



take the *next* step

Taking the Next Step

By Pastor Sabu Samuel

In Max Lucado's book *Just Like Jesus*. Lucado repeats a statement throughout the book that is profound about taking the next step, "God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus." It is a simple, easy-to-understand statement.

There is no doubt God loves each of us. Scripture is full of verses and expressions of how much God loves us. It is easy to talk about God's love in fact it is comforting and reassuring. Unfortunately, many of us forget the second half of Lucado's statement. We are not nearly as comfortable with change. It can be difficult to pattern our lives, not to the world, but rather to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and be doers of the Word of God. But God loves us far too much to leave us where He found us at salvation. There has to be a shift, a progression in our walk with God. Salvation is simply the first step to a journey that will last a lifetime. God wants you to continue to take the next step in your relationship with Him.

One of the ways we can grow is spending time to read the bible. We should set aside time every day to read God's Word. God told Joshua as he was preparing to become the new leader of the children of Israel, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." In order for Joshua to be the leader, he needed to spend time reading and meditating on God's Word. Reading God's Word changed his life, this too can transform your life.

Another area God can use in our spiritual maturity is the experiences we encounter. This goes back to the passage in James not just hearing, but doing. Everyone has the opportunity to experience the power of God firsthand in his or her life. Sometimes God shows up in extraordinary ways and sometimes He shows up in the normal routine of life. When you began to share your testimony with others, you are taking the next step to advance the Kingdom of God.

Maybe your experience with God is volunteering to serve in non profit organization. Maybe your experience with God is walking down the street to introduce yourself to that new neighbor. Maybe your experience with God is volunteering to serve at a local food pantry. Maybe your experience is stepping out in faith to evangelize to a non Christian. All these are examples of taking that next step.

God loves you with all your wounds and scars and baggage. But He loves you too much to leave you where He found you. He wants you to change, to become just like Jesus. Don't remain where you are, take the next step in your relationship with God.

The Next Step: Esther, The Brave Queen

By Steven Thomas

Esther was just an ordinary woman who found herself in an extraordinary position as the queen. But despite her royal status, she remained grounded in her faith and values. When she discovered a plot to harm her people, the Jewish community, Esther faced a difficult choice. She could have stayed silent, afraid of the consequences, but instead, she took the next step.

Taking the next step means moving forward, even when it's scary or uncertain. For Esther, it meant risking her own safety by revealing her Jewish heritage to the king, knowing that it could put her in danger. But she believed it was the right thing to do because she couldn't stand by and let harm happen to her people.

Esther didn't stop there. She took another brave step by inviting the king and Haman to a banquet where she revealed Haman's wicked plan. This was risky, but Esther knew she had to speak up for what was right, even if it meant facing personal danger.

Ultimately, Esther's courage and willingness to take the next step led to the salvation of her people. Her story teaches us that sometimes, to make a difference, we must be willing to step out of our comfort zones and take risks. Whether standing up to injustice, helping those in need, or pursuing our dreams, taking the next step is essential for progress and positive change.

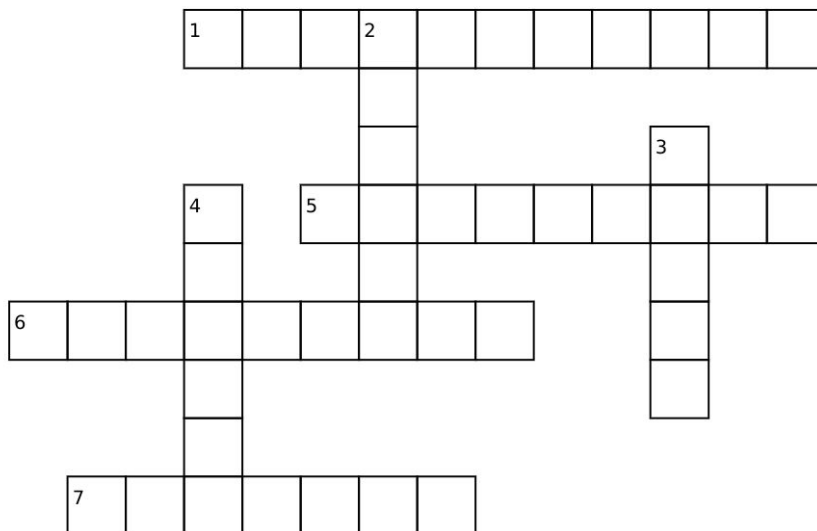
So, when we face challenges or opportunities in life, we can look to Esther's example and remember that taking the next step, even if difficult, can lead to great things. It's about having faith, courage, and a willingness to do what's right, no matter the obstacles we may face.

Down:

2. Author of "Just Like Jesus"
3. We can grow spiritually by reading this
4. The Queen that was mentioned

Across:

1. Esther's courage and _____ to take the next step led to the salvation of her people.
5. _____ is the first step to a journey that will last a lifetime
6. We need to share this with others
7. Taking the next step means moving _____



Weekly Meetings

Date	Time	Location
Monday	10:30 AM	@Church
Tuesday	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	@ Zoom
Friday	10:00 AM - 11:00AM	@ Zoom
Saturday	7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	@ Church

Mark Your Calendar

Event	Date	Location
Cottage Meeting	May 11	@ Br. Aby's Residence
Service/Facility Day	May 18	@ Church
Thanksgiving Prayer	May 25	@ Br. Mathew's Residence

Pray For Nations

Country	Capital	Population est.
Guinea	Conakry	13,990,000
Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	1,663,000
Guyana	Georgetown	741,300
Honduras	Tegucigalpa	9,895,000
Hungary	Budapest	9,574,000