



**GROWTH**  
FIRST MELISSA

40 DAYS – 2023

Scripture in this workbook is from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise indicated



So that you may  
walk worthy of the  
Lord, fully pleasing  
to Him, bearing fruit  
in every good work  
and growing in the  
knowledge of God.

– Colossians 1:10  
(HCSB)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 – WEEK 1

**G**GROWTH – **G**GIVE – OUR FATHER **GIVES** US ALL WE NEED

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NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S SERMON:

## WEEK 1

### GROWTH – GIVE – OUR FATHER **GIVES** US ALL WE NEED

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#### NOT PART OF A SMALL GROUP?

In our small groups, we “connect authentically” with one another in the body of Christ as we walk through life together. During these 40 Days, we encourage you to try a small group! For more information on small groups or help choosing one, visit The HUB or email [smallgroups@firstmelissa.com](mailto:smallgroups@firstmelissa.com). “One another” is used over 50 times in the New Testament, so a small group is a perfect place to be with one another as we grow in our faith.

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#### GROUP DISCUSSION

Let's start by reading our theme verse:

- **Colossians 1:10** – What are the four things listed here that we should do?

Our Father has granted us countless gifts. Perhaps the most important are those He bestows in those transformational moments when He makes us – who He chose before the foundation of the world – His own. He gives us:

- Eyes to see we need repentance
- A heart to embrace faith
- Salvation itself as our chains drop off
- The start of a lifelong journey of sanctification as the Holy Spirit – our Creator God – takes up residence within us.

It's important to reflect on those gifts because they're every disciple's starting point. We cannot fulfill our theme verse without that starting point. We cannot walk worthy of the Lord, please Him, bear fruit in every good work, or grow in the knowledge of Him without first being transformed by His gospel.

How do I know I am transformed? I am transformed when I *want* to walk worthy of the Lord, please Him, bear fruit in every good work, and grow in the knowledge of Him. And as time goes by, when I *do* walk worthy of the Lord, please Him, bear fruit in every good work, and grow in the knowledge of Him. More and more. Every day.

Because if we are not obeying Him, we are not His disciples (literally, Jesus-followers). As theologian Matthew Henry points out, those who do not obey “persuade themselves that filling their heads with notions is sufficient, though their hearts be empty of good affections and resolutions, and their lives fruitless of good works.” The Bible makes this clear.

Read:

- **John 15:14** – What does Jesus say makes us His friends?
- **Luke 6:46-49** – What does Jesus say happens to “the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly”?

As we at First Melissa have been taught before, the Hebrew verb *she'ma*, which our English Bibles translate to "hear," actually means "hear and obey" – one seamless action. If you hear a command, you obey the command.

Read:

- **James 2:14-26** – How does James describe a "faith" that does not compel a person to obey God (obedience here described as "works")?

A "dead faith" cannot save anyone. That's why some misinterpret this passage to be teaching that "works" are necessary for salvation. But what James meant – backed up by the entirety of Scripture – is that genuine faith *results* in "works" – the work of walking with Jesus, pleasing Him, bearing fruit, and growing in our knowledge of Him. When we are transformed, this is the path we choose to walk. Can works by themselves save anyone?

Read:

- **Matthew 7:21-23** – What does Jesus say happens to someone who claims to do "works" in His name but does not really know Him?

When God reaches down and touches us, opening our eyes and hearts, granting us repentance, faith, and salvation – He comes to us where we are. But He loves us too much to leave us there. He has a plan for each of us. He has significant things for us to do!

Read:

- **Ephesians 2:4-10** – What exactly does this passage teach us? What are some examples of "good works" that God prepared beforehand for YOU?

Note that this passage starts with that magnificent phrase – "But God." To understand the power of that little phrase, it's important to know what comes before this passage.

Understand the context:

- **Ephesians 2:1-3** – What were we before that transformative touch from our merciful God?

Finally – our memory passage for this series will be the passage that includes our theme verse.

Read:

- **Colossians 1:9-14**

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## LOOKING AHEAD

This week we'll put context around our theme verse as we delve into our memory passage. As our series unfolds, we'll also talk about another set of gifts the Lord gives us – individual spiritual gifts – and how they may (or may not) affect the good works God prepared beforehand for us to walk in.

## MONDAY, JANUARY 16 – WEEK 1

### GROWTH – GIVE – OUR FATHER **GIVES** US ALL WE NEED

If you did not participate in a small group discussion this week, please read the previous two pages.

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#### DAILY TEACHING

Each day of this series we'll study scriptures related to our 40-day theme of **growth**. Use the bottom of each page to record your thoughts and answers to questions. This week we'll start by getting more context around our theme verse (**Colossians 1:10**). It's part of the Apostle Paul's explanation, to the Colossian disciples, of how he prays for them. First read the entire passage: **Colossians 1:3-14**.

Questions to ponder (feel free to consult your Bible's study notes or commentaries for additional insight):

- What three "graces" of the Christian life are mentioned in verses 4-5? (Hint: read **1 Corinthians 13:13**)
- What is the "hope" of verse 5? What might be the practical result, for you, when you fix your hopes on what God has reserved for us in heaven?
- Verse 6 notes that the gospel "is bearing fruit" – what fruit is it bearing in you? Commenting on this verse, 16<sup>th</sup>-century author Matthew Henry says, "We mistake, if we think to monopolize the comforts and benefits of the gospel to ourselves." What do you think that means? (We'll explore "fruit" much more in coming days.)

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#### PRAYER

Our Father – thank You for richly providing for us through the Bible. It's everything we need for life and godliness. We ask You, Holy Spirit, to illuminate Scripture so that it changes us and conforms us to what You want us to be. Thank You that we can fix our hope on what You have reserved for us in heaven!

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#### MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Write our memory passage on a card to keep with you these 40 days. Be sure to write the "address" (the reference) on the card as well.

**GROWTH – GIVE – OUR FATHER GIVES US ALL WE NEED**

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DAILY TEACHING

We're in the process of putting scriptural context around our memory passage for this series, **Colossians 1:9-14**. Read it again now.

- What do verse 3 and verse 9 teach us about the frequency of Paul's prayers for the Colossian believers?

Verse 9 talks about knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. The ESV Study Bible notes that both knowledge and wisdom were offered by the false teachers of Colossae; Paul was contrasting that with God's wisdom and understanding. Consider one definition of those two terms:

1. Spiritual understanding – the ability to collect and organize knowledge and principles from Scripture
2. Spiritual wisdom – the application of those principles to daily living

What practical steps can you take to improve how you're doing on #1? How about #2?

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PRAYER

Lord, You are the only one who can help us read, study, understand, memorize, and apply Your Word to our lives. We ask You today to help us saturate our lives with Scripture so that it informs every thought, every word, every deed. Thank You that Your Spirit lives within us for exactly this reason.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Using the card you created with our memory passage, begin working on the first verse. Read it aloud several times throughout the day. Try to cement in your mind at least the first few sections of the verse.



**GROWTH – GIVE – OUR FATHER GIVES US ALL WE NEED**

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DAILY TEACHING

As we learn more about our memory passage for this series, **Colossians 1:9-14**, today we come to our theme verse. Read the whole passage now, noting especially verse 10.

- How does spiritual wisdom and understanding (verse 9) lay the groundwork for what's required in verse 10?

The ESV Study Bible notes that as a trained rabbi, Paul was calling believers "to walk" not according to the oral traditions of Judaism but in a way fully pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. It goes on to add, "Although Christians are completely justified from the moment of initial saving faith, they are not fully sanctified, and they can do things that either please or displease God each day. Every good work here is viewed as the fruit of salvation in the life of a Christian, not as the prerequisite for entering a relationship with Christ."

- What two things "please Him in all respects"? (from the end of verse 10)? How are you doing in these two areas?

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, please help the entire aim and focus of our lives to be knowing You better, and making You known. Thank You that the more we grow like You, the more fruit we bear for You.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Continue working on the first verse of our passage today, reciting each section of that verse and then pausing to make sure you're reciting it correctly.

**GROWTH – GIVE – OUR FATHER GIVES US ALL WE NEED**

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DAILY TEACHING

Let's continue working through our memory passage for this series, **Colossians 1:9-14**. Read it again. Verses 11 and 12 describe the state we are in when we are doing verse 10.

- In the Greco-Roman world, people sought power through pagan rituals and gods. How does Paul describe the source of power for the Colossian believers (verse 11)?
- The pagans sought power to protect them from evil spirits and bring them wealth and influence. How does Paul describe the purpose of power for the Colossians – what two things will God's power bring them?

Speaking of inheritance In verse 12, Paul uses language normally reserved for Jews under the old covenant (see **Genesis 13:14-17** for an example) and applies it to us! We are His heirs through Jesus' redemption of us.

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PRAYER

Father God, it is only through Your power that we attain perseverance and patience. We ask for that power, for that purpose! And we praise You that we are a chosen people, made saints by Christ's work on the cross.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Try reciting the entire first verse of our memory passage to someone in your family. If you have kids, recite to one of them!

**GROWTH – GIVE – OUR FATHER GIVES US ALL WE NEED**

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DAILY TEACHING

Today we'll finish working through our memory passage for this series, **Colossians 1:9-14**. Some Bibles group verses 13-14 as part of Paul's prayer for the Colossians, which is why we've included it in our memory passage. Others group it with the next section of that chapter, a magnificent defense of Jesus' deity, which Paul wrote to combat heresy threatening the Colossian church.

Read **Colossians 1:13-17**. Verses 15-17 establish Jesus as Lord of all creation. "Firstborn" in verse 15 conveys the meaning, from both Greek and Jewish culture, of "highest in rank," not "first created." Jesus IS God and participated in creation. Read **John 1:1-3**.

Read **Colossians 1:18-20**. These verses establish Jesus as Lord of redemption. Verse 18 refers to Him again as firstborn, but this time as "firstborn from the dead." Jesus was in fact the first chronologically to be resurrected, never to die again – but because of Him, He won't be the last!

- Meditate on all of **Colossians 1:3-20**, and jot down what you've learned and want to remember.

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You are eternal. You existed before time and will exist forever. Because of what You did for us, we get to live forever with You. Help us keep that thought ever present in our mind every day. Thank You for reconciling us to You.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Today begin adding verse 10 to verse 9 as you seek to memorize our passage.

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REFLECTION

Not a lot is known about John Mark (generally known as Mark), the author of the second gospel in the Bible. What we do know, from the book of Acts, indicates that he may have demonstrated some spiritual immaturity early on.

