

EYES UP, ANCHORS DOWN TOOLBOX

Hebrews 2:1 states, *“We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”*

Our leadership is promoting this motto, “Eyes Up, Anchors Down” to help us focus on Jesus and to make our foundation firm in the Word of God. At WCC, we desire to help each other accomplish this by filling our “Toolbox” with ways we can Focus Each Day with our EYES UP and ANCHORS Down.

We have six key tools: Consistent prayer; Bible reading; Scripture memorization; serving; creative expression; intentional withdraw. Then we have included other tools that your small group can use to help them keep their “eyes up, anchors down.” There is an explanation of the tool with accompanying practical suggestions for using this tool. We pray that God will help you in 2020 to keep your “Eyes Up, Anchors Down!”

Tool #1 – Consistent Prayer

To aid us in staying on course with our relationship with Jesus, we need to develop a consistent prayer life. Prayer is our direct communication line to God. To ensure we do not drift away, we must spend time each day or throughout our day keeping our EYES UP. One way to begin a lifestyle of consistent prayer is to start small. Begin each day praying for strength and help, prayer before meals, pray before you go to sleep, to ask for wisdom as we have decisions to make, to express our gratitude to God and praise Him for Who He is. We must develop the confidence to bring everything to Him in prayer, whether big or small, casting our cares on Him for He cares for us. Prayer is course corrector that ANCHORS us to God.

Set a time each day to spend intentional time in prayer

- Find a quiet place away from distractions to pray
- Choose a time and make an appointment to meet with God
- Use a Prayer format to lead to a balance prayer life. (ACTS – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication), (PART – Praise, Admit, Request, Thanksgiving)
- Compile a list of concerns for yourself and others that you use to bring before God
- Develop a confidence to bring questions, doubts and concerns to our God Who cares and never finds fault
- Cultivate an attitude of gratitude by spending time thanking God for your blessings and the ways you see Him leading you and answering prayers.
- Pray Scripture – As you read the Word, turn a scripture into your personal prayer to God
- Spend time in Confession and stating your worries and concerns to Him to give them up
- Take time at the end of the day to reflect with God about your day.
- Pray together as a family in the morning before work/school, at mealtimes, at bedtime, or/and when issues arise.

Level up in your prayer life -

- Pray without ceasing – Having an open dialog with God throughout the day.

- Take a prayer walk and silently pray for people in your neighborhood as you walk by their home.
- Read books on Prayer to inspire, encourage, and grow your prayer life.
- Attend a seminar to learn more about prayer.
- Listen to podcasts that encourage a life of prayer

Tool #2 – Bible Reading

The Word of God is a light to our path and lamp to our feet. It is a guidebook that helps us navigate life. Taking time daily to read and think about a verse or passage allows God to speak into each area of our life and allows us to reflect which helps set our course toward a life following Jesus. Reading the Bible helps us put our ANCHORS DOWN where we will not drift away from God and we will have the stability to weather any storm we face.

What do I read?

- Explore a variety of versions to settle on one that is understandable for you. (Doug preaches from the New International Version)
- Find a reading plan to follow that points you to passages on a certain topic in God's Word (truth, anger, wisdom, joy, parenting...)
- Start small by reading one of the gospels or one of Paul's letters in the New Testament or Psalms in the Old Testament.
- Use the YouVersion app on your phone, iPad, or computer to spend time reading daily.
- Allow the YouVersion app to read a passage to you.
- Switch between different translations to gain greater clarity on what you are reading
- Read with your spouse, children, or a friend and to have a discussion about what you have read.
- Read a chapter in the Old Testament and New Testament daily.
- Start at the beginning and read through the Bible in a year or use a Chronological Bible to do the same.
- Read all the letters Paul wrote, all the gospels or Psalms.
- A perpetual calendar of verses
- Use the SOAP format (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)
- Make a commitment to read daily
- Use the "Focus Each Day" from this week's sermon

Tool #3 – Scripture Memorization

One way to have your ANCHORS DOWN is to pick a meaningful passage you have read and choose to concentrate on it for a period of time. Allow that verse or verses to be applied to your life. Use the truth of your verse to help you navigate difficulties, challenges, temptations or to inspire you in your relationship with God. Memorizing God's Word keeps your EYES UP on Him.

What verse should I memorize and how do I do it?

- As you daily read God's Word, write down a verse that resonates with your life.

- Write the verse several times to help with memorization.
- Read the verse over and over until it is memorized.
- Place it on a notecard and hang it at work, on your mirror in the bathroom, by the kitchen sink, or any place you spend the most time.
- Turn the verse into a prayer.
- Create a song using the verse.
- Put the verse on an index card and take it with you while you walk, run, or workout.
- Quote your verse to someone else and tell them why it is important to you and what you are learning.
- Teach the verse to your children, spouse or someone else, so you can memorize it together

Tool #4 – Serving

Giving of yourself in service can be both a time of EYES UP and having our ANCHORS DOWN. Serving places our anchors deep trusting God as we give of ourselves to others.

