

DIGGING DEEPER

Get in the Game Week 2 – GROW

Marshall Road exists to help people take their next steps with God.

We are Committed to Providing opportunities and resources for people to...

Connect...*to God and one another*

Grow...*to become like Jesus*

Serve...*God by serving others*

Share...*the love of Jesus in word and deed*

It has been taught that every believer should foster three relationships in their life: A Paul—an older and wiser believer from whom you can learn A Barnabas—a friend who teaches, encourages, and holds you accountable A Timothy—a young believer [believers] in whom you are investing. These three relationships allow others to speak into your life, and, at the same time, allow you to speak into others' lives.

Paul described this kind of multigenerational mentoring relationship in 2 Timothy 2:2: and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

God's growth is always multiplication. Every person that I get to be part of their gospel story will go and make new disciples themselves over time. 1 new convert will equal many new converts and each of those will mean many new converts. But God never said we are to simply make converts. A new believer is a convert. A mature believer is a disciple. We are called to make disciples who make disciples.

1. I cannot be a disciple without being DISCIPLINED

2. The more disciplined I become THE MORE GOD CAN USE ME

3. The mark of a disciple is CROSS BEARING

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:27

4. How often am I to do this? DAILY

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23

HOW CAN I GROW AS A DISCIPLE? Develop SPIRITUAL HABITS

- **Time with God's word; Prayer, Connecting with other believers; giving; serving; sharing...**

Since we are followers of Jesus, let's look at His example of leadership.

1. From Many to Twelve. Mark 3:13-15

As a master teacher, Jesus taught thousands. As Scripture describes, He was not there as only a provider of information but had compassion on them. He cared for, and loved, the people who came to Him.

Jesus called his 12 disciples - Scripture describes the intent of this small group relationship. They were to be with Jesus. This does not represent just an hour per week but doing life together throughout the week. They ministered together, traveled together, and ate together. Jesus wanted them to be equipped to replicate what He did. In doing so effectively, Jesus would give them His power and authority to accomplish His mission.

This is a picture of discipleship that occurs in a small group as modeled by Jesus.

2. From Twelve to Three.

Jesus did invest in the 12, but from that group He chose Peter, James and John. In Mark 14:32-34, Jesus pulled the 3 away from the rest of the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. In Mark 9:2-4, Jesus revealed part of His glory in the presence of these three. Why? There is greater intimacy in smaller groups. On that mountain, Christ wanted His close 3 to have a greater understanding of who He was. The disciples, who had only known Him in His human body, would now have a greater realization of the deity of Christ.

We want to help people intentionally seek out relationships on a personal level where we can share a deeper understanding of our identity with one another, share our struggles and victories, while holding each other accountable for spiritual growth.

Here is an undeniable truth: The larger the group in which we are participating, the more shallow the interaction.

You may feel like you are part of the family of God, but still disconnected.

An effective connect group will share praises, needs and struggles. They will study and discuss God's Word together, applying truth to their lives. They will pray for each other here and throughout the week. They will join together for fellowship. They will join together in missions and ministry.

We want to be a church of connect groups. Not just a church with groups.

Why

- **Life change happens best in groups.** Because life change happens best in circles, not rows.
- **Groups make churches personal.** If I can slip into a back row and then leave without sharing life with people, I can slip through the cracks. That is not so easy if people develop real relationships and deep connections with a group of people.
- **Groups provide the best opportunity for one-anothering.** 59 times in the New Testament we are given ways to "one-another" love one another, serve one another, pray for one another, forgive one another, etc...
- **I can ask questions in a small group.** Dialogue is one of the key ingredients of life change. If every spiritual experience I have is about listening, if it's all about one-way communication, then I'm going to miss one of the most important developmental aspects of a growing faith.

God wants us to grow in our faith.

As a believer, how do I begin?

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ²Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1 Peter 2:1-3

Peter issues three commands to believers. And his challenge is to grow.

Rid yourself

(1 Peter 2:1) - Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind
Rid yourself denotes the image of taking off a garment in order to put another garment on.

Crave spiritual growth

(1 Peter 2:2) - Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk. The Word translated crave for is the same word found in Psalms 42:1, "As the deer pants for the water, so my soul pants after you." This craving for the Word of God is a passion, a passion for the Word of God, a passion for Jesus Christ. That's a challenge for us today because there are so many things in our lives that cry out for attention and take our energy and our passions.

