

TRACK YOUR FAITH STEPS

(This resource is a summary of Chapter Nine "Faith Is Steps (And It Takes One Step)" in the book *Life & Faith: from "This is it?" to "This is it!"*)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'C' and 'R'.

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WHAT IS A STEP?

One of the best habits you can create is tracking your steps.

You may already be tracking your physical steps. Did you know you do not need to take 10,000 steps per day to live longer? The actual number of steps you should take in a day is lower. Check out Chapter Eight in *Life & Faith: from "This is it?" to "This is it!"* for the details.

Let's define a step as a decision to say something or do something. You take a bunch of steps every day. "A bunch" is the closest I could get to being numerically accurate. Steps may not seem significant, but each step you take matters.

Steps are scary because you can never know precisely where each step will take you: good steps or bad steps. You can be as calculated, informed, and wise as possible, but you cannot know for sure where a step will take you. Each step forces you to wonder, "What's next?" and "What if...?"

WHAT IS A FAITH STEP?

Let's talk about tracking your faith steps. This resource helps you do that.

A faith step is when you say something or do something that causes you to have to trust Jesus. It is not a faith step if you can say it or do it without thinking you need Jesus to help you.

It's doubtful you track your faith steps. Don't think Bible study, prayer, worship, and all the Christian activities you do. Those are meaningful and important things. But the most important thing you can do to grow your faith in Jesus is to say things and do things that cause you to have to trust Jesus more. That is when your faith grows. This is how your faith grows up.

FAITH STEPS BEFORE TODAY

Think about what led you to start your faith in Jesus. Was it God's kindness, His conviction, a significant life event, a dream, a meaningful relationship, a logical argument, an encounter with a stranger, the presentation of specific information, or something else? Whatever it was, you took a step to start your faith in Jesus. That was THE most important faith step you will ever take.

That was the starting line for your faith. Not the finish line. What steps have you taken since then to trust Jesus more?

Looking back at your life up to today,...

- **WHAT *BIG STEPS* HAVE YOU TAKEN THAT CAUSED YOU TO TRUST JESUS MORE?**

Think about the significant decisions/events in your life. They can be good or bad. These are the times you typically associate with having to trust Jesus. You often reflect on these times and see how your faith in Jesus grew. Write all or some of these steps on the "Steps Before Today" worksheet.

- **WHAT *NORMAL STEPS* HAVE YOU TAKEN THAT CAUSED YOU TO TRUST JESUS MORE?**

This may be a little more challenging. Odds are you have taken numerous everyday steps that caused you to trust Jesus more, but you did not see them as steps that grew your trust in Jesus. You "just" said and did things and did not connect them with your faith. Write all or some of these steps on the "Steps Before Today" worksheet.

- **WHEN HAS LIFE FORCED YOU INTO *THE DEEP END*?**

Life can be cruel. There are events and seasons throughout life that are painful. During these times, you feel like you're in the deep end and your feet cannot touch the bottom. All you know to do is trust Jesus. On the other side of the season, you trust Jesus more. Write all or some of these steps on the "Steps Before Today" worksheet.

If you need help, ask those who've known you for a long time what steps they've seen you take that caused you to trust Jesus more. Write all or some of these steps on the "Steps Before Today" worksheet.

I hope you discover you've taken many steps that have caused you to trust Jesus more. If this is true, be encouraged. Look at how your faith has grown without you knowing the power of taking steps.

If you determine you have not taken many steps that have caused you to trust Jesus more, it's okay. You can start today.

FAITH STEPS AFTER TODAY

If you have not read *Life & Faith: from "This is it?" to "This is it!"*, please do. It will help you take meaningful steps to grow your faith in Jesus. Below is a summary of taking unique next steps that cause you to trust Jesus more. This is the key to having a more mature and more active faith.

Instead of relying on the church and others for your faith, you can own your faith. Can you trust Jesus on your own? Can you trust Jesus more when life is good and bad? Yes!

You are unique. What causes you to trust Jesus more differs from what causes others to trust Jesus more. "This is it!" faith happens when you understand faith is steps and take steps that cause you to trust Jesus more. What do these steps look like?

- **STEPS THAT CAUSE YOU TO NEED JESUS TO SHOW UP**

Steps that cause you to trust Jesus are forward steps, but they are also steps that cause you to pause, feel nervous, and need Jesus' help. They don't have to be big, significant steps. They can be small steps. But they are steps that make you whisper, "Jesus, I need you to help me with this."

When you take this kind of step, you feel something on the other side of the step. On the other side, you whisper, "Thank you, Jesus!"

- **REGULARLY TAKE STEPS**

You probably see steps as something to do only on an as-needed basis. You only take steps that cause you to trust Jesus when you have to. Steps are for the big things in life: job change, marriage, medical decisions, etc. You don't make steps a regular part of your life and faith.

To have a "This is it!" faith in Jesus, you must regularly take steps that cause you to trust Jesus. Daily. Weekly. In seemingly insignificant times. Especially in the good times. The goal is to develop a habit of taking steps that cause you to trust Jesus more. Habits are formed by repeating the same action until you do it without realizing it. Can you imagine if taking steps to trust Jesus more became a habit in your life?

- **TAKE UNIQUE NEXT STEPS**

I love the phrase "unique next steps" when it comes to taking steps to grow your faith in Jesus. The steps that will cause me to trust Jesus more are probably different from those that will cause you to trust Jesus more. Take steps that cause you (not your kids, parents, friends, etc.) to trust Jesus more.

What steps do you need to take to trust Jesus more? See the "Possible Steps To Help You Trust Jesus More" list below for ideas. On the "Steps After Today" worksheet, following the list of ideas, write steps you could take today and into the future.

For additional help, see the free “Personal Faith Assessment” under “Faith Resources” at caseyross.net. This resource will help you determine specific areas of your life where you can take steps.

POSSIBLE STEPS TO HELP YOU TRUST JESUS MORE

- Start your faith in Jesus
- Become friends with a neighbor
- Work fewer hours
- Ask for help
- Coach your kid’s team
- See a counselor
- Attempt to repair a damaged relationship
- Make your spouse feel loved
- Share that thing you’re afraid to share
- Give money to the person holding the sign that says they need help
- Get baptized
- Make peace with someone
- Start a new job
- See a doctor about your health concerns
- Mentor kids in a local school
- Defend someone who needs defending
- Help someone having car trouble
- Give financially to your church
- Join the board of a local nonprofit
- Get help concerning the dangerous habit you have
- Make your kids feel loved
- Read the Bible daily
- Make the other person feel loved in every interaction
- Be kind to someone you don’t like
- Increase your financial giving to your church
- Speak with gentleness
- Lead a Bible study in your church
- Express joy in a challenging situation
- Give financially to a local nonprofit
- Invite someone to your church
- Show more self-control in difficult situations
- Travel outside of your community to meet needs
- Check yourself into rehab to deal with your addiction
- Volunteer in your church
- Forgive the person who hurt you

- Volunteer in a local nonprofit
- Mentor someone in your church
- Join a Bible study
- Surprise someone by serving them
- Help others experience peace
- Make your grandkid feel loved
- Ask someone to help you better understand the Bible
- Ask someone to mentor you
- Apply the Bible in ways that cause your faith in Jesus to grow
- Travel outside of your country to help others start and grow their faith in Jesus
- Eat dinner regularly with your family
- Say “no” to an opportunity you’d typically say “yes” to
- Go on a vacation and completely unplug from technology
- Start a new relationship
- Share with someone why you started your faith in Jesus
- Volunteer in a local school
- Say something kind to the grocery store worker
- Quit your job
- Help someone else succeed
- Say “no” to something that takes up space on your calendar
- Show more love to everyone
- Become friends with someone unlike all of your other friends
- Be someone others can trust
- Rest
- Pay for someone’s meal
- Ask someone if they want to start their faith in Jesus
- Don’t sign your kid up for the following sports season
- Apologize to the person you hurt
- Understand the opinions of someone you disagree with
- Show love to someone very different from you
- Pray with your family every night
- Have a meaningful conversation with someone
- Pray for someone you do not like
- Do a chore at your house that someone else is supposed to do
- Hug someone just because
- Leave a large tip for the person helping you at a restaurant
- Sell something you own and give the money away
- Study the Bible by yourself
- Say an encouraging word to a stranger
- Give up a parking space close to the store
- Say “yes” to an opportunity you’d typically say “no” to
- Pray out loud in front of others

- Do less
- Attend church regularly
- Ask for forgiveness from someone you hurt
- Do something you've never done before
- Support a local business
- Acknowledge a secret from your past
- Ask people if they need anything
- Tell that person how they hurt you in the past
- Share with someone how Jesus has proven trustworthy in your life
- Accept someone very different than you
- Verbally encourage someone you don't know
- Find out how someone is doing
- Put up with someone you find difficult
- Show honor to every person you encounter
- Serve someone in need
- Invite someone you don't usually spend time with to a meal
- Carry someone's worry with them
- Care for someone who is not easy to care for
- Warmly say "hi" to everyone you encounter
- Plant a church

