

## Why Church Won't Change Your Life

### The Story:

Mark 4:1-20

The only one responsible for my **spiritual growth** is me.

### Lessons From The Dirt:

#### SOIL #1

God's work in our life depends on **our openness**.

Mark 4:15 Proverbs 28:14 Hebrews 3:12-13 Romans 2:5-8

#### SOIL #2

God's work in our life has to be a **personal commitment**.

Mark 4:16-17 Ezekiel 33:31-32 Luke 6:49 John 6:61-71 Luke 11:27-28

#### SOIL #3

God's work in our life has to be our **first priority**.

Mark 4:18-19 Matthew 6:25-33 Luke 10:38-42 Hebrews 12:1

#### SOIL #4

God's work in our life is an **ongoing series of choices**.

Mark 4:20 Isaiah 55:10-11 Psalm 1:1-3 James 1:21-25 Joshua 1:8-9 John 14:23

### Three Steps For Growing As A Christian:

1. **Hear** God's Word
2. **Accept** God's Word
3. **Obey** God's Word

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 18, 2016

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## Welcome to the Fall Quarter of Growth Groups!

This week we kick off our Fall Growth Group quarter. Your first meeting will include a potluck dinner, time to get acquainted, as well as time to discuss your Growth Group Covenant. The homework has been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish this.

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great first meeting as you come together to connect, encourage one another to grow and to see God change your lives from the inside out!

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### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**1.** What's something you did this past summer that was fun or enjoyable? (i.e. going to a concert, swimming, family gathering, vacation, barbeque, etc.)

**2.** What is a favorite pastime or hobby of yours – and when was the last time you were able to participate in it?

**3.** Who was your most memorable teacher in elementary school and what made him or her so memorable?

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

### DIGGING DEEPER

**1.** The parable of the sower is about responsiveness to God's Word. The following passages both deal with the positive impact the Bible can have in our lives when we are responsive to it. From these passages make a list of all the benefits of being receptive to God's Word that you see in these passages.

**Psalm 19:7-14** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

<sup>8</sup>The precepts of the LORD are right,  
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant,

giving light to the eyes.  
<sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever.  
The decrees of the LORD are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.  
<sup>10</sup> They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;  
they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the honeycomb.  
<sup>11</sup> By them your servant is warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.  
<sup>12</sup> But who can discern their own errors?  
Forgive my hidden faults.  
<sup>13</sup> Keep your servant also from willful sins;  
may they not rule over me.  
Then I will be blameless,  
innocent of great transgression.  
<sup>14</sup> May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart  
be pleasing in your sight,  
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

**Psalm 1:1-3** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one  
who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,  
<sup>2</sup> but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
<sup>3</sup> That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
whatever they do prospers.

Have you experienced any of these benefits in your life? If so, how?

Which of these benefits could you use the most right now?

**2.** The third soil Jesus talked about was the thorny soil where the distractions of this world – worries, wealth and material possessions– crowd out the Word. What are some potential signs that a person is becoming distracted by the world?

Is there a time in your life when you struggled with life's worries, wealth or pleasures?

What has helped you deal with these distractions?

## TAKING IT HOME

In preparation for going over the Covenant in your Growth Group, take a moment to jot down some of the reasons you joined a Growth Group this quarter. What are you looking forward to the most?

## THE PURPOSE OF GROWTH GROUPS

Growth Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word. (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). Here's how it will happen:

### SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives.

At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions." But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

### STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

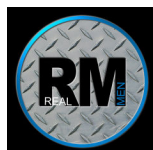
### SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another and meeting real needs.

### SERVE

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.



### REAL MAN WEEKEND – "The Palomar Experience"- Oct.28-30

Lookin' for some crazy guy stuff to do? Want to kick back or get refocused on God? Join us for another epic man's weekend that will get you recharged and refreshed as a man following God. The weekend will also include plenty of man event options like paintball, high ropes course, skeet shooting, archery, zipline, horseback riding, etc. **Save the date - sign up information coming**

soon!