Read **Acts 12:25-13:13**. John Mark had joined Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey, but then left them and returned to Jerusalem. We don't know exactly why he left them, but we know that Paul was not at all pleased (read **Acts 15:36-40**).

But we also know that Mark grew into a spiritual powerhouse. How do we know this? Because:

- Paul later wrote the Colossians that they should welcome Mark (read **Colossians 4:10**).
- Still later Paul referred to Mark as his fellow worker (read **Philemon 24**).
- And after that, Paul told Timothy to bring Mark to him, "for he is useful to me for service." (Read **2 Timothy 4:11**)
- Perhaps most obviously, God chose Mark to write one of the four gospels.

How did Mark morph from immaturity to powerhouse? One answer may lie in the fact that he was disciplined by the Apostle Peter. In fact, scholars sometimes refer to the book of Mark as Peter's gospel because it is believed Peter was the primary source of Mark's gospel narrative. John MacArthur notes:

Peter's close relationship with Mark is evident from (Peter's) description of him as "Mark my son" (**1 Peter 5:13**). Peter, of course, was no stranger to failure himself, and his influence on the younger man was no doubt instrumental in helping him out of the instability of his youth and into the strength and maturity he would need for the work to which God had called him.

As we contemplate spiritual wisdom, understanding, and growth this week, consider who might be able to help you grow spiritually. Is there someone in your life whose godly wisdom you admire? Likewise, is there someone in your life who could benefit from your spiritual wisdom and experience? Author Joel Rosenberg says all of God's saints should both *be disciplined and be discipling* – a worthy goal for us all to consider.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22 – WEEK 2

**G**GROWTH – **R**REALIZE – **R**REALIZE WHO YOU ARE

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NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S SERMON:

## GROUP DISCUSSION

This week we're going to examine who we are in Christ. Seeing ourselves clearly considering Scripture facilitates spiritual growth. But let's start by looking at the life of someone who demonstrated he did understand, as he went through trials, who he was. Read **Genesis 37:2-11**.

Joseph was surely aware that his father's favoritism had won him no love from his older brothers, in a polygamous family already plagued by internal rivalries. Matthew Henry notes that Joseph was more of a prophet than a politician, otherwise, he would have kept these dreams to himself. The 17-year-old may have been more pious than his brothers, but he was not immune to youthful behavior.

- Why do you think God allowed Joseph this foreshadowing of his future?

God in His wisdom did not provide a glimpse of all the troubles Joseph would face, but He graciously offered him hope as to his future. Indeed, things were about to take a turn for the worse as he approached his brother's flocks out in the fields. Read **Genesis 37:18-24**.

The next verse tells us the callous brothers then sat down to eat a meal. A disturbing insight into this experience comes later in Genesis when the brothers are reunited with Joseph, who gives them a bit of trouble when they do not recognize him, and they realize they may be getting payback for their awful sin. Read **Genesis 42:21-22**. Interestingly Reuben, as the firstborn, had the most reason to be jealous of Joseph's favored status, but he is the one who first interceded to protect Joseph. However, his plan backfired – read **Genesis 37:25-35**.

- Practically speaking, Joseph was no longer a son or a brother at this point. What was his status?

Read **Genesis 39:1-6**.

- Who is responsible for Joseph's success in Potiphar's house?
- How might Joseph's responsibilities in Potiphar's house have prepared him for the future?

Read **Genesis 39:6-9**.

- What character traits was Joseph demonstrating?
- Who was Joseph most concerned with offending if he had succumbed to this temptation?

Joseph did not yield to temptation because he knew who he was. He surely knew he was a slave, but he also knew that he was a servant of the Most High God. And God had given him those dreams! Surely God had something marvelous for him to do. As the Bible Knowledge Commentary puts it, "Joseph would not throw away God's blessings for the pleasures of sin."

- Do you think God stands ready to bless you with marvelous things to do? Have you ever allowed the pleasures of sin to rob you of that blessing?

Read **Genesis 39:10-20**.

- Have you ever enjoyed God's blessing only to have it dry up and disappear?

It is certainly possible to imagine oneself giving up at this point, after overcoming being sold as a slave and rising to such a high position. But God – was not done. Read **Genesis 39:21-23**.

Of course, Joseph may have preferred prospering as a steward in a high official's house, rather than as a prison supervisor. And after a series of interactions with fellow prisoners who needed their dreams interpreted (see **Genesis 40**), Joseph finds himself spending a solid two more years in prison before one of his former jail-mates tells Pharaoh of Joseph's dream interpretation abilities. Pharaoh is impressed by both Joseph's ability and his wise counsel on how to handle the coming famine crisis. Read **Genesis 41:38-46**.

- How many years elapsed between Joseph's sale as a slave and his rise to power in Egypt?
- Joseph knew he was a despised brother. He knew he was a slave. He knew he was a prisoner. And now he knew he was second in command of one of the most powerful nations on earth, Pharaoh's closest assistant. How does his life mirror our experience with the living God?
- Despite Joseph's family issues, his parents had clearly taught him to love, obey, and trust God. Where in these stories do you see that obedience illustrated? Who all was blessed by that obedience?

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## LOOKING AHEAD

As we know, God had strategically placed Joseph in a role that would allow him to protect his family, and by extension, the Abrahamic covenant and God's chosen people, as well as all the people of Egypt. We'll finish up his story this week. We'll also examine who we are in relation to the Creator God – and what that means for how we live.

## MONDAY, JANUARY 23 – WEEK 2

### GROWTH – REALIZE – **REALIZE** WHO YOU ARE

If you did not participate in a small group discussion this week, please read the previous two pages.

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#### DAILY TEACHING

In the group discussion, we looked extensively at the life of Joseph (from **Genesis 37, 39, 40, and 41**) including his rise to great power in Egypt. Today we're going to read a little longer passage describing the dramatic reunification with his brothers, who do not recognize him. Read **Genesis 42, 43, and 44**.

Joseph put his brothers through the wringer, it could be said. It seems like he was especially concerned that they had perhaps hurt his younger brother Benjamin as they had hurt him. This may be why he insisted that they return with Benjamin, as proof he was alive and well. Another test may have been when extra portions were served to Benjamin (**43:34**). One can imagine Joseph observing to see if there were signs of envy or hatred, but it seems there were not. The final test was putting the silver cup in Benjamin's bag. Would the brothers sacrifice him? Their agonized response, and Judah's willingness to sacrifice himself for Benjamin, proved to Joseph that the hearts of his brothers had changed, paving the way for a tearful and joyful reunion, which we'll see tomorrow.

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#### PRAYER

Father God, Joseph trusted You through years of hardship and separation from his family, remembering whom You told him he was, even when reality told him he was a rejected slave. This week help us see clearly who we are to You, so we can act accordingly. Thank You, Jesus.

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#### MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Our goal by the end of this week is to have verses 9 and 10 of our passage completely committed to memory. Try setting an alarm on your phone, several times today, to take 30 seconds to study and recite those two verses.



GROWTH – REALIZE – **REALIZE** WHO YOU ARE

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DAILY TEACHING

The story of Joseph stretches across Genesis, starting in chapter 37 before picking up again in 39 and all the way to the end of the book. Consider reading it all this week to get the big picture of Joseph's remarkable life. But today, read the moving story of Joseph's forgiveness of – and reuniting with – his brothers. Read **Genesis 45:1-15**.

Joseph was overcome with emotion as he forgave his brothers with great kindness, pointing out that whatever their intentions had been, God meant it for good. Joseph was also well-versed in the covenant God had made with this father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and now recognized his role in protecting that. Matthew Henry notes, "Joseph reckoned that his advancement was not so much designed to save a whole kingdom of Egyptians as to preserve a small family of Israelites." God never forsakes His people!

- What parallels do you see between today's reading and the parable in **Luke 15:11-24**? How do both repentance and forgiveness play key roles in reconciliation?
- Do you need to demonstrate repentance with someone? Forgiveness? Make a phone call? Send a message? Ask God to envelop you with His presence as you seek to make things right.

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PRAYER

Lord, we see hurting, torn families all around us – sometimes in our own homes. We thank You that where there is family conflict, Lord, You can bring sweet reconciliation. We plead with You for repentant and forgiving hearts that demonstrate Your unfailing love.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

See if you can perfectly write verse 9 from memory, and as much of verse 10 as you can remember. Note that verse 10 has four distinct phrases that we are to do.

GROWTH – REALIZE – **REALIZE** WHO YOU ARE

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DAILY TEACHING

Joseph lived a righteous life. He was not perfect because he was human, but he had a firm understanding of who he was in God. What characterized his life is what characterizes the lives of everyone who understands who they are in God. They:

- Serve God faithfully in public
- Serve God faithfully in private
- Trust God's provision despite difficult circumstances
- Know God's commands and follow them
- Are spiritually blessed even in tough situations
- Trust God to defend their righteous character
- Know they are forgiven and therefore willingly forgive

As He did for Joseph, God also devised a special plan for your life even before you were born. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" as **Ephesians 2:10** tells us. As He did for Joseph, God wants to reveal to you His plans for your life, in His time and in His way.

- What do you most want to remember and apply to your life from the story of Joseph?

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PRAYER

Father, we thank You again for Your Word, and the riches we can always find there. As we continue this week to consider who we are in You and what You have done for us, help Your truths to penetrate our hearts and inspire us to serve You more and more enthusiastically. Thank You, Jesus!

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Can you recall the four elements of verse 10? If so, you're well on your way to mastering it. Be sure to work on verses 9 and 10 together several times today.

GROWTH – REALIZE – **REALIZE** WHO YOU ARE

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DAILY TEACHING

Now that we've studied the life of a man who clearly grasped who he was, let's review a few passages that explicitly tell us who we are and who we are not. Read:

- **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** – Who does not inherit the kingdom of God? What moves us out of that state of hopelessness?
- **Romans 6:16-22** – What word does Paul use repeatedly here to describe us? (Also see **1 Corinthians 6:20**) What is your reaction to being described this way? How should this role affect what we do?
- **Ephesians 2:10** – What does Paul call us here? What does this mean? How should this role affect our actions?
- **John 15:14-15** – Whom does Jesus say we are? How should this role affect what we do?
- **Romans 8:14-17** – What are the terms Paul uses to describe us? What is your reaction to being described this way? How should this role affect our actions?

