

# **PBC Growing in Christ**

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# Class Norms

A large, dark wooden cross stands in a field of tall grass. The background is a sunset sky with soft, golden light breaking through the clouds. The cross is the central focus of the image, symbolizing faith and community.

- Place your microphone on mute.
- Use the chat room. Located in the upper right of the screen.
- Interact in the class just raise your hand. The instructor will take you off mute.
- Technology may not always work....please be patient.
- God is always in the midst
- Enjoy the class.

# Growing in Christ

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- Every day is an opportunity to grow in the word.
- Growing in Christ will tackle real life issues, while studying the bible for its answers.
- Examine challenges believers and non-believers face every day.
- Growing in Christ bible study will focus on how Christians face challenges and how the bible addresses these issues.



# Growing in Christ

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*To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. 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. Ephesians 4:12-13 (NIV)*





# Maintaining Focus on Jesus

## Daniel 9:1-7,17-19

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**How do you tune out distractions when you really need to focus?**

# Scripture

## Maintaining Focus on Jesus

### Daniel 9:1-4

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**1** In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, a Mede by birth, who was made king over the Chaldean kingdom— **2** in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the books according to the word of the LORD to the prophet Jeremiah that the number of years for the desolation of Jerusalem would be seventy. **3** So I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek him by prayer and petitions, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. **4** I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: Ah, Lord—the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps his gracious covenant with those who love him and keep his commands—



## **Maintaining Focus on Jesus Daniel 9:1-4**

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**How would you summarize  
the purpose of biblical  
fasting?**

**What life events might cause  
us to seek the Lord through  
prayer and fasting?**

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# Maintaining Focus on Jesus

## Daniel 9:1-4

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- The spiritual discipline of fasting is still appropriate as a special observation today. And when believers fast, it should be done in a biblical and responsible manner.
- The purpose of fasting is to focus on Jesus, not impress others.
- People with medical conditions should consult their physician before fasting from food and should ease into the practice gradually.
- If unable to fast from food, believers should practice other spiritual disciplines that will help them focus on Jesus. For example, a person can engage in a fast from media or other activities.



# Scripture

## Maintaining Focus on Jesus

### Daniel 9:5-7

5 we have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly, rebelled, and turned away from your commands and ordinances. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, leaders, ancestors, and all the people of the land. 7 Lord, righteousness belongs to you, but this day public shame belongs to us: the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, and all Israel—those who are near and those who are far, in all the countries where you have banished them because of the disloyalty they have shown toward you.



# Maintaining Focus on Jesus

## Daniel 9:5-7

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**Why is confession an important part of our spiritual lives?**

**What emotions do you experience when you consider talking with someone about your sins and failures?**

# Maintaining Focus on Jesus

## Daniel 9:5-7

**Daniel spoke of sin in six ways:**

- 1. Sinned.** The root word means to miss a mark. It may come close, but if it doesn't hit the mark completely, it's sin.
- 2. Done wrong.** Doing wrong is more than just missing the mark; it's missing the mark intentionally by distorting the truth.
- 3. Acted wickedly.** They missed the mark set by God, they did so intentionally, and they will continue to sin. The Hebrew word drips with guilt.
- 4. Rebelled.** Through their sin the people had risen in revolt against God.
- 5. Turned away.** The people had turned their backs on God's ways.
- 6. Not listened.** The people couldn't excuse their failure as ignorance of God's Word. They had refused to even listen to the prophets God sent.



# Scripture

## Maintaining Focus on Jesus

### Daniel 9:17-19

**17 Therefore, our God, hear the prayer and the petitions of your servant. Make your face shine on your desolate sanctuary for the Lord's sake. 18 Listen closely, my God, and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations and the city that bears your name. For we are not presenting our petitions before you based on our righteous acts, but based on your abundant compassion. 19 Lord, hear! Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and act! My God, for your own sake, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your name.**



# Maintaining Focus on Jesus

## Daniel 9:17-19

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**“What obstacles might hinder us from engaging in confession and fasting?”**

**How does confession of sin affect our relationship with Christ and with others?**

**How can we adjust a focus on life’s burdens to a focus on God?”**

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# Maintaining Focus on Jesus

## Daniel 9:17-19

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- Unfortunately, some people don't confess their sins; instead, they hold onto them and miss the freedom that comes with confession and forgiveness.
- Confession and repentance are always the right things to do; these humbling actions make it possible to restore our relationships.
- Because we carry guilt about our sins, we can't pay attention to God. As you pray, do not be afraid to pour out your heart



# GROWING IN CHRIST IN ACTION

DECEMBER 20, 2020

- **Pray for God's glory. Replace at least five minutes of social media time with additional time spent in prayer for God's glory. Ask Him to align your heart with His.**
- **Pray for unity. Gather with others to spend time in concentrated prayer for unity among believers in your church, your community, and around the world.**
- **Pray like Jesus. Spend time this week reading Jesus' prayers recorded in the gospels (for examples, see Matthew 6:9-13, John 17:1-26). Note what Jesus desired and prayed for. As you read, pray for these things in your life and in the world.**

# Final thoughts about Maintaining Focus on Jesus

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- When we confess our sins, God forgives, the fog lifts, and we're able to focus on Him.
- While it's not possible to achieve sinless perfection this side of heaven, it is possible to achieve "confession zero." Through the spiritual disciplines of fasting and confession, we can gain and maintain a strong relationship with God.



# Resources

- **Fasting as a biblical concept is when a person refrains from food in an attempt to have a deeper experience in knowing God—to draw nearer to God in prayer. It is often accompanied by confession of one's sins.**
- **Sackcloth refers to a garment made of coarse material from goat or camel hair. It was often worn as a sign of mourning; it was also used in conjunction with fasting.**
- **Ashes were associated with sacrifices, mourning, and fasting.**
- **Daniel knew that fellowship with God took focus and attention, indicated by his words, I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek him. Daniel turned away from food and other personal comforts in order to seek God.**
- **BIBLE-Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth**
- **[Bible.com](https://www.bible.com)**



Next Week: January 10, 2021  
**Connecting to Christ's Body**

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1 Corinthians 12:12-24

When have you seen one  
person's success depend on  
others?



**God Bless  
You!**

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