her back onto the right path should be a sympathizer a godly parent physical or spiritual isn't a tyrant in their disciplining they do know the difference between a firm loving hand of a father or mother and that of an oppressor or tormentor number nine should be an encourager spiritual adult should encourage others number ten should show servanthood a prime quality that he or she should have philippians 2 verse 22 so another challenge do we want to serve the lord by serving others my question and challenge is where are we in the four states of a Christian still a baby maybe you've moved to a child or even a young adult and if so from there you should be working towards being a mature Christian adult and to be more like Christ that's our ultimate aim so am I a baby in Christ eager for feeding and growing am I a child I've grown some but need teaching and discipline am I a young adult growing spiritually strong and able and willing to serve am I an adult spiritually mature good knowledge of God's word and able to disciple am I am!

and who could help to grow this year if you are a spiritual adult praise God but you can't rest on your laurels there are still many things we can learn so that we may grow to be more like Christ and just to make it clear we are not saved by doing good works but when we are genuinely saved we will have that desire to do good works to please our saviour and we want to learn more about him the Holy Spirit within us guides and encourages us and leads us question is are we listening to him so how do we grow spiritually don't aim to feel mature aim to become mature don't aim to feel mature aim to become mature the Bible is God's living word so the very best way to grow spiritually is to ask the

Holy Spirit to help you to read and understand the Bible perhaps even find a study guide to help you and do it daily it doesn't need to be long or in depth although as you get into the habit you'll find you will want more the interesting thing is that you can be a mature believer who knows the Bible really well but God can speak to you and show you something new and relevant from the same passage that you're familiar with and teach you something different and it can be the same!

I don't know how many people are here but say 15 or so God might have the same verse and there could be 15 interpretations for you one that the Lord wants you to understand so we need to have prayer prayer is vital this is when you talk to God it's not only when we talk to God it's when we listen I think that's hard I find it hard I interrupt too much my wife tells me so we need to listen to what God is saying to us the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much James says put Christ first in our relationships and activities examine yourself honestly and see if there's any perpetual sin that needs to be dealt with and is stopping you from growing submit therefore to God resist the devil and he will flee from you again

[ 43 : 49 ] James says 4 7 other ways to help are listening to God focused music turn to Joe for that spending quality time with other believers and asking for the Holy Spirit's help Hebrews 10 25 says!

Don't be a smoe smoe few blank faces there so what is a smoe Sunday morning only a growing Christian needs to be in regular touch with Jesus so RPW that's a new one I made this up read pray and worship on a daily basis we are all works in progress and it is my prayer that we will be encouraged today to genuinely analyse our Christian maturity and consider these questions do I need to return to Jesus as my advocate am I reading my Bible regularly am I obeying and living in the light and who could I help grow this year and of course whether we are obeying the Lord's command the important thing is to love one another we need to follow Jesus example truthfulness and integrity obedience to the father servant hearted love humility and forgiveness and most of all to abide in him and persevere in the faith if you are not a Christian and want to start to have a relationship with the living God and you don't know how to start or if you're worried about the news today speak to me or someone here that you know and I'm sure we will all be pleased to help let's just pray father we just pray that you will challenge us as to where we stand in our relationship with you if we're still babes in Christ help us to move forward from that help us to read your word daily help us to meet with other Christians father if we're a child help us to continue to grow we want to grow to be more like you for a young adult with lots of enthusiasm help us to use that enthusiasm for Christ and as adult Christians most those here I just pray that you will challenge us to help the younger Christians and to shine Jesus in all circumstances especially when we go through trials that we will show the world that we have someone who cares someone who understands someone who says that he will never leave us nor forsake us one that will always support us so father we thank you for your word I pray that the words that you want us to remember that we will remember the words not needed to forget bless us throughout the rest of this day help us to glorify your son the Lord Jesus Christ it's in his name we pray amen