What stands out to you from these verses that describe His disciples? What does God want from you right now? Are there things you believe about yourself that contradict any of these passages? If so, address that with God right now, remembering the depth of love He demonstrated *for you*.

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PRAYER

We can never thank You enough for what You've done for us, in making us Your very own. Thank You for rescuing us from enslavement to sin and transforming us into Your disciples. We willingly submit to you, All-powerful God, as Your slaves – but You in Your kindness also make us friends, sons, daughters, children, heirs. Your blessings are unimaginably rich. Help us to remember that we are all these things in You. Help us engage with the world knowing who we are, so that our light may be seen.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Ask someone (one of your kids would be great!) to help you work on the first two verses of our memory passage today.

GROWTH – REALIZE – **REALIZE** WHO YOU ARE

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DAILY TEACHING

Yesterday we looked at who we are. Today a reminder of who we are **not**.

Increasingly, we live in a world of lies. We struggle to know whom to believe as we watch current events unfold. And more to the point here, we struggle with what to believe about ourselves. It only takes watching a few commercials to be introduced to the idea that we aren't living our best lives. We not only need that new thing, but we're told we deserve it. Or we're told we'll be less without it – less attractive, less successful, less happy. Of course, these are all lies. But sometimes the lies come from someone close to us who made us feel "less than" or worthless. And we've all experienced that little voice in our ear reminding us of all our failures and telling us we will never be good enough.

- What is the source of all these lies? Read **John 8:44**.
- Unlike God, the "father of lies" is not omnipresent. He is likely not whispering in your ear. But he has his own forces spreading lies and other evil. Read **Ephesians 6:12**.

If you belong to God, you are His precious child, redeemed from the pit of hell for His glory. And since you are still alive, that means He has plans for you, also for His glory.

That is who you are.

How do you remember that when you suffer an onslaught of lies from that pit of hell? Well, God has given you a complete set of weaponry to fight back.

- Read **Ephesians 6:10-17** – write each tool you've been given and note how it will help you. (Hint: What is the very first tool? See verse 14.)

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PRAYER

Lord, thank You for giving us everything we need, including Your power, protection, and tools to fight against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Keep our ears tuned to You, Lord, and don't let us give the devil any foothold to lie to us about who we are and what You have done for us to make us Your very own.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Now that you're learning more of our memory passage, be sure to review the two verses you've memorized so far over the weekend, as well as today.

## REFLECTION

Artists have tackled the subject of Joseph's betrayal by his brothers. Consider these two works:



The painting on the left (Karoly Ferenczy, 1900) depicts Joseph stripped to the waist and being handed off to the Midianites. The right, by contemporary artist Yoram Raanan, depicts the same story. Both compositions are subdued and dimly colored, appropriate to the somber scene. But both significantly show a distant horizon of blue, symbolizing hope – which is where our eyes need to be when we consider the Joseph story. Incidents along the way seemed to be the end, but no pit, prison, or famine would prevent God from using Joseph to save His people.

We've looked at Joseph as an example of a man who realized who he was. But our best example is always Jesus. Today read **Philippians 2:5-11** and meditate on the example He left for us.

You may also enjoy listening to the song *Who You Say I Am*, focusing on the lyrics and meditating both on who you are, and what He has done for you. (Here's a link to the song with lyrics on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/lKw6uqtGFfo>)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 – WEEK 3

GROWTH – **OBSERVE** – **OBSERVE** HIS COMMANDMENTS

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NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S SERMON:

## WEEK 3

### GROWTH – OBSERVE – **OBSERVE** HIS COMMANDMENTS

#### GROUP DISCUSSION

Last week we studied the life of Joseph in Genesis as an example worthy to follow. This week as we talk about observing His commandments, let's look at another Joseph – the Christmas story Joseph, Jesus' earthly father. First let's get a little background regarding the situation in which Joseph found himself, keeping in mind that "betrothal," unlike our modern engagement, was a legal status and divorce was required to end it. Read:

- **Deuteronomy 22:23-24** – What did the Law prescribe?
- **Deuteronomy 24:1** – What did the Law allow? ("Send away" referred to sending her away from his house, meaning if her father did not take her back in, she was destitute)
- **Matthew 19:7-8** – Jesus' comment on Deuteronomy 24:1
- With all this in mind, read **Matthew 1:18-20**.

It seems like Joseph, before the angel's visit, was seeking to send Mary away from him/divorce her, a choice which protected her life (as well as the baby's), although it would still have been a source of great shame to both Mary and Joseph.

But in verse 20, before the angelic announcement, it says (depending on your version) that Joseph "thought it over" or "considered" or "pondered" what to do. A fuller understanding of the Greek word being translated there, *enthymeomai*, tells us it also means to become upset/angry. The root of that Greek verb is also used elsewhere in Matthew where Herod is enraged (**Matthew 2:16**) and in Luke to describe the wrath of some Jews who wanted to stone Jesus (**Luke 4:28**). An early Arab translation uses the word "disturbed." This, of course, would have been exactly what one would have expected Joseph's reaction to be, at the least. He could have taken her out the gate of the city and demanded she be stoned, but he did not. Why?

Although Joseph's ancestry was from Bethlehem, the city of King David, he lived in Nazareth in Galilee. Author Kenneth Bailey notes that many years earlier godly Jews from Judea had migrated to Galilee to convert the "heathen." It's possible that Joseph was from a very religious family. The only person in the New Testament called "son of David" other than Joseph is Jesus. In addition, **Matthew 1:19** clearly refers to Joseph as a righteous man – that is, someone who faithfully observed God's commandments.

In fact, Joseph may have known the Jewish scriptures better than many. Bailey says Joseph was expressing a nobler view of justice he would have learned directly from those scriptures – from Isaiah's prophecy of the Suffering Servant coming to save us.

- Read **Isaiah 42:1-4**. What do you think verse 3 means?

In Bible times reeds were used as pens, unless they were damaged, in which case they weren't good for much. Likewise, a dimly burning wick wasn't very helpful. This prophetic definition of

justice required compassion for the weak. Perhaps Joseph, regardless of any personal hurt or anger, chose to see Mary as a bruised reed? A dimly burning wick he would not extinguish?

But of course, God graciously intervened to align Joseph with his soon-to-be wife.

➤ Read **Matthew 1:20-25**.

Dr. Octavio Esqueda of the Talbot School of Theology sums up this passage:

Joseph was being called to suffer great losses. If he married Mary, people would assume he was the father, and his reputation as an upright man would be shattered. Joseph was also called to deprive himself of the important privilege of begetting his first child and naming him after him. Nothing like this happened before in Scripture or history, but Joseph chose to be obedient.

Joseph does not argue or doubt, even though his life is being turned upside down. When he awakens, he obediently goes to take Mary into his house, as opposed to sending her away. As Dr. Esqueda goes on to say, "Joseph was a simple carpenter who was focused on his normal life and duties. When God intervened in his life, he responded in obedience regardless of the cost or the circumstances. May we be willing to imitate his faith when God speaks to us."

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#### LOOKING AHEAD

We talked in week one of this series about how hearing God and obeying God should really be one seamless activity. If we hear Him, we obey Him. To obey Him, we need to carefully observe His commandments and obey Him, as Joseph did. This does not mean we are required to observe every instruction God gave to the Israelites. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are not bound by the Law. What's more, while He walked the earth Jesus beautifully summarized how we are to observe and obey His commandments. We'll jump into that tomorrow.



GROWTH – OBSERVE – **OBSERVE** HIS COMMANDMENTS

If you did not participate in a small group discussion this week, please read the previous two pages.

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DAILY TEACHING

How did Jesus summarize the commandments for us?

- Read: **Matthew 22:36-40**

New Testament authors, who provided loads of practical instruction for us (which we *are* meant to learn and apply), also summarized how best to fulfill the Law. Read:

- **Romans 13:8-10** – What fulfills the Law, according to verse 8? Verse 10?
- **James 2:8** – What fulfills the “royal law” of our King?

Why do you think these NT writers omitted the first part of Jesus' “greatest commandments” about loving God? Bible teacher Dr. Del Tackett points out that it is by loving our neighbor that we love God, as Jesus Himself said in **John 14:15**. However, the Bible is talking about a very specific love – in the Greek, *agape*. We do not have an English word that corresponds. Agape love is unconditional, self-sacrificial love such as Christ demonstrated on the cross. It grows out of the unmerited grace we are given when we become His.

Understanding this, then, allows us to see how “love your neighbor as yourself” becomes the one law we must always fulfill, because only by loving Him can we receive the power and grace to love others this way. Dr. Tackett also notes that the Hebrew word for love, *chesed*, can be defined as “never stops seeking the good of enemies.” He goes on to define this agape/chesed love as the steadfast, sacrificial love that always seeks the good of others – which also happens to perfectly describe the love that characterizes our God.

- What do you think our response should be to that kind of love?

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PRAYER

Almighty God, please help me increasingly understand and feel the height and depth and width of Your astounding love for me. Thank You, Lord.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

We're on to verse 11 this week, which breaks from verse 12 in kind of an odd place – so you might find it helpful to spend the next two weeks working on verses 11-12 together, while of course continuing to recite verses 9-10.

GROWTH – OBSERVE – **OBSERVE** HIS COMMANDMENTS

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DAILY TEACHING

Yesterday we talked about the central role “love one another” takes in our walk with Jesus. But note that it is not exclusively a New Testament concept.

- Read **Leviticus 19:18**. Now read **John 13:34-35**. Why did Jesus call it a “new commandment”? The key phrase is buried in verse 34 – “just as I have loved you.” The newness comes from loving one another as Jesus loved the disciples – and all of us – to the point of laying down His life.

This love plays a role in assuring us of our salvation:

- Read **1 John 3:14-18**. What does this assurance equip us to do?
- How can we live out verses 17-18, on a practical, daily level?

Many of us are familiar with the so-called “love chapter” of the Bible, **1 Corinthians 13** (and we will look at that later in this series). But **1 John 4:7-21** is an equally rich passage on the subject of love. Read and discuss:

- How might people “see God” (verse 12)?
- John MacArthur says this passage contains five reasons why Christians love. See verses 7-8, 9, 12, 13-16, and 17-20 to find them.

Clearly, the overarching commandments are to love God, through whom we can love one another, and love our neighbor. “Love one another” generally refers to our love for “the brethren” – our fellow disciples. But – who is our “neighbor”? Jesus was asked this very question, as we’ll see tomorrow.

