

Something to Talk About

Grow Groups Sermon Discussion Guide ON TARGET – Part 11

TOPIC: Growing in the Gospel

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) *Jesus came to them and said... “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you...”*

Colossians 1:9-10 (NIV) *We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will... so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God...*

From your perspective how are Christians bearing fruit in society today? What are some of the fruit that you see? What are some of the fruit that is glaringly missing? What should we do about it?

Romans 8:29 (LB) *From the very beginning, **God decided that those who came to him-and all along he knew who would-should become like his Son.***

What do you see Christians doing in a tangible way to become more like Christ? What needs to change in this area? What do believers do that are focused on becoming like Jesus?

Ephesians 4:15 (NLT) *We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. (NIV) We will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

How are you able to tell is a believer is growing in Christ? How are you able to tell is someone has stagnated in their growth in Christ? What are the signs that someone is backsliding? Do you see anyone in this condition? If so, what should be done?

FOUR CULTURES TO DEVELOP:

1. CULTURE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV) *Encourage each other and build each other up.*

Have you ever been encouraged by another Christian? What where the circumstance and how did they encourage you?

What is the best way to encourage someone? Who is the best encourager in your life and why?

Romans 15:7 (NIV) *Accept one another just as Christ accepted you.*

How can Christians do a better job of accepting each other? How do we help a judgement person change? Do you know anyone that needs acceptance? If so, what will you do?

Galatians 3:28 (NIV) *There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for **you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV) *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NIV) *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

How can our grow group get better and demonstrating these verses to each other? How do we stand on the truth and build unity at the same time? How does your grow group keep peace among each other with so many differing opinions? What is spirit speaking to you about in your group? What have you been hesitant to bring up in your group for fear of upsetting the group? How do we stay “one in Christ?” Why is this important? Do

Galatians 6:10 (NCV) *Give special **attention** to those who are in the family of believers.*

Have you ever felt, lonely, left out, missed or unneeded? If so what can we learn from that about giving attention to others? How should we show people proper attention? What is missing in our culture at Jamestown First Assembly? How can this group change that?

1 Thessalonians 5:12 (NCV) *Brothers and sisters, **appreciate** those who work hard among you...*

One by one in your grow group share what you appreciate about each other!

2. CULTURE OF PRAYER

Colossians 4:12 (NCV) *Epaphras always prays for you that you will grow to be spiritually mature.*

How can we develop a culture of prayer in our church?

Ephesians 3:18-19 (NCV) *I pray that you will understand the greatness of Christ's love—how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is. Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know, but I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.*

Hebrews 13:21 (CEV) *I pray that you'll always be eager to do what is right.*

Romans 15:13 (NCV) *I pray God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace while you trust in him.*

Ephesians 1:17 (NIV) *I pray God would give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation.*

2 Thessalonians 3:5 (CEV) *I pray the Lord will guide you to be as loving as God and as patient as Christ.*

Ephesians 3:16 (NIV) *I pray that God may strengthen you with power through his spirit.*

What do these verses tell us to pray over each other?

3. CULTURE OF OPENNESS

Ephesians 4:25 (NCV) *Tell each other the truth because we all belong to each other.*

James 5:16 (GWT) *Admit your faults to one another pray for each other so that you may be healed.*

Acts 2:38 (NIV) *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*

1 John 1:9 (NIV) *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

James 5:16 (NIV) *Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*

Galatians 6:2 (NIV) *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

How can we develop a culture of openness in our church? Grow group? What is the benefit of openness? What is the fear of openness? How can we become better and admitting our faults to each other and still create safety?

4. CULTURE OF COMMITMENT

1 Timothy 4:7-8 (NIV) *Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, **but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.***

Romans 1:12 (NCV) *I want us to help each other with the faith we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you.*

Are Christians more committed today or are they less committed? Why or why not? What is distracting believer's commitment today? What can be done to help each other shore up their commitment? Are you more committed to Christ today than you ever have been? Why or why not? What do you personally need to change to have Christ as your first love in your commitment?

<>Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Preparation:

Preparing to Lead Your Zoom Grow Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 30-60 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Something to talk about... is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 20-40 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.