

TALK IT OVER

Sermon Discussion Guide

Do You Really Want To Grow Up?

Week 1

(Note – may only be reproduced for use as a participant in MCF's 40 Day of Prayer campaign)

"We are not meant to remain as children at the mercy of every chance wind of teaching . . . Instead we are meant to hold firmly to the truth in love, and to grow up in every way into Christ . . ." Ephesians 4:14 (Ph)

Do you really want to grow up? Our key verse in Ephesians 4:14 above notes that we're to grow up in every way into Christ. Six laws of spiritual growth include: (1) We grow when we feed on God's Word, (2) We grow when we learn in different ways, (3) We grow when we develop spiritual habits, (4) We grow when we help each other to grow, (5) We grow when we expect to grow, and (6) We grow when we commit to grow. Let's *Talk It Over!*

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

[Jesus]: "People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every Word of God." Matthew 4:4 (NLT)

1. Read the verse above, and then look up two or three other versions of the same verse and read them as well. Then, put into your own words what Jesus is trying to say in this passage.

[Paul]: "... the Word of grace is able to build you up and give you all the blessings that God has for his people." Acts 20:32

2. Paul says in Acts 20:32 that the Word is able to build us up and give us all the blessings that God has for his people. In what ways do you think the Word is able to do this for us? How do you feel Paul wants us to respond to this statement?

"Now that you know these things, you'll be blessed if you practice them!" John 13:17

3. Open your Bible and read Hebrews 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 9:25 aloud. Discuss in your group what these verses have in common with John 13:17 above. How can you apply this common theme to further your own spiritual growth?

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

4. Read Acts 2:46-47 in your Bible. Discuss as a group what you will commit to do to meet with other believers regularly and meditate on God's Word so "you will be prosperous and successful" as Joshua 1:8 above says.

"Jesus said, 'According to your faith will it be done to you.'" Matthew 9:29 (NIV)

5. We grow when we plan and expect to grow spiritually. God responds to our faith; God often does what we expect him to do! Based on Matthew 9:29 above, how can our faith and expectation of spiritual growth positively impact our spiritual growth and maturity?

[God]: "You'll find me when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else . . ."
Jeremiah 29:13 (Message)

6. We grow when we commit to grow spiritually; what does Jeremiah 29:13 above say about finding God? Discuss what it means to get serious about finding God and wanting Him more than anything else. What immediate action(s) will you commit to take to become closer to God?

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. We grow when we feed on God's Word; how are you feeding on God's Word? It's important to grow in daily spiritual habits including: hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, meditating, and applying God's Word. Since these are essential to spiritual growth, which of these habits do you need to focus on?
2. Read Nehemiah 9:38 aloud in your group. Have you made a covenant with God? Talk about this in your group and spend some time this week praying about this and where you want to be in your relationship with God a year from now.

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

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Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week's Study

- **Icebreaker:** Consider a hobby or sport that you've grown to love. What steps did you take to grow to enjoy it?
- **Goals:** To grow up in every way into Christ as Ephesians 4:14 says. To learn six laws of spiritual growth including: (1) We grow when we feed on God's Word, (2) We grow when we learn in different ways, (3) We grow when we develop spiritual habits, (4) We grow when we help each other to grow, (5) We grow when we expect to grow, and (6) We grow when we commit to grow. To commit to taking action steps such as spending a daily time with God, joining or continuing in a small group, and covenanting with others to take growth steps.
- **Final Prayer:** Heavenly Father, help us to have a revival of new habits and relationships that help us grow up in every way into Christ as Ephesians 4:14 says. Help us to not just hear the Word – but to put it into practice! Fulfill your word that we be “prosperous and successful” in You as Joshua 1:8 says. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Preparing to Lead Your 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 60-90 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

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 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.