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PRAYER

Lord, we thank You that we love because You are the very essence of love. We thank You for the supreme example You set by sending Your Son for us. We thank You that love is the very heart of our witness for You. We thank You that the presence of Your love in us assures us of our salvation. And we thank You for the confidence that gives us as we approach Judgment Day.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Many people find memorizing is easier if they hear the words as they are seeing them. Consider using the voice memos function on your phone, or some other recording device, to record yourself reading our passage, then play it back as you work on the verses. This may be especially useful now that we’re more than halfway through the passage.

GROWTH – OBSERVE – **OBSERVE** HIS COMMANDMENTS

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DAILY TEACHING

How did Jesus answer when asked “who is my neighbor”?

- Read **Luke 10:25-37**.

Note that Jesus corrected the lawyer's question. We should not ask “who is our neighbor?” but rather “how can I *become* a neighbor?” And clearly, He was teaching that we are to become a good neighbor to everyone we encounter.

Matthew Henry offers two reasons why we are to love (all) our fellow men and women:

- Because each human is a unique image-bearer of our holy God
- Because “God so loved *the world*” that He gave us Jesus, so we must love likewise

If it is sometimes challenging to love our own “brethren” – how much more challenging to love everybody else as well? Although *saying* you “love everyone” is not remotely like doing it. C.S. Lewis observed, “It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital ‘H’ than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody, in general, may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular.”

- Consider this quote from Warren Wiersbe: “...Christian love is not basically a ‘feeling’: it is an act of the will. The proof of our love is not in our feelings but in our actions, even to the extent of laying down our lives for Christ and for one another... it means treating others the way God treats us.”

**Galatians 5:14** sums it all up nicely.

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

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PRAYER

Oh Lord, help me to love with Your love. Help me not to just pay lip service to loving my neighbor but to actually meet and get to know real “neighbors” in any sphere of my life. Help me to seek their good and love them so well that they want to be in relationship with me – and with You. Thank You that – only through You – I can begin to treat them the way You treat me.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

As you continue to work on this passage through verse 12, see how much of it you can write out from memory now.

GROWTH – OBSERVE – **OBSERVE** HIS COMMANDMENTS

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DAILY TEACHING

We've discussed the "summary" commandments we've been given including "love your neighbor as yourself," we've discussed how this is made possible only through God Himself, and we've discussed how loving our neighbor is how we show we love Him. So, let's look at another passage that offers further guidance in how to live in relationship with others. Read **Matthew 25:31-46**.

- List the types of people we should be concerned with, and what we should be doing for them.
- What happens to those who do not do these things? What does this tell us about the people and activities we should be concerned with?

Again, it's important to stress that doing these things does not save us. We seek to do these things out of love for our Father, who first loved us. Some "goats" may well do some of these things as well, but not out of love, because they rejected His love.

The categories of needy people noted in this passage are mentioned often in the Bible – the poor (hungry, thirsty, naked), the captive (prisoner, oppressed), the sick (blind, lepers, wretched), the stranger we are to invite in. And we do well to actively seek to minister specifically to the poor, the captive, the sick, and the stranger, as well as widows and orphans (see **James 1:27** for just one mention of these). All these especially needy people are specifically mentioned in God's Word. And these all fall under the banner of "love your neighbor." (Note that "stranger" tends to speak to the idea of hospitality – we'll talk about that more later.)

- What is something you can do to join others seeking to serve people in these groups?

---

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, break my heart for what breaks Yours. Show me how to participate in loving people who are especially needy, whether they are my brethren or people who need spiritual help and healing as well. Thank You for giving us the ultimate example of Your sacrificial love.

---

MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Try reciting as much as you can to another person today.

GROWTH – OBSERVE – **OBSERVE** HIS COMMANDMENTS

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DAILY TEACHING

Yesterday we looked at how the Bible advocates for different types of especially needy folks. Of course, we were all needy before Jesus. We were spiritual beggars, captive to sin, blind to truth, oppressed by Satan. The good news is – this is precisely why Jesus arrived here 2000 years ago. He made this clear when He inaugurated His public ministry with a visit to his “home” synagogue in Nazareth. Read **Luke 4:16-30**.

- There is much to absorb from this brief story. What stands out to you?

This God who came to bring good news, proclaim release, restore sight, and set free – this God is the reason we want to observe His commandments. This God is the one who empowers us to observe His commandments.

The scripture Jesus quoted was from **Isaiah 61:1-2** – but He stopped reading halfway through verse 2. Why would He do that? Because He was here the first time to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord – an era that we are still in. The very next line, about the day of vengeance of our God, will wait for His second coming.

---

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for ushering in the favorable year of the Lord. Thank You that You bring good news, release, restoration, and healing. Help us now to do exactly as You did. Help us to bring good news and show the lost how to find peace, joy, release, restoration, healing, and more – all through Your sacrificial love. Thank You also, Lord, that You are coming again.

---

MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

We will continue to work on verses 9-12 next week. Be sure to read, study, and recite that section often over the weekend!

REFLECTION

We talked about Joseph (from the Christmas story) in this week's group discussion. Here's poet Rainer Maria Rilke's take on Joseph's state of mind in the work entitled, *Joseph's Suspicion*.

And the angel, taking due pains, told  
The man who clenched his fists:  
But can't you see in her robe's every fold  
That she is cool as the Lord's morning mists?

But the other, gazing gloomily, just  
murmured:  
What is it has wrought this change in her?  
Then cried the angel to him: Carpenter,  
can't you see yet that God is acting here?

Because you plane the planks, in your pride  
would  
you really make the Lord God answerable  
who unpretentiously from the same wood  
makes the leaves burst forth, the young  
buds swell?

He understood that. And now as he raised  
His frightened glance toward the angel who  
Was gone already... slowly the man drew  
His heavy cap off. Then in song he praised.

In those Bible passages that tell of Christ's birth we hear from the angels, Mary, the shepherds, the wise men, the parents of John the Baptist – but Joseph says nothing. However, his actions speak volumes. May we too respond in obedience when He speaks to us by His power.



*Joseph's Dream* - Jean-Marie Pirot

You may also enjoy this brief devotional on "What Joseph Makes Possible":

<https://artandfaithmatters.blogspot.com/2019/12/matthew-213-23-joseph-art-lectionary.html>

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5 – WEEK 4

GROWTH – **WALK** – **WALK** IN WISDOM

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NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S SERMON:

## WEEK 4

### GROWTH – WALK – WALK IN WISDOM

#### GROUP DISCUSSION

Begin by re-reading **Colossians 1:9-10**, focusing on verse 10.

- What are the two things we do to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” and “please Him in all respects”?

“Increasing in the knowledge of God” is of course what we’re trying to do right here. It involves reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on His Word. That is how we increase our knowledge of Him, and it is the foundational behavior of our walk with Him, because without it, spiritual growth cannot occur. As for “bearing fruit in every good work” ...

- What role does the Bible play in that? Read **James 1:22**.

This is a matter for careful self-reflection. How do we know we’re doers of the word, and not deceiving ourselves? A fruit inspection is in order. If there’s no fruit – or only rotten fruit – well, the Bible offers many warnings around this.

- We were bearing fruit before we were saved – how was it? Read **Romans 7:4-5**.
- The Pharisees and Sadducees thought they were spiritually secure because they were descendants of Abraham. John the Baptist disagreed. Why? Read **Matthew 3:7-10** (note verse 8).
- **Jude 10-13** describes people who defile the flesh and reject God’s authority. Note his language at the end of verse 12.
- Jesus warned us to be discerning as to whom we follow – based on what? Read **Matthew 7:15-20**.
- Jesus also warned us about our own fruit – read **Luke 6:43-45**.
- Jesus embedded a warning in this parable – read **Luke 13:6-9**. What is the message?

So, what is good fruit? If we were charged with the crime of belonging to Jesus, what would convict us? Consider a few pieces of evidence:

- Deepening love for God’s Word – read **Psalms 119:97** (or for that matter almost any verse in Psalm 119)
- Increasing obedience to Him – read **1 John 2:3-5**
- Increasing faith and love – read **2 Thessalonians 1:3**

How does deepening love for the Bible and increasing obedience, faith and love manifest in our lives? How are they demonstrated? What does a fruitful life look like? Read the following verses to find one thing the Bible mentions often in relation to fruit:

- **Philippians 1:11**
- **James 3:18**
- **Ephesians 5:9**



What's the common fruit here? How important is this fruit in our daily lives?

The fruit of the Spirit is perhaps the most well-known biblical passage on this topic. Read **Galatians 5:22-23**.

- How do we obtain these 9 characteristics?
- Why does He give these to us?
- How are you doing on these?

The flip side of the “fruit of the spirit” self-check is the negatives. Are you characterized by:

- Anger
- Bitterness
- Complaining
- Controlling
- Disappointment
- Worry

These are all fruits. But they aren't fruits of the Spirit. Where, instead, do they come from?

There are many ways to look at biblical fruit. Del Tackett, creator of the Engagement Project, offers three ways we can bear fruit and flourish:

- Physically – by having children. Read **Genesis 1:28**, **Psalms 127:3-5**, and **Psalms 128:3**.
- Vocationally – bringing glory to God through the work of your hands and mind. Read **Psalms 128:2**.
- Ministerially – by making disciples. Read **Acts 1:8** and **Matthew 28:19-20**.

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## LOOKING AHEAD

How do we become effective ambassadors, making disciples for Him? The answer lies in what we focused on last week – loving one another and loving our neighbor. This week we'll dig into that and dig into our own hearts as well.

GROWTH – WALK – WALK IN WISDOM

If you did not participate in a small group discussion this week, please read the previous two pages.

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DAILY TEACHING

Perhaps one of the most useful Bible passages for self-reflection is the parable of the sower. Read **Matthew 13:3-9** – then read Jesus' explanation in **Matthew 13:18-23**. Consider: Can a person bear fruit if they:

- Don't understand the "word of the kingdom" and the evil one snatches the seed away?
- If a person hears the word but has no firm root and falls away – can that person bear fruit?
- If a person hears the word but the world and wealth choke it out – can that person bear fruit?

This is deadly serious. As author Francis Chan says:

Do not assume you are the good soil. Has your relationship with God actually changed the way you live? Do you see evidence of God's kingdom in your life? Or are you choking it out slowly by spending too much time, energy, money, and thought on the things of this world?

Where do you stand? Write out your thoughts.