This is a time for growth. God has to deliver us from a Sunday morning only spectator mentality about the Christian faith. The Christian faith is living dynamically. It's a yearning for God, to know God, to be excited about God.

Learning and Growing

so that by it you may grow up in your salvation (1 Peter 2:2)

And then, Peter says, "Learn." Last part of 1 Peter 2:2, "That by it ...," that is, the Word, "that by it you may grow in your salvation." Here it is. When you are getting rid of the wrong things, when you are craving for the things of God and His presence, when you have a passion for Christ, then comes the learning. You grow in your faith.

Discipleship – the process of becoming like Christ – always begins with a decision.

"As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him" Matthew 9:9

When the first disciples chose to follow Jesus, they didn't understand all the implications of their decision. They simply responded to Jesus' invitation. That's all you need to get started: decide to begin to grow as a disciple.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. *Philippians 2:12.*

This verse shows the two parts of spiritual growth: "work out" and "work in." The "work out" is your responsibility and the "work in" is God's role. This verse, written to believers, is not about how to be saved, but how to grow. It does not say "work for" your salvation, because you can't add anything to what Jesus already did! During a physical workout, you exercise to develop your body, not to get a body.

Farmers work the land, not to get land, but to develop what they already have. God has given you a new life; now you are responsible to develop it "with fear and trembling." That is to take your spiritual growth seriously. When people are casual about their growth in Christlikeness, it shows they don't understand the implications.

What steps do you need to take in your relationship with God?

- Know Jesus as Lord and Savior
- Publicly share my faith by being baptized
- Connect with Marshall Road and become members
- Own my faith and commit to growing spiritually

What do you need to do in order to begin growing spiritually?

- Join a Connect Group
- Begin studying my bible daily
- Memorizing Scripture
- Praying daily
- Other

Are you ready and willing to do what you need to in order to grow spiritually?

Here are some thoughts on growing in your faith that I have collected from various books and pastors.

- Healthy things grow
- The goal of discipleship is to conform us to the image of Christ
- You can go to church your entire life without growing up
- It takes more than sermons to grow disciples
- Bible knowledge does not equate to spiritual maturity
- How do you know something is mature, when it bears fruit.
- Maturity does not mean perfection
- The goal of a church is not growth, but health and maturity
- Focus on building people and God builds the church

Being a disciple means I *must first spend time with Jesus*

- We need to be talking to God constantly and continually, we have to be with Jesus (John 12:26)
- Spiritual growth is a choice
- If you don't feel close to God, it is not because of God
- It takes action to grow, it is not passive
- Commitments force us to grow
- If you are committed to everything means you are not committed to anything

Being a disciple means I *must love Jesus supremely*

- Luke 14:26
- Spiritual maturity is measured by love

Being a disciple means I *must love his church*

- Spiritual growth happens in community
- You cannot follow Jesus by yourself
- 1 John 3:16

Being a disciple means I *must obey Jesus completely*

- Spiritual growth is an ongoing process, it is measured by obedience not knowledge, growth is based on God's word, the result is that it leads to freedom (John 8:31 – 32)
- To continue in the word you need a pathway and a process, you have to learn some habits (John 15:7 – 8)
- Your character is the sum total of your habits
- The result of spiritual habits are bearing fruit

Being a disciple means I *must serve others unselfishly*

- To grow to maturity, we must understand where significance comes from, significance comes from serving

Being a disciple means I *must pass on the good news*

8 laws of spiritual growth

1. Spiritual growth is *incarnational* (Galatians 2:20), we grow by letting Christ live through us (1 Corinthians 3:6)
2. Spiritual growth is *intentional*, not automatic or inevitable (Philippians 4:13)
3. Spiritual growth is *incremental*, one little step at a time, it is not instant (2 Corinthians 3:18). Stages of growth are *knowing Christ, connecting, growing, serving, and sharing*.
4. Spiritual growth is *personal*, there is no such thing as a one size fits all discipleship, each person is different and grows differently (2 Corinthians 13:5).
5. Spiritual growth is *habitual*, we grow by developing good spiritual habits
6. Spiritual growth is *relational* (Hebrews 10:25). Worshipping, Connect groups, mentoring.
7. Spiritual growth is *multi-purpose*. Maturity is not measured by how much you know. You need discipleship, mission, service, outreach and worship.
8. Spiritual growth is *seasonal* (Genesis 8:22), we grow in spurts. Nothing grows up and to the right, we grow in waves.