We fix our EYES UP to God, Who has gifted us with abilities, talents, comfort levels, and resources to share with others. This changes our mind set of serving as “more work to do” to a way that God can use us to encourage others with the abilities He has given us.

How do I serve others?

Start by serving those who are around you with a willing heart. Doing unexpected things for others we live and work with is serving God.

- Meet the needs of others in our home
- Do unexpected chores to take the load off another
- Leave notes of encouragement to brighten someone’s day.
- Make someone else’s bed.
- Make a meal.
- Pick up a mess you didn’t make.

We can then move on to our neighbors, extended family and friends to serve them by meeting their needs.

- Mow a neighbor’s lawn
- Bring a meal to a neighbor with a need
- Offer to babysit for a few hours
- Loan your tools or expertise to a neighbor
- Call or write a note of encouragement.

Also, we serve our church family by serving in a ministry at WCC. God has gifted each person with personality, abilities, talents, and delights that can be used to encourage and help others.

I know that serving in the walls of WCC right now is not happening, but now is a great time to pray about how you can serve God at WCC.

- Be a greeter – Welcome those who enter the building with a warm smile and “Hello.”

- Be part of the decorating team – Help design sets or the stage or for videoing, decorate for holidays, and help make our church facility inviting and attractive.
- Help in the children or student ministry – Work alongside others to help our children feel loved, safe and learn about Jesus by being a youth sponsor, teacher, nursery worker, VBS helper, volunteer for special events
- Sing or play on the worship team – Use your musical giftedness to praise God and encourage our church family.
- Technology - Run the sound, lighting or presentation during the morning service and practices or help video or edit video testimonies
- The HUB – Work behind the scenes making sure people have their caffeine needs met for a day
- Maintenance – Lawn and landscaping, painting, patching or repairing our interior and exterior of the building
- Take a spiritual gifts test to aid in seeing your innate strengths

Tool #5 – Creative Expression

God has gifted each one of us and has intentionally made us to praise and exalt Him. How we worship Him with our own creative expression is a way to place our EYES UP. The Creative way we purposefully serve others helps us place our ANCHORS DOWN so we do not drift away.

Our awesome God deserves us to use our creativity to worship Him in various ways.

Written Word-

- Journaling your thoughts, prayers, gratitude, praises or observations
- Writing a devotion
- Poetry
- Writing Cards or notes of encouragement
- Writing small group lessons

Art-

- Painting
- Using mixed media to create a graphic picture of what you have read in God's Word
- Drawing
- Coloring
- Lettering
- Decorating

Music -

- Dance
- Playing instruments
- Singing
- Write worship music
- Learn a song in sign language

Non-typical creative avenues-

- Building
- Gardening
- Speaking
- Cooking
- Baking
- Organizing
- Planning

Tool #6 – Intentional Withdraw

Because we are not under Old Testament law, this practice, “Honor the Sabbath Day and keep it holy,” has often been thrown by the wayside.

Taking intentional time to withdraw, rest and the practice of a Sabbath is needed in 2020 more than ever.

Sabbath is not a time of fasting and denial. It is a purposeful time to step back with EYES UP to see what is good: creation, family, food, rest, fun and to be thankful.

Withdraw is a time to let go of the day to day concerns, giving your worry a break, realizing there is nothing you can do about _____, and purposefully give it into God’s hands. Rest in Him and trust Him by letting go. It is a time to stop working, stop making or spending money, stop rushing, and take a break from the daily grind and place your EYES UP and your ANCHORS DOWN.

Your Intentional Withdraw might be one hour or a whole day, but it is a time of rest.

Life can get crazy and overwhelming, so to keep our EYES UP and our ANCHORS DOWN we may need to be intentional about getting away for a purposeful time of seeking God. This helps us unplug from our daily distractions and quiet ourselves to hear from God.

- A prayer day is a time away, usually in nature where your purpose is to worship, read scripture, pray, journal and listen. When we are full of the daily distractions, it is difficult to hear God’s desires for us.
- Bring our future plans to Him, so we allow Him to speak truth, guidance and help.

It is to each person’s benefit to take a day, an afternoon or even a couple of hours to intentionally withdraw to keep our EYES UP and our ANCHORS DOWN.