---

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us to be the good soil. Help us to see where we've allowed the world to choke out Your commands of loving one another and loving our neighbor. Ignite our hearts with passion for You that colors every moment of our lives so that we can't help but be radically changed. Thank You for the change You make in us through Your gift of faith and salvation and Your Holy Spirit within us.

---

MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

This is our second week of working on verses 9-12. Recite that section at least three times today, trying to recite from memory.

GROWTH – WALK – WALK IN WISDOM

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DAILY TEACHING

Let's jump back into the fruit of "loving one another." Read again **John 13:35**.

- How does our loving one another tell the world we are His disciples?
- How would you describe "love for one another"?
- Read **Ephesians 4:1-3**. What does Paul tell us to do to "walk worthy"?
- Read **1 Peter 1:22**. What does Peter tell us is a prerequisite for "fervently loving one another"?
- Read **Romans 15:1-7**. Does this change your description of "love for one another"? List what this passage instructs us to do.
- What are practical steps you can take to deepen your relationships with other disciples and demonstrate sacrificial love for them?

We'll talk about this again in this series but start thinking about what it would look like for us to live less like a bunch of people who go to the same church, and more like the family of God.

---

PRAYER

Father, help us hold up Your Word against our lives and see where we can be more like You. Help us be doers, not hearers. Thank You for giving us this Book that is alive and burns truth into our hearts and thank You for coming down to us to show us exactly what Your Kingdom on earth should look like.

---

MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Have you recited your verses to someone in your family? Hand someone else your card with your memory passage and ask them to help you work on it for a couple of minutes.

GROWTH – WALK – WALK IN WISDOM

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DAILY TEACHING

“Love one another” is at the heart of John 15, and (not coincidentally) it is also a passage where Jesus taught about bearing good fruit. He spoke these words to His disciples the night before He was to die. Read **John 15:1-17** and meditate on these questions.

- Who does He take away – who will not be in His presence (verse 2)?
- What does He do to those who are bearing fruit (verse 2)? What does this mean? Is it painful? (Read also **Hebrews 12:11**)
- Where must we be to bear fruit (verse 4)?
- How much fruit can we bear on our own (verse 5)?
- What happens to those who do not remain in him (verse 6)? Since we are sealed in Him forever when we become His children, who must this verse be talking about? Who remains in Him?
- What does verse 7 mean?
- Verse 8 is the centerpiece of all of this! Read it again!
- What are the conditions set forth in verse 10? Who would not keep His commandments?
- How does verse 16 tie this all together?

Connection – continual, intimate connection – is required to grow fruit. Connection between disciple and discipler (meaning, us and Jesus) allows us to love one another as He commanded, which is one of the many ways we “walk worthy” of Him.

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PRAYER

Jesus, Thank You for Your words recorded in this section of the book of John, just before You went to the cross for us. They show us what You deemed most important for Your disciples to know. Help us love like You do.

---

MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

If you are having trouble memorizing through verse 12, try telling someone, or writing out, what the verses are teaching. We want to memorize His Word mindfully, too.

GROWTH – WALK – WALK IN WISDOM

---

DAILY TEACHING

“They’ll know we are Christians by our love” as the old song goes. But we are called not only to engage lovingly with our brethren but also to engage with the lost (“love your neighbor”).

This best happens one person at a time. The lost are won through genuine relationships with followers of Jesus. And making disciples is surely our highest calling, because “love your neighbor” is that highest commandment, as we discussed last week.

- Jesus referred to this as fruit as well – read **John 4:36**. What does this fruit result in for the sower and the reaper?

We’ll discuss some practical ways to engage with our “neighbor” later in this series. For now, start thinking about who are “neighbors” that God has placed in your life – people with whom you could start to build a relationship because they are near you on a regular basis. Might this be work colleagues? Some of your actual neighbors?

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PRAYER

Lord, You have given us our marching orders. We are to join in the work of Your kingdom, helping to restore people to You as You restored us. Your Word also shows us that Your work is best accomplished in relationships characterized by our genuine love for others. Help us to view evangelism through this lens and start to understand how we might weave this into our lives. Thank You for Your patience with us as we seek to serve You better and bring more fruit to You!

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

If you are a “creative,” have you considered setting the words of our memory passage to a tune to help you remember? Or creating a work of art illustrating the passage? Even if you’re “not an artist” it is sometimes helpful to try depicting the meaning of a passage by drawing it. Give it a try!

GROWTH – WALK – WALK IN WISDOM

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DAILY TEACHING

We've talked a lot about self-examination – inspecting our own fruit. Are we also to examine each other's fruit?

Read **Galatians 6:1**, then consider this, from the Intervarsity Press New Testament Commentary:

Jesus does not say we should not examine the lives of others. But we should do so only with a careful eye cast toward ourselves... Jesus wants disciples to be a moral encouragement to one another, but there is a proper way to go about it. There is a crying need for humility, an awareness that all of us are learning to walk more closely with God. To help another see clearly, we need to wash out our own eyes first.

In the end, disciples are to reflect good character. Our relationship with God is to produce good fruit. The fruit reveals the nature of the root, *for each tree is recognized by its own fruit*. Bad trees do not produce good fruit, nor do good trees produce bad fruit. To judge a tree's fruit, we don't look at one particular moment but at a period of production. The product of the life reflects the heart. The product of our discipleship reflects our inner character, what Jesus calls the treasure of the heart. The value of our speech and actions is determined by the quality of the soul that produces them. In other words, works are a snapshot of the heart.

A lack of humility regarding fruit is just one of the many obstacles the enemy will throw in our paths as we seek to be fruitful for Jesus. Others might be self-centeredness, fear, isolation, dependency, apathy, persistent sins, a doom-and-gloom attitude, or lack of vision (not focusing on the vision – love God, love one another, love your neighbor).

- What do you need to address in yourself to be sure your “eye” is washed out, seeing clearly?

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PRAYER

Jesus, please protect us from – and help us see – anything that would hinder our fruitfulness for You. Thank You that Your Word is victoriously powerful against anything the enemy tries to throw in our paths.

---

MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

How are you doing on our memory passage at this point? Since the last two verses make up a sentence, go ahead and add them in to your daily review at this point, so we are now working on the entire passage at once. Be sure to work on the passage over the weekend.

GROWTH – WALK – WALK IN WISDOM

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REFLECTION

God promised Abraham abundant fruit – an entire nation that descended directly from him and his wife Sarah – as innumerable as grains of sand along the seashore, as **Hebrews 11:11-12** says. All Jews ever born count Abraham and Sarah as their “father” and “mother.” Sarah initially didn’t believe God’s promise due to her advanced age and decided she needed to “make” it happen (read **Genesis 16:1-6**). Because that son, Ishmael, is the father of the Arabs, you can see that this mistake she made is still resulting in strife today and will likely do so until Jesus returns.

But God’s promise was true. Abraham and Sarah did establish the Jewish people through their son, Isaac. And who “resulted” from this long-awaited child? The twelve tribes of Israel, Moses, Joshua, all the judges, all the kings including King David; all the prophets including Daniel, Queen Esther, and eventually, a man named Joseph who took another young Jew as his wife although she was already with Child. Indeed, as God stated in **Genesis 22:18**, all the nations of earth are blessed through this people that began in the womb of a 90-year-old woman – her fruitfulness changed the world.

As you consider the many kinds of fruit we discussed this week, reflect on these passages:

- **Psalms 1:1-3**
- **Jeremiah 17:7-8** (similar passage to the one above – but how does it differ?)
- **Hebrews 13:15** – we can bear this fruit any time. If it inspires you to sing your praise, here’s a beautiful version of one of the most beautiful praise and worship songs, *Is He Worthy*:  
<https://youtu.be/1A1sAdFXMlc>

Also, consider this quote about good works from Matthew Henry:

We must abound in good works, and in every good work: not in some only, which are more easy, and suitable, and safe, but in all, and every instance of them.

Is God directing you to participate in a good work that is less easy, less suitable, and less safe? Rejoice! He is trusting you, His disciple, with something important!

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NOTE FOR FUTURE STUDY

The Bible app most people have on their phones (called YouVersion) offers a multitude of Bible reading plans and devotionals. After this 40-day series, you might consider working through the plan called *Appointed to Bear Fruit – A 90 Day Journey* – or one of the many plans they offer covering the fruit of the Spirit.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12 – WEEK 5

GROWTH – THANK – **THANK** THE FATHER

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NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S SERMON:



## WEEK 5

### GROWTH – THANK – **THANK** THE FATHER

#### GROUP DISCUSSION

This week's focus – of thanking our Father – is closely related to Week 1 – where we looked at how God gives us everything we need. The natural outgrowth of understanding what the Father has done for us is gratitude – as a continual life practice.

Even the world has come to realize the benefits of cultivating a thankful spirit, although they don't really know whom to thank. Consider these article titles from the past few years:

- From the Mayo Clinic – “Can expressing gratitude improve your mental, physical health?” (their answer is yes)
- From Harvard Medical School – “Giving thanks can make you happier”
- Greater Good magazine – “Why Gratitude is Good”

Of course, God's truth is *the* Truth, and God designed us to benefit from thankfulness, so it's no surprise the world has caught on. Keeping a journal of what you're thankful for is a worthy practice for anyone, and an attitude of gratitude helps generate contentment even in an unbeliever. Unlike them, however, we *do* know whom to thank. Read **James 1:17**.

Since thanking God is a part of prayer, let's briefly look at a couple of key verses related to our invitation to speak with the Almighty God, both in Hebrews:

- Read **Hebrews 4:16**. How impossible a privilege is this – to enter the throne room of the living, Holy God – who welcomes us in! Who have we to thank for this privilege?
- Read **Hebrews 12:28-29**. What exactly does this passage tell us to do? Why? How should this mindset prepare us for entering that throne room?

Paul had quite a bit to say about gratitude, as well. Read the following passages. Note the words and themes that are often repeated – what is gratitude or thankfulness often linked with?

- **Ephesians 5:3-4**
- **Ephesians 5:18-20**
- **Philippians 4:6-7**
- **Colossians 2:6-7**
- **Colossians 3:12-17**
- **Colossians 4:2**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

Since much of our prayer naturally involves asking God for things, what does the mindful practice of praying with thankfulness do? Where does it put our focus?

