

FOCUS ON JESUS

**5 WAYS TO FIND YOUR SPIRITUAL FOCUS
BRINGING CLARITY, LEVERAGE
AND INTEREST TO SCRIPTURE**

A LIFE-CHANGING WORKBOOK FROM **RICK SOTO**

▶ SUPER STOKED FOR YOU

I am super proud of you for taking a big step in making Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the focus of your life. You will never regret focusing on Jesus and making Him the main thing in everything.

The course and workbook are simple, but don't let the simplicity fool you. There is a treasure waiting for you as you work through some simple exercises.

As you work through the course, make sure to do the following:

- 1. Make an appointment with God and keep it.** Over the next few days, schedule time to go through the workbook. Block out about 30 minutes. The videos are short, as well as the exercises, but don't rush through the things you are learning.
- 2. Complete and finish all the exercises;** you will be glad you did.
- 3. Expect God to meet you and to move in sweet ways,** deep inside your heart.

I am your friend on this journey and am cheering you on.

You are beloved of God.

Always love,



Rick Soto

Pastor | Teacher | Family Man

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FIRST FOCUS: The Door is Open

Video One

*“Behold I have set before you an open door
which no one is able to shut.”*

Revelation 3:8

In the video, we looked at a simple truth: God has opened certain doors for you and **it is impossible for any human being to shut them.**

Understanding how to apply that truth and activate it requires the removal of a few stumbling blocks.

Here is a quick summary of what you will work through:

- 1.** God is for you, not against you, that is the plain teaching of scripture. (Romans 8:31)
- 2.** This side of eternity, everyone has false and limiting beliefs holding them back.
- 3.** God has placed His life inside you, giving you real divine power.



Thankfulness Unlocks Power

“Then Jesus answered, ‘Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’ And he said to him, ‘Rise and go your way, your faith has made you well.’ ”

Luke 17:18–19 ESV

Be encouraged—God is for you! Now, write down ten things you want to praise and give God thanks for.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

2

SECOND FOCUS: Put the Past Behind You

Video Two

Focusing on Jesus requires something of you, namely that you **focus on Jesus, and not other things.**

Part of what happens, and the reason for this spiritual exercise, relates to how our past tempts us to embrace negativity, fear, shame, guilt and then failure—to say nothing yet about sin.

Jesus overcame sin, Satan and death; focusing on Him brings to reality the words of the great Apostle Paul when he said, “We are more than conquerors.” Peter, (someone Jesus never gave up on) calls believers “sojourners and exiles.” He writes as a man pleading with others to travel light in this lifetime.

Such liberty is exactly what Jesus has for you.

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed, always carrying in the body of the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.”

2 Corinthians 4:7–12 ESV



Quick Reflections

Exercise Instructions

Don't overly reflect on the questions; move quickly, going with first impressions.

Using art as a metaphor to describe this past year, and focusing on the last 12 months, what movie, TV show or book, best describes you (drama, comedy, infomercial, dramedy)?

What major themes dominated this past year?

What sins got the better of you?


What was missing?

What was God teaching you this past year that you didn't see clearly in the moment?

EXERCISE

Trusting God for 30 Days

Now in order to gain strength and receive grace and mercy, get out a sticky note pad and a black sharpie pen.



I WILL
TRUST
GOD!

For the next thirty days, write down on a fresh, new sticky note, “I Will Trust God!”

This will help you put the past behind you and move into a wonderful future. Try to add one more word or phrase you are specifically trusting God for.



▶ **THIRD FOCUS: The Supernatural (Part 1)**

Video Three

Your supernatural future is right now.

Get out your Bible. Read 1 Peter. It's a short book in the Bible.

Write down a short list of what Peter is saying about focusing on Jesus.

Write down a short list of what Peter is saying about sacrifice and suffering.

Write down two things you just learned.

▶ **THIRD FOCUS: The Supernatural (Part 2)**

Video Three (only one video for both exercises)

DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP. IT'S THAT IMPORTANT.

Here is what is necessary for living a supernatural life:

1. Intentionality.

Believing and walking in supernatural power means planning to take some real steps forward. Jesus, for example, walked in divine power, yet always planned on going to the cross. Supernatural power is released through intentional living.

2. Sacrifice Required.

Maybe even suffering. Every human will experience sacrifice and suffering to some degree, the difference is whether or not they do it for God's glory, or for their own. The outcome of dying to self is a great paradox, but doing so brings about joy, supernatural power, and divine direction.

The STEP Process

You can use STEP to make your desires real. **Here's how it works:**

- S** **Something specific.**
Write down something specific that you are willing to trust God for, something you are willing to move forward with.
- T** **Time to make it a lifestyle.**
Most people miss the rhythm of supernatural living, because they discount the power of miracles, and a small advance. Joyfully trust God for grit and advance into your dreams as a lifestyle.
- E** **Execute means you will do it in Jesus' Name.**
- P** **Purpose in your heart that God will win.**

When done, write down 7 things that will yield you many advantages and spiritual fruit. I don't suggest going over that number but do as you like.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

4

▶ **FOURTH FOCUS: Know Your “Why”**

Video Four

The phrase “know your why” is popular in current leadership language. I think the phrase is a good one and not a secular concept just because it is found in those circles.

