

January 21, 2018

“Deeper – A Journey to Spiritual Maturity”

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.” 1 Peter 2:2

“Grow – Finding a Safe Place for Spiritual Growth”

“growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.” Ephesians 4:15b

A. What is the path to spiritual maturity?

1. Spiritual maturity is developed by obediently following God’s Word.
2. Spiritual maturity is developed by being in relationships with fellow believers.
3. Spiritual maturity is developed by putting into practice the Word of God on a regular basis.
4. Spiritual maturity is developed as we grow with other believers!

“For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.” Colossians 2:19b

B. A biblical model for a maturing faith...

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity” Acts 2:42-46

1. A maturing faith shares the teaching of the Word with one another.
2. A maturing faith shares fellowship with one another.
3. A maturing faith makes a place for social opportunities.
4. A maturing faith shares prayer with one another.
5. A maturing faith shares together in groups.
6. A maturing faith gathers for worship.

“Spiritual growth is **More Jesus**, less drama, less selfishness, less complaining, less bitterness, less gossip, less pride, less anger, less me...”

C. So, the real test of spiritual maturity is how we interact with one another...

“Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us” 1 John 4:11-12.

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.” 1 John 4:20-21

1. Your love for God is not measured by how loud you proclaim your love for God.
2. Your love for God is not measured by the spiritual disciplines that you practice.
3. Your love for God is not measured by how much faith you have.
4. Your love for God is not measured by how much you give.
5. Your love for God and your spiritual maturity is shown in how you love others in the practical day-by-day aspects of life.
6. Loving one another is most easily evidenced in groups and those one-on-one encounters.

Your vertical love for God is shown by your horizontal love for others!

D. What are the blessings of growing with others?

Here are 10 benefits of being a part of a group:

1. Life change happens best in groups.
2. Groups make church more personal.
3. Groups provide the best opportunity for one-anothering.
4. Groups can provide a sense of family for many whose biological family lives far away.
5. I can ask questions in a group.
6. Groups make it possible for more people to be cared for between Sundays.
7. Groups provide an ever-expanding network for communication and impact.
8. Groups provide a source of encouragement and accountability.
9. Groups give the opportunity for more personal prayer.
10. Groups give the opportunity to discuss and digest truth.

“Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.” Philippians 2:1-2

E. There are a diverse ways of growing together as we are becoming more and more disconnected...

“One of the greatest self-perception changes over the past decade is in how Americans see themselves in relation to others. For all the technological advances in the past decade, the desire for human connectedness remains. Ten years ago, slightly over one out of 10 Americans self-identified as lonely. Today, that number has doubled—a paradoxical reality in the full swing of the social media age.

But while loneliness among Americans has risen, the desire to find one’s place among a few good friends has likewise increased—from 31% a decade ago to 37% today. Leading this charge today in finding friendship are Millennials (47%), Hispanics (47%) and never-married single adults (44%)—all higher than the national average.” –George Barna

“**Grow** – It can be difficult to feel connected if you only attend a large corporate worship gathering. Being a part of a smaller group will not only bring greater connection, but provide people with whom everyday life can be experienced. Whether it’s to celebrate, mourn, carry each other’s burdens, or simply study God’s Word, groups at CWC offer a platform for meaningful spiritual growth.”

Groups at CW come in a variety of forms. It is our belief that “one size doesn’t fit all” and we offer many opportunities for spiritual growth through groups with over 600 people involved.