- **1 Timothy 2:1-2**

This passage teaches the importance of praying for *all* people, not just the brethren. “All people” includes “all who are in authority.” Paul specifically mentions “thanksgiving” as one of

the types of prayers to be made for all these people. What does this mean? Commenting on this passage, John MacArthur says:

Because so many powerful and influential political rulers are hostile to God, they are often the targets of bitterness and animosity. But Paul urges believers to pray that these leaders might repent of their sins and embrace the gospel, which meant that the Ephesians were even to pray for the salvation of the Roman emperor, Nero, a cruel, vicious blasphemer and persecutor of the faith.

- What are some ways we bring “thanksgiving” into these prayers, as the passage teaches?

Paul also left us some incredible examples of how to pray, which we'll dig into later this week. We're also going to look at more gifts from the Giver – spiritual gifts – with an eye to how we can best be thankful for those, too.

In preparation for that, read **1 Corinthians 13:8-13**.

- What gifts does Paul say will be done away with? What gift does he say will cease? Why do you think he made this differentiation?

Now go back and read **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**.

- What good are any of these gifts without “loving our neighbor” or “loving one another”?

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## LOOKING AHEAD

As mentioned, we'll talk about spiritual gifts this week. We'll also learn some of the ways Paul showed us how to pray and explore some Psalms of thankfulness.

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13 – WEEK 5

### GROWTH – THANK – **THANK** THE FATHER

If you did not participate in a small group discussion this week, please read the previous two pages.

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#### DAILY TEACHING

In writing to the churches of the first century, Paul told them how he was praying for them. Let's look at some of those prayers.

- Read **Colossians 1:9-12**. This should be familiar to you by now as it comprises the bulk of our memory passage! Scholars point out this prayer encompasses four attributes of a “worthy walk” life – fruit-bearing, growing, empowerment, and gratitude.
- Read **Philippians 1:9-11**. How do the themes of this prayer align with what we've learned so far in this series?
- Read **Ephesians 1:15-19a**. Paul says he does not cease to give thanks for the Ephesians. What else is he praying for?
- Later in Ephesians he prays another powerful prayer. Read **Ephesians 3:14-19**.

These are the kinds of prayers we should be praying for each other! In fact, an excellent “prayer practice” is to pray these verses to God, personalizing them with the name of the individual you are praying for. For example, let's pray the Ephesians 3 passage for each other now:

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#### PRAYER

Father, we pray that You would grant our fellow disciples at First Melissa, according to the riches of Your glory, to be strengthened with power through Your Spirit in their inner selves, so that You may dwell in their hearts through faith; and that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know Your love which surpasses knowledge, that they may be filled to all the fullness of God.

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#### MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

You already reviewed verses 9-12 today! Review verses 13 and 14 now.

GROWTH – THANK – **THANK** THE FATHER

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DAILY TEACHING

The Psalms are overflowing with thankfulness. Today read the following passages and choose a few to incorporate into your daily “God time” to help you focus on what He has done and is doing for you. Note what these Scriptures say about what we are to be thankful for, and any instructions they include.

- **Psalm 7:17**
- **Psalm 9:1-2**
- **Psalm 35:18**
- **Psalm 69:30**
- **Psalm 86:12**
- **Psalm 92:1-2**
- **Psalm 95:1-2**
- **Psalm 97:12**
- **Psalm 106:1**
- **Psalm 118:1**

Finally, **Psalm 100** is a psalm of thanksgiving. Read it now – and consider memorizing this brief passage!

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PRAYER

Lord, we can never run out of things to thank You for, but we get so focused on ourselves and our perceived needs and even the needs of others that we often are lacking in an attitude of gratitude. We ask Your Spirit to cultivate that attitude in us more and more each day.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Read our memory passage, then write down what, in it, you are especially thankful for!

GROWTH – THANK – **THANK** THE FATHER

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DAILY TEACHING

God grants us spiritual gifts so that we can love others with them and further His Kingdom. Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts places them in this important context. Let's start by reading **1 Corinthians 12:4-31**.

We'll get back to specific gifts later but note that Paul was addressing the misuse of gifts in the Corinthian church. When verse 31 says he is going to address "a far better way" – his very next words are the famous love chapter, **1 Corinthians 13**, which teaches us that gifts are useless without obedience to the foundational commandment of loving your neighbor.

- List the 15 descriptions of love contained in verses 4-7.

Now that we have this type of love firmly in our minds, let's read **1 Corinthians 14:1-5**. The Corinthians were not using the gift of tongues properly, which was the gift demonstrated at Pentecost, where people of all languages could hear Peter's words in their own native tongue. Paul appears to be arguing against a "gibberish" tongue that made no sense to anyone, although of course speaking in a foreign language to an audience that doesn't speak it also sounds like gibberish. The Corinthians were also desiring more "showy" gifts, apparently.

- What does Paul identify as the "better" gift?

It's important to understand that the primary meaning of "prophecy" as a spiritual gift is simply to speak the truth of God's Word to others. The "foretelling" aspect of prophecy, in earlier times, served to give us the Bible, but now the canon of Scripture is closed. This spiritual gift is not telling the future but proclaiming God's truth as it applies to various circumstances.

- Why does Paul wish that everyone would "prophecy"?

Tomorrow we'll look more closely at gifts.

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for giving us the gift of salvation and that with that comes the ability to love our neighbor. Thank You also for giving us spiritual gifts – blessings You give each believer, individually – so that together we as a body can build up Your church.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Try writing out the entire passage today from memory.

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DAILY TEACHING

We've looked at the teaching on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians. Let's read the other two passages that address gifts.

- **Romans 12:4-8**
- **Ephesians 4:11-16**

All these passages (yesterday and today) celebrate the "unity in diversity" that is individually gifted disciples serving one Body, in love. With *that* in mind, let's look at the individual gifts.

There is overlap in the gifts, which makes sense because the bestowing of a specific gift on an individual will look different than the same gift bestowed on another individual. What's more, God may grant an individual more than one gift, and an individual's gifts may change in different seasons of life. And a spiritual gift is not necessarily a talent or skill, like singing or sports. Author Joel Rosenberg says it's "the ability to touch and help change people's lives with supernatural effectiveness, using the tools of God's Word and God's love."

There are many ways of looking at the various lists of gifts. John MacArthur divides them into speaking and serving gifts, and notes which gifts were primarily for use in the early church (for instance, apostles, which generally refers to those who personally interacted with Jesus). Since we've just read all the passages, the chart on the next page may prove helpful:

<https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/chart-45-04/>

## Spiritual Gifts in Paul's Letters

Romans 12:6-8	1 Corinthians 12:7-10	1 Corinthians 12:28	Ephesians 4:11
<i>Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us</i>	<i>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good</i>	<i>God has appointed in the church</i>	<i>And he gave</i>
		apostles	the apostles
prophecy	prophecy	prophets	the prophets
			the evangelists
	ability to distinguish between spirits		
	utterance of wisdom		
teaching	utterance of knowledge	teachers	the shepherds and teachers
exhorting			
	working of miracles	miracles	
	gifts of healing	gifts of healing	
service		helping	
leading		administrating	
	various kinds of tongues	various kinds of tongues	
	interpretation of tongues		
giving			
	faith		
mercy			

MacArthur's category of speaking gifts includes prophecy (which could include evangelism and wisdom); teaching (which could include knowledge and shepherding); and exhortation (encouraging and motivating others). The service gifts include service/helps; discernment; giving; mercy; faith; and leadership/administration.

Again, these gifts are all to be used to serve others and build the Body of Christ. So how do we discover our spiritual gifts? We'll talk about that tomorrow.

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#### PRAYER

Holy Spirit, we thank You that You give abundantly to us and that one of the things You give us is spiritual gifts, as Your Word teaches. We ask that You help us find – *and use* – our gifts, for God's glory.

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#### MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Today recite the entire passage to another member of your family or a friend and see how far you can get.



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#### DAILY TEACHING

We're talking about how to discover our spiritual gifts. Obviously, start with prayer. Ask God to show you what He's given you.

The next step is to do *something*. Serve *somehow*, without worrying about what your gifts are. This is the best way to discover your gifts – start taking action to serve and love others, and your gifts will bubble to the surface. After all, the early church had no “spiritual gift inventories.”

Read this brief, insightful article on this topic, then write down what/where you can start to serve now.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-not-discover-spiritual-gifts/>

### CHRISTIAN LIVING

## HOW (NOT) TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

JULY 6, 2018     **THOMAS SCHREINER**

Is it important to know your spiritual gifts? Or is that concern evidence of the narcissism so characteristic of our culture today?

Perhaps we can compare figuring out our spiritual gifts to the current interest in personality tests and profiles like the Enneagram. The Enneagram explores nine different personality types and has made quite a splash in evangelical circles. Kevin DeYoung rightly warns about the dangers of the Enneagram, explaining that it's alien to Scripture in many respects. Russell Moore is sympathetic to what DeYoung says, agreeing that the Enneagram isn't helpful if embraced root and branch, but thinks it can be used as a tool to discern and understand one's potential strengths and weaknesses, as well as the motivating desires and inclinations of others.

I think we can say something similar about the process of discerning spiritual gifts.

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### SPIRITUAL GIFT TESTS?

Over the years, it has been popular to use spiritual gift inventories and questionnaires to help believers discover their spiritual gifts. The major problem with these tools is that they're an abstraction; we can take those tests and try to discover our gifts without being involved in the life of the local church. When used this way, spiritual gift inventories are artificial and even misleading.

They're artificial because we don't and can't discover how God has gifted us in isolation from others. **Gifts can't be traced in a laboratory like DNA.** The questionnaires are also misleading because the tests themselves, even if helpful in some respects, are inevitably partial and flawed. In other words, the inventories are produced by humans who have their own biases and preconceptions, and thus believers may wrongly come away from such an inventory thinking they have a particular gift when they don't. On the other hand, they may think they don't have a gift after taking the inventory when they do.

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## DISCOVERY THROUGH THE LIFE OF A CHURCH

The best way to discover your gift, then, is not by taking a test. They didn't have such instruments in the early church, and people discovered and used their gifts just fine! Rather, **if you get involved in the lives of others in your church and love as Jesus commanded, then you will discover your gift.**

Some might say they still don't know their gift. But knowing your spiritual gift isn't as important as exercising your spiritual gift. Surely many believers in history didn't know their spiritual gifts or think much about them, and yet they exercised those gifts in powerful ways. If you aren't sure what your spiritual gifts are, I wouldn't worry about it. If you give yourself to other believers in the church, you will inevitably be using your gifts.