Jesus knew His “why” with laserlike clarity which, in part, allowed Him to overcome The Cross. Hebrews says Jesus scorned the shame of The Cross and sat down at the right hand of God. John says Jesus knew the Father sent Him. John says Jesus knew the Holy Spirit could not be sent unless He died on The Cross. John also says Jesus knew others would believe through the lives of the disciples.

Jesus knew His “why.”

Another way of thinking about it, is to understand we are all motivated by rewards. We are wired by God for rewards, both eternal and immediate. In every advance, we hope for a payoff, something good we desire to come our way. Many people have those kinds of desires and many of them are godly, but most do nothing with them because they fail to understand the mountain stands before the miracle.

The way forward, what I like to call the advance, goes up and over difficult mountains. **Knowing your “why” will help you push through difficult climbs, negative emotions, and demonic lies.** When I wrote my first book, knowing my why helped me push through constant rejection.

You will want to reference your “why” from time to time, **especially when the going gets rough.**



Identifying Your “Why”

Below, I want you to identify your “why.” Here is what I want you to do:

1. Write down the blessing you hope to receive.

2. Write down and identify what outcome you expect.

3. Write down appropriate scripture next to each why.

4. Write down the emotional and spiritual conviction you feel over each why.



The Forward Advance

Exercise Instructions

- Below, use the STEP exercise to fill in your forward advance.
- Below and next to each forward advance STEP, write down 5–7 motivations.
- Below, next to each STEP, ask yourself why this is important to you and God.
- Below, identify which STEP is most important to you.

STEP 1:

Use the list of 7 from previous exercise, write down the advance STEP, and here write down your why next to it.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

5 **FIFTH FOCUS: Today is the Day****Video Five****The Jesus Focus**

This entire exercise revolves around focusing your life on Jesus. What does that mean?

Focusing on Jesus requires a person to understand Jesus' core message, the gospel, at least in a child-like way.

At some point in your journey a line must be crossed, where you enter into a permanent relationship with God, knowing certain transactions have taken place, because you have applied what God made available to you in Christ.

So, today is a day of new beginnings, a day of salvation, **the start of a whole new life**. Here is the true reality of your life. You are a soul, and God wants to save your soul, and pour the life of Christ into it.

Here is how the adventure begins.

1. All Good Things Begin with God

God created you in His image and likeness, to live out a divine life reflective of His glory, heart and character.

You Are Created for Good

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion...”

Genesis 1:27–28

God made, designed and birthed you in love, as a special human, to bring his glory and his life to all the earth. **But, there is a problem.**

2. Sin Ruins Everything

The perfect intimate life with God was broken due to sin. As a result of sin, humans bring death and destruction to all people walking on the planet. Instead of joy, contentment and confidence with God, we live far away from him.

God at one time sent prophets, and other messengers, to teach humans about his love, law, and purpose. **But few listened.** Humans now possess a will independent of God and live as angry sinners in the hand of a loving and holy God.

The Problem Has a Solution

“For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes no matter who you are. For everyone has sinned, we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God freely and graciously declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty of our sins.”

Romans 3:21–24 NLT

God knew our condition, and came to save us from ourselves. **Here is the most important person you can ever meet.**

3. Jesus is God

God entered the human race as Jesus Christ, in order to walk humans back into a **sweet relationship with God**.

He did this by exchanging his life for your own. So your sin and pain became his sin and pain, and his love and truth, can now become your love and truth. And because of Christ, all of weaknesses can actually bring about great strength, and greater glory to God.

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

“We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him and with our own eyes touched him with our own hands.

He is the Word of life.

This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may fellowship the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.”

1 John 1:1-5 NLT

The reason why all those things are possible is because **Jesus rose from the dead**.

4. Jesus' Resurrection Brings Life

The original word for sin meant tragic flaw. And that is a perfect description of humans, **since everyone has inside them tragic flaws**. Those tragic flaws created an out of control debt against God, even though that debt is not what God wanted.

The only way to cure the ill effects of sin and to pay the debt sin created, was to have someone free from sin do those two things—cure the ill and pay the debt. Sin kills, so blood payment was required, and a bridge back to God was needed.

The entire issue is resolved in Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

Jesus died on the cross as a perfect human, and rose from the dead as a perfect God, taking away forever the dominance of sin.

The Debt is Paid

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we receive reconciliation.”

Romans 5:8–11 ESV

He Rose from the Dead

“Hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”

Acts 2:22–24 ESV

5. Individual Faith Required

You must personally ask Jesus to come into your life, take away your sin, and **give you a new life** as a born again human.

Growing up in church, participating in rituals and rites, does not necessarily mean faith has been exercised. And growing up without those things only means today is the day of salvation for you.

True Faith

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Ephesians 2:8–9 ESV

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame...For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:8–13 ESV

EXERCISE

Prayer. Believe. Receive.

Prayer, at its most basic level, is **talking and listening to God**.

God promises to answer your prayer regarding Jesus coming into your life, taking away your sin, making you a born again human, and **flooding your life with love and power**.

Pray this prayer:

Jesus I need you to be my God and Savior.

*I ask you to remove my sin, all of it,
past, present and future, by your power on the cross.*

*I now place you at the center of life,
and release my life to your love, purpose and plan.*