Practices include:

A day to delight in God

- Spending time in nature delighting in what God has made
- Take a walk

A day focused on seeking God’s direction

- Pray (Praise, Confession, Thanksgiving, Requests)

- Read God's Word
- Journal
- Worship
- Fast (go without food) to let go of the physical to be more aware of the spiritual

A day of relaxing self-care

- Read books to encourage an area of spiritual growth
- Sleep
- Cook and eat good food
- Do a Bible study
- Listen to podcasts which inspire

A day of resting from the day to day hurriedness reconnect with God and others

- Delight in your spouse and family
- Pray and read God's Word together
- Play
- Create
- Play games with your family
- Put a puzzle together
- Write letters of encouragement
- Fishing
- Call distance friends/family
- Take a drive
- Hike
- Bicycle
- Picnic
- Sit by your firepit
- Lay or rest in a hammock.
- Sing
- Sit in front of your fireplace
- Relax on the porch

A great way to end your intentional withdraw is to take time to share with others your thoughts of the day and delighting in God's rest.

Other helpful and practical tools:

Fasting – One way to place your EYES UP is through a time of fasting. Fasting from food is the most typical way, but you can fast from TV or any technology, or from anything that distracts you from a life focus on Jesus. Author Jennifer Kennedy Dean states, “Fasting is not a way to influence, impress, or manipulate God. It is not a hunger strike designed to convince God to release what He has, up to now, held back. Instead, fasting is the way to let go of that which binds us to this physical world - food - in order to receive all our sustenance from the spiritual world. Fasting is not a last-ditch effort to get through to God. Instead, it sharpens our spiritual senses so that God can get through to us.”

- Go without food, TV, technology, or anything that takes up a lot of time in order to evaluate and deepen your relationship with God.
- Spend time in Praise.
- Read God’s word.
- Reflect and evaluate your walk with Christ.
- Spend time listening to God’s Spirit move you to action.
- Write down anything that impresses you from God’s Word or the Spirit’s promptings.
- Spend time in Thanksgiving.
- Bring any concerns to God and let Him take them over.

Meditation – When you consider meditation, what images does it conjure up in your mind? Incense? Sitting crisscross applesauce on the floor? New age music? Beads hanging from your doorframe? Instead, meditation is focused thought. It is quieting yourself and placing your EYES UP. It is a time of quiet to think about Who God is or to think about a verse of scripture and how it applies to your life situation. It is a time to wait before God for the Holy Spirit to speak truth into your circumstance.

- Find a quiet place at home or outside to be alone. Read a scripture and then get quiet before God focusing your EYES UP. Pray and ask God to give insight, then get quiet and wait for God to point something out to you, highlight a part of the scripture, or convict you, challenge you, or affirm you.
- Use a Lectica Divina format to help you focus on a specific scripture. (include a description of this)
- Perhaps you have an issue, circumstance or challenge you are facing. Lay it out before God and ask for wisdom. Stop talking and telling Him more about it, but instead purposefully quiet yourself and allow Him through His Spirit to give your direction concerning your problem.

Sharing your story – When we share our own personal story of what God has done in our life, we have both our EYES UP and our ANCHORS DOWN. When we point out God’s work in our own transformation story or how He has intervened in our life we are putting our EYES UP on Him and giving Him all the credit and praise. When we tell that story to others, it places our own ANCHOR DOWN deeper as we recall God’s work now and the promise of His continued

work in the future. Telling our own story, also causes others to place their own EYES UP on Jesus and their own ANCHOR DOWN.

- Share your story with a friend over coffee
- Tell your kids or other family members what God has done.
- Write out what God has done to share with others
- Video your story to share with our church family

Spur One Another On – We are better together! We help each other keep our EYES UP and our ANCHORS DOWN. We do that both through encouraging and challenging each other through community. Sometimes we need another person to take their spurs and kick us in the backside when we are drifting off course. At other times, we must prayerfully and with the full intention of love and restoration confront someone we love to help them stay the course. We are in this journey together and we must both spur on others as well as have others who will say the hard things to us.

- Meeting together in church or even online helps us develop community
- Studying scripture together in small groups or with our family or spouse.
- Talking about a passage and what steps we need to take to apply it to our lives.
- Memorize scripture alongside each other to help us overcome a specific temptation with which we struggle.
- Ask someone in which you admire their faith and ask them to mentor you.
- Mentor someone younger in their faith
- Seek godly counsel for yourself and be godly counsel for others

Music – At times, music can speak to our hearts and plant truths in minds in a greater way than words. When we sing, play or listen to worship music, we have our EYES UP and are focused on Jesus. When songs speak the truth of God's Word, it can help us bury our ANCHORS DOWN and grow our faith and trust in God.

- Listening to music as we work, drive, play or clean can lift our spirits to worship God.
- Praise songs have the ability to change an attitude when we are feeling down, discouraged or disappointed.
- Playing an instrument, singing or writing music can give us a way to express our love for God and tell our story of what He has done in our lives.