All of this brings us back to the matter of spiritual gift inventories. If you're involved in the life of the church and take such an inventory, it might prove helpful. Sometimes we don't see ourselves clearly, and other believers and resources can help us discern where we're gifted. Obviously such tools can be used in a narcissistic and self-absorbed way, but it's also true that understanding ourselves better may help us become more effective ministers.

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## KNOW THYSELF

The importance of knowing ourselves is clear from [Romans 12:3](#):

For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.

Here Paul warns us neither to have an inflated view of ourselves, nor to denigrate ourselves, but to know and assess ourselves rightly. We know that mistakes can be made in both directions regarding spiritual gifts. Some might say their gifts aren't important and aren't needed in the body ([1 Cor. 12:15-16](#)). Some might say they don't need the other gifts and members of the body ([1 Cor. 12:21](#)). **But every member is needed, every member plays an important role, every member is significant.**

When we look at some of the spiritual gifts, it becomes clear that knowing our gifts is helpful (even if not essential). For instance, Paul says those with the gift of service should concentrate on serving, those with the gift of teaching on teaching, and those with the gift of exhortation on exhorting ([Rom. 12:7-8](#)). If you know your gift is exhorting, you can focus your energies. This doesn't mean you

don't serve or do evangelism or give counsel, of course. We shouldn't twist what Paul says into an excuse to be selfish. Still, life is short, and we should concentrate on our strengths, because in doing so we build up the church.

Knowing our strengths and gifts helps us to focus on the ways we can be most helpful to other believers. If you don't know your gift yet, don't worry. It'll become clear as time passes, and asking other believers can help you discern your gift. We're often in a great hurry to find our gifts, but God isn't. He has a purpose and plan to use you in the life of your church, and it will become clear as you serve him and others.

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#### PRAYER

Lord, thank You again for the blessings of spiritual gifts that You customize just for us! Help us to begin serving and see where Your touch in us is most powerful. Ultimately, Lord, please help us to love one another and love our neighbor, all to Your glory.

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#### MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

We have one more week to work on our passage. If you're having trouble, take heart! Simple repetition will work every time, but it takes time. Read the passage out loud as many times a day as you can, all through the weekend.

GROWTH – THANK – **THANK** THE FATHER

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REFLECTION

It is instructive to read the stories of Bible people and consider what kinds of spiritual gifts they exercised. This weekend read the very brief book of **Ruth** (it's only four chapters). Ruth was a Gentile who married a Jew and lived a life of great character. She's also named in Matthew as one of the "foremothers" of Jesus!

The article we linked yesterday about how not to discover spiritual gifts included this passage regarding spiritual gift inventories: "**If you're involved in the life of the church** and take such an inventory, it might prove helpful. Sometimes we don't see ourselves clearly, and other believers and resources can help us discern where we're gifted. Obviously, such tools can be used in a narcissistic and self-absorbed way, but it's also true that understanding ourselves better may help us become more effective ministers."

If you're involved in the life of the church, you may wish to view the resources Lifeway has put together on this topic, the link is available here and we have attached the resources at the end of the workbook as well.

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service>

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NOTE FOR FUTURE STUDY

We've talked in this series a lot about fruit, and a lot about spiritual gifts. As you become more aware of your gifts, you may find this blog helpful. It offers articles targeted to people exercising specific spiritual gifts:

[Fruitful Blog | Your Gifts ~ His Story | Fruitful Blog | Your Gifts...His Story](#)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19 – WEEK 6

GROWTH – **HOW** – **HOW** CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

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NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S SERMON:

## GROWTH – HOW – HOW CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

## GROUP DISCUSSION

In this series on growth, we've looked at the gifts the Father gives us, who we are in Him, the critical importance of obedience to His commands, how that helps us walk in wisdom and bear fruit, and the centrality of thankfulness to Him. This week we'll tie this all together with answers to the very practical question of "How then can I live as His disciple?"

Let's start by reminding ourselves that faith in Him does great things for Him, as the Bible illustrates repeatedly. Remembering those very real-life victories of heroes of the faith is helpful as we see the world around us getting darker. Our God will do great things through us as He has done great things through flawed people just like us.

Consider Gideon, whose name appears in the Hebrews 11 "hall of faith." The Lord tells Gideon he will rescue his people who are being oppressed by the Midianites, but God isn't interested in a military victory that will glorify the people. After all, the reason they're being oppressed is that they've fallen away from Him, so they need to see Him in the victory. This story includes twists and turns that only God could bring to pass.

- Read **Judges 6:11-14** for how God got Gideon's attention.
- It appears that Gideon was already a man of faith and action (note what the angel calls him). What kind of people is God pleased to use (read **1 Peter 5:6**).
- Read **Judges 6:25-30** for God's pre-assignment to Gideon. The Abiezrites were the people of that area who wanted to kill him for destroying their pagan idols.
- Read **Judges 6:33-34**. The people who had wanted to kill him were now called to follow him into battle! Who is the only One who can turn men's hearts? (Also – since we talked about spiritual gifts last week – as Gideon headed up this decisive military campaign, what spiritual gift do you see evident? (Hint: it's one of the gifts often categorized as a "service" gift – see page 45 of this booklet.)
- Read **Judges 7:2-8** for the unique method God uses to winnow down Gideon's fighting force from more than 30,000 to 300 men. How do you think Gideon felt about this military strategy?
- Read **Judges 7:9-15** for how God graciously reassured Gideon.

The battle is victorious, and Israel enjoys 40 years of peace during Gideon's lifetime – one of many rescues God fashioned for His wandering people.

- Who initiated the call for Gideon to do something great? Who expects more out of us than we do ourselves?
- In battle, Gideon took on far greater odds than were realistic to mere mortals. Whom did he fear more, his enemies or his God? Read **Proverbs 3:5-6**.

It is good to remind ourselves of the unlimited power and mercy of the God we serve. So – how best to serve Him? We're going to consider some very practical action steps this week, and the first is perhaps the most practical of all. **Your time with God.**

- How did Jesus set an example for even this, while He was on earth? (Read **Luke 6:12** for just one example.)

Consider: The Creator God of the universe, who sent His Son to redeem the world, who loved us while we were still sinners – that living God graciously invites us to spend time with Him, to worship Him, to know Him better.

- How does this speak to your heart?

We must immerse ourselves in the riches of the Bible – riches we won't be able to mine completely no matter how long we live. And we can be as close to Him as we choose to be. Or as Warren Wiersbe reminds us, "...we ought to be near the throne, listening to His Word, enjoying His intimacy, and obeying His commandments."

- Note the order in Wiersbe's comment. What precedes obedience?

Renewing ourselves during time with Him each day both fuels us and motivates us for the good works and fruit-bearing that He calls us to do.

- How do you incorporate "God time" into your life?

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## LOOKING AHEAD

We'll take a serious look, the rest of this week, at ways we can live as a disciple, bearing fruit for His Kingdom.

**GROWTH – HOW – HOW CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS**

If you did not participate in a small group discussion this week, please read the previous two pages.

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DAILY TEACHING

Let's talk about bearing the fruit of "love-one-another-ing."

The early Christians in Acts shine as examples for us. They lived in an upside-down culture characterized by sin, idolatry, despair, pride, hatred, division, and societal expectations completely at odds with Jesus' teaching. It was even a culture that enjoyed killing humans as entertainment. As Paul, Peter, and other disciples spread across the Roman empire to share the gospel, into this pagan culture emerged the first groups of Jesus followers, learning how to imitate Jesus and be part of God's family. They were branded as heretics because Roman emperors were to be worshipped as gods.

Read **Acts 2:42**. The Christians were continually devoting themselves to four pursuits:

1. gathering to hear teaching
2. fellowship
3. eating together
4. praying together

How are we doing on these four? We are probably doing well on #1 – most of us do come together regularly to hear Bible teaching here at church. But the other three are most effective in smaller groups. Consider the size of Jesus' small group. It was 12 people. That's about the right size for fellowship where we really get to know one another – know one another well enough to pray for each other, know each other's needs, and literally show love for one another. Small enough to have meaningful discussions because we have built trust with each other. Small enough that we might even be able to meet – and even eat – in each other's homes.

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, please ignite our hearts with urgency to live as committed to You as the early believers did. Help us set aside our Texas individualism enough to genuinely love other members of our church family here at First Melissa. Help us open our hearts and our homes to each other. Thank You that this raggedy band of early believers so clearly showed us the way.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

How did you do with repeating our entire passage over the weekend? Today try to say it at least twice during the day, once this evening and once before bed.



GROWTH – HOW – HOW CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

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DAILY TEACHING

Author Kristi McLelland notes the early Christians were easy for the Roman regime to spot because they were characterized by a refusal to participate in the upside-down culture in which they found themselves:

- They would not worship the emperor or any other gods.
- They ignored the ironclad stratifications of Roman society – Christians who were slaves and Christians who were nobility were among those dining and fellowshiping together.
- They revered life, in a culture that routinely abandoned babies to die (most often girls). They would rescue and raise these babies.

In a culture that despised them and what they stood for – where many suffered great financial loss after turning to Jesus, if not their very lives – these people then also demonstrated a kind of generosity that the Romans had never seen, sharing not only with each other but with the suffering church in Jerusalem.

- Read **1 Corinthians 16:1-4**. Have you ever demonstrated this kind of “painful generosity” – giving something that costs you a lot to give?
- For more on how the early church saw the purpose of their belongings and property, read **Acts 4:32-37**. When the pagans saw the Christians living this way, what effect do you think it might have had?

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PRAYER

Lord, make us more like Your early believers. Help us not to just hope that by being nice or friendly, people will see You in us, but to dedicate ourselves to truly following your instructions in a way that the world must take notice. Help us put no idol (money, family, sports, entertainment, even “good works”) ahead of You. Help us reach across societal divisions to demonstrate love to those not like us. Help us revere life, and stand up for truth, when the world wants to tear it down. This is a tall order, Lord, but we thank You that You are the kind of God who can hear and answer our prayers.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Ask someone else to work with you, one more time, as you seek to master our memory passage. Say as much of it as you can, let them correct you, and try again. It's okay to recite it in sections if that helps at this point.

GROWTH – HOW – HOW CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

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DAILY TEACHING

On Monday we read one powerful verse in Acts that told us what the early believers were up to. Today let's continue that passage to learn more. Read **Acts 2:42-47**.