1. **Where do I start?** You can always start at the Connection Center and talk with Jill (Connections Director) or talk with Caleb Swartz (Spiritual Formations Director) about connecting to group life. caleb.swartz@cwc.life or 570.742.8987
2. If there is uncertainty, the **Rooted Experience** and **Spiritual Gifts Discovery** are great places to start and Caleb can direct you as to those opportunities.
3. **When:** Groups meet weekly, every other week, and monthly. Groups meet mornings, evenings and weekends. Groups meet on and off campus.
4. **Types of groups:** Fellowship Groups, Encouragement Groups, Accountability Groups, Women’s Groups, Men’s Groups, Young Adult Groups, Age and Stage Groups, Classroom-style Groups, and a variety of Study Groups (Inductive Study of the Bible – approximately 10 groups a year with over 100 people participating. Open studies are Revelation, Joshua, and Ezra.) We also offer Support Groups (Cancer Hope, GriefShare, DivorceCare, Embrace Your Journey, Families of Incarcerated Individuals, Military/Veterans Group, and Financial Peace University.)
5. **Resources:** We are very willing to equip and resource your group. A great assistant is RightNow Media with hundreds of thousands of resources. Contact Caleb for an invitation

The 59 “One Anothers” of the New Testament*

1. “...Be at peace with each other.” (Mark 9:50)
2. “...Wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14)
3. “...Love one another...” (John 13:34)
4. “...Love one another...” (John 13:34)
5. “...Love one another...” (John 13:35)
6. “...Love one another...” (John 15:12)
7. “...Love one another” (John 15:17)
8. “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...” (Romans 12:10)
9. “...Honor one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10)
10. “Live in harmony with one another...” (Romans 12:16)
11. “...Love one another...” (Romans 13:8)
12. “...Stop passing judgment on one another.” (Romans 14:13)
13. “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you...” (Romans 15:7)
14. “...Instruct one another.” (Romans 15:14)
15. “Greet one another with a holy kiss...” (Romans 16:16)
16. “...When you come together to eat, wait for each other.” (I Cor. 11:33)
17. “...Have equal concern for each other.” (I Corinthians 12:25)
18. “...Greet one another with a holy kiss.” (I Corinthians 16:20)
19. “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” (II Corinthians 13:12)
20. “...Serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13)
21. “If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other.” (Galatians 5:15)
22. “Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” (Galatians 5:26)
23. “Carry each other’s burdens...” (Galatians 6:2)
24. “...Be patient, bearing with one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:2)
25. “Be kind and compassionate to one another...” (Ephesians 4:32)
26. “...Forgiving each other...” (Ephesians 4:32)
27. “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” (Ephesians 5:19)
28. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21)
29. “...In humility consider others better than yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3)
30. “Do not lie to each other...” (Colossians 3:9)
31. “Bear with each other...” (Colossians 3:13)
32. “...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.” (Colossians 3:13)
33. “Teach...[one another]” (Colossians 3:16)
34. “...Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
35. “...Make your love increase and overflow for each other.” (I Thessalonians 3:12)
36. “...Love each other.” (I Thessalonians 4:9)
37. “...Encourage each other...” (I Thessalonians 4:18)
38. “...Encourage each other...” (I Thessalonians 5:11)
39. “...Build each other up...” (I Thessalonians 5:11)
40. “Encourage one another daily...” (Hebrews 3:13)
41. “...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” (Hebrews 10:24)
42. “...Encourage one another.” (Hebrews 10:25)
43. “...Do not slander one another.” (James 4:11)
44. “Don’t grumble against each other...” (James 5:9)
45. “Confess your sins to each other...” (James 5:16)
46. “...Pray for each other.” (James 5:16)
47. “...Love one another deeply, from the heart.” (I Peter 3:8)
48. “...Live in harmony with one another...” (I Peter 3:8)
49. “...Love each other deeply...” (I Peter 4:8)
50. “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (I Peter 4:9)
51. “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...” (I Peter 4:10)
52. “...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...” (I Peter 5:5)
53. “Greet one another with a kiss of love.” (I Peter 5:14)
54. “...Love one another.” (I John 3:11)
55. “...Love one another.” (I John 3:23)
56. “...Love one another.” (I John 4:7)
57. “...Love one another.” (I John 4:11)
58. “...Love one another.” (I John 4:12)
59. “...Love one another.” (II John 5)