

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 2, 2014

QUICK REVIEW: Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. This weekend Chris dispelled two myths about spiritual growth and maturity. Can you think of any ways your understanding of spiritual growth and maturity has changed over time? If so, explain.

2. Just as physical growth varies for all of us, the same is true for our spiritual growth. Which of the following words could be used to describe your spiritual growth journey?

Growing	Hasn't started yet
Falling	Starting over
Refreshed	Going backwards
Just Beginning	Confused
Consistent	Struggling
Rebellious	Other

DIGGING DEEPER

1. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (see 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10), he describes what maturity and spiritual growth look like in the midst of "severe suffering." After reading the passage, jot down how Paul describes the faith of the Thessalonians, himself and his friends.

What is most attractive to you about how they live out their faith?

How do you think they were able to mature in such a trying situation?

2. Following Jesus and spiritual growth are things that involve both God's Spirit working in our lives from the inside out, and us working on how God calls us to live (Philippians 2:12-13). The process of maturing can be hard work. Paul often used the analogy of athletic competition to help Christians understand their part in growing to maturity. How do the following verses increase or affirm your understanding of what it takes to develop a spiritually mature perspective?

Philippians 3:13-14

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

2 Timothy 2:4-5

Hebrews 12:1-2

3. This weekend, we heard how spiritual growth is measured not by how much we know, but rather by how we live. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18 gives a list of great things to know and live out as we follow Jesus and impact those around us. As you read the list, which one or two have you seen or do you think would push you toward the most growth?

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back at the four areas people should see a difference in (Love, Speech, Attitude and Desires), which one has challenged you the most?

Prayer Requests:

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1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, Silas and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith

² We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³ We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. [NIV]

What is most attractive to you about how they live out their faith?

How do you think they were able to mature in such a trying situation?

2. Following Jesus and spiritual growth are things that involve both God's Spirit working in our lives from the inside out, and us working on how God calls us to live (Philippians 2:12-13). The process of maturing can be hard work. Paul often used the analogy of athletic competition to help Christians understand their part in growing to maturity. How do the following verses increase or affirm your understanding of what it takes to develop a spiritually mature perspective?

Philippians 2:12-13

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. [NIV]

The process of maturing can be hard work. Paul often used the analogy of athletic competition to help Christians understand their part in growing to maturity. How do the following verses increase or affirm your understanding of what it takes to develop a spiritually mature perspective?

Philippians 3:13-14

¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. [NIV]

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

The Need for Self-Discipline

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. [NIV]

2 Timothy 2:4-5

⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. ⁵ Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. [NIV]

Hebrews 12:1-2

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [NIV]

3. This weekend, we heard how spiritual growth is measured not by how much we know, but rather by how we live. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18 gives a list of great things to know and live out as we follow Jesus and impact those around us. As you read the list, which one or two have you seen or do you think would push you toward the most growth?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

Final Instructions

¹² Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. *[NIV]*

TAKING IT HOME

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