- Describe in your own words what they were doing as depicted in verses 44-45. What would it look like if we had more of this mindset?
- What else were they doing together (verses 46-47)? What was the result of this togetherness, gladness, and sincerity of heart?

Eating together is a powerful way to build relationships and trust. Opening our home and our table to other disciples is what the Bible calls hospitality, and we are instructed to do so, both by the examples in Acts and by explicit biblical instruction (see **1 Peter 4:9** and **Romans 12:13**).

Table fellowship can also change lives, which is why it's prescribed not just for our fellow believers but also as a way to "love our neighbor." **1 Timothy 5:10** tells us that showing hospitality to strangers is a key component of godliness. And **Hebrews 13:2** tells us not to neglect hospitality to strangers.

Whom have you invited to dinner lately?

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us remember that everything we have is a gift from You, meant to be shared. Help us let go of our worldly possessions, knowing that their highest use is blessing others. Help us find that 1<sup>st</sup>-century mindset in our 21<sup>st</sup>-century world so that our neighbors can see that we truly are different. We have heard Your instruction on hospitality – help us begin obeying it. Thank You that You made the table a place of fellowship and blessing.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

If you're working on our passage in sections, today work on the transitions between those so you can recite the entire passage.

GROWTH – HOW – HOW CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

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DAILY TEACHING

We've talked about living like the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians, who shared belongings, shared their homes, and shared their meals. We've seen how the Bible commands us to practice hospitality, both to our fellow disciples and to "strangers" (i.e., people who do not yet know Him).

You may be thinking – especially if you have children at home – that this is impractical. Your house is never ready for company since you had kids! But reaching out to the "neighbors" in your life – whether they are actual neighbors, work colleagues, or anyone else in your regular circle of acquaintances – reaching out to them and inviting them into your home is perhaps the most powerful evangelism tool you will ever have.

We are not talking about luring them in and hitting them with a Bible. We are talking about building a relationship with them, family to family (or family to couple, or couple to single, or whatever that combination may be). We are talking about getting to know them and their needs and starting to trust each other enough that they might allow you to meet some of those needs. We are talking about praying for them regularly, diligently, and as a family. We are talking about conversations about what is happening in the world where you let them talk and pray continuously for the Holy Spirit to talk through you. We are talking about inviting them to attend church with you.

You've probably heard someone say they hope the world sees Jesus in them, and they'll "witness" when someone asks them why they're different. Has anyone ever asked you that? They haven't unless they're already in a relationship with you. They won't if they're not in a relationship with you. What does that tell us?

**We must build relationships.** It's how we do the Great Commission. Even if we are called to live in a foreign land as missionaries, most people will still respond to us better from within a relationship. And the better we love them, the more they will trust us and want to spend time with us and – yes – want to know who made us the way we are. Meditate again now on **Galatians 5:14**.

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PRAYER

Dear Lord, help us to see Your work through new eyes. Help us to see that simply by obeying Your commands, we can sacrificially love our neighbors in a way that will make a difference for eternity. Thank You for giving us this love to share, Jesus.

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

If you never recorded yourself reading the memory passage and you're still struggling with it, you might consider doing that now, and listening to it several times a day until you have it down cold!

GROWTH – HOW – **HOW** CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

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DAILY TEACHING

Loving your neighbor – by inviting him in for dinner. It's pretty simple but it can be revolutionary. This is the subject of Del Tackett's Engagement Project study, which is coming to First Melissa this August, to help us all get a better grasp on how to use our homes and families as the most powerful evangelism tool.

Building a relationship with a person or couple or family who are far from God is a lifetime commitment. Your goal is to build a strong friendship. Your job is to love them enough that they just love being in your home. Your job is to pray. With the Holy Spirit's prompting, your job will also be to speak truth. But it is His job to convict them and save them. You cannot do that. You do your part and let God do His.

Now, what about those kids? Well, most people know what a house with kids looks like. If the family you're inviting has kids, they *really* know. But involving your kids in loving your neighbors is the best thing you can do for them. Imagine them seeing this relationship bear fruit for the Kingdom! Imagine seeing God work in lives as you pray together for the people you know.

Children NEED to see God work. They need to know He is real in a way that picture book Bible stories cannot. Head knowledge is not enough. But once they see God work in real ways in real lives – that is a God they will never want to abandon – a powerful God who answers real prayers. The best thing you can do for your children is to model God's love through your "neighbor" interaction and allow them to join in.

Del Tackett notes that the primary work of the Kingdom has been entrusted to the common everyday Christian family. And it may end up blessing no one more than the children involved.

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PRAYER

Jesus, again we need You to help us look at the people in our sphere with fresh eyes. We need You to help us let go of our convenience and privacy and fear of a messy house and **let people in**. We ask You to help us do this for You, for them, and for our children. Thank You that You made the world this way – that by befriending each other in love, we may help to build Your family. Thank You for inviting us on this adventure!

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MEMORY WORK – COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

If you haven't quite got the passage down yet, don't give up! Carve out a little nugget of time each day to work on memory verses going forward, too. Memorization is a lifetime muscle we need to exercise till we see His face!

GROWTH – HOW – HOW CAN I LIVE AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

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REFLECTION

Today as we conclude this 40 Days of Growth, meditate on a chapter that ties together many of the themes we studied – **Romans 12**.

Since we talked about how the simple act of opening your table could lead to the greatest fruit bearing, enjoy this beautiful work by artist Jonathan Shaw, called *Open Table* (opposite page). What Jonathan says about the piece is important:

It can be challenging in this fast-paced day 'n age to slow down and enjoy the presence of others. This painting, titled "Open Table," reflects on the beauty of sharing a meal and cultivating deep relationships. I love how God created us to repose from our work three times a day to partake in a meal. In a sense, mealtimes are like mini sabbaths reminding us that we are dependent upon "bread" and "rest." These tangible needs ultimately point us toward the Bread of Life and the full Shalom and Rest He gives. I look forward to the day when we are all gathered around the Lord's Table, celebrating His goodness and glory.

If you'd like to see more of Jonathan's work, you can visit his website at <https://www.yehonatan-art.com/>. He has many spiritually themed works.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Have these 40 days changed you? What will be new in your life this year as a result of your study the past 40 days?

Share how these 40 days have impacted your life by emailing your testimony to [firstmelissa@firstmelissa.com](mailto:firstmelissa@firstmelissa.com). We would love to hear from you!





## SPIRITUAL GIFTS SURVEY

### DIRECTIONS

This is not a test, so there are no wrong answers. The ***Spiritual Gifts Survey*** consists of 80 statements. Some items reflect concrete actions; other items are descriptive traits; and still others are statements of belief.

- Select the one response you feel best characterizes yourself and place that number in the blank provided. Record your answer in the blank beside each item.
- Do not spend too much time on any one item. Remember, it is not a test. Usually your immediate response is best.
- Please give an answer for each item. Do not skip any items.
- Do not ask others how they are answering or how they think you should answer.
- Work at your own pace.

Your response choices are:

- 5—Highly characteristic of me/definitely true for me  
4—Most of the time this would describe me/be true for me  
3—Frequently characteristic of me/true for me—about 50 percent of the time  
2—Occasionally characteristic of me/true for me—about 25 percent of the time  
1—Not at all characteristic of me/definitely untrue for me
- 

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I have the ability to organize ideas, resources, time, and people effectively.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I am willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am able to relate the truths of God to specific situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I have a God-given ability to help others grow in their faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I possess a special ability to communicate the truth of salvation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I have the ability to make critical decisions when necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I am sensitive to the hurts of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I experience joy in meeting needs through sharing possessions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I enjoy studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I have delivered God's message of warning and judgment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I am able to sense the true motivation of persons and movements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I have a special ability to trust God in difficult situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I have a strong desire to contribute to the establishment of new churches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I take action to meet physical and practical needs rather than merely talking about or planning to help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I enjoy entertaining guests in my home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I can adapt my guidance to fit the maturity of those working with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I can delegate and assign meaningful work.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I have an ability and desire to teach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I am usually able to analyze a situation correctly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I have a natural tendency to encourage others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I am willing to take the initiative in helping other Christians grow in their faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I have an acute awareness of the emotions of other people, such as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I am a cheerful giver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I spend time digging into facts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I feel that I have a message from God to deliver to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I can recognize when a person is genuine/honest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I am a person of vision (a clear mental portrait of a preferable future given by God). I am able to communicate vision in such a way that others commit to making the vision a reality.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I am willing to yield to God's will rather than question and waver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I would like to be more active in getting the gospel to people in other lands.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. It makes me happy to do things for people in need.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I am successful in getting a group to do its work joyfully.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I am able to make strangers feel at ease.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I have the ability to plan learning approaches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I can identify those who need encouragement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I have trained Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I am willing to do whatever it takes to see others come to Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I am attracted to people who are hurting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I am a generous giver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I am able to discover new truths.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. I have spiritual insights from Scripture concerning issues and people that compel me to speak out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. I can sense when a person is acting in accord with God's will.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. I can trust in God even when things look dark.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. I can determine where God wants a group to go and help it get there.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I have a strong desire to take the gospel to places where it has never been heard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. I enjoy reaching out to new people in my church and community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. I am sensitive to the needs of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I often am consulted when fellow Christians are struggling to make difficult decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. I think about how I can comfort and encourage others in my congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. I am able to give spiritual direction to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 51. I am able to present the gospel to lost persons in such a way that they accept the Lord and His salvation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 52. I possess an unusual capacity to understand the feelings of those in distress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 53. I have a strong sense of stewardship based on the recognition that God owns all things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 54. I have delivered to other persons messages that have come directly from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 55. I can sense when a person is acting under God's leadership.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 56. I try to be in God's will continually and be available for His use.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 57. I feel that I should take the gospel to people who have different beliefs from me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 58. I have an acute awareness of the physical needs of others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 59. I am skilled in setting forth positive and precise steps of action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60. I like to meet visitors at church and make them feel welcome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 61. I explain Scripture in such a way that others understand it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 62. I can usually see spiritual solutions to problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 63. I welcome opportunities to help people who need comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counseling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 64. I feel at ease in sharing Christ with nonbelievers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 65. I can influence others to perform to their highest God-given potential.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 66. I recognize the signs of stress and distress in others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 67. I desire to give generously and unpretentiously to worthwhile projects and ministries.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 68. I can organize facts into meaningful relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 69. God gives me messages to deliver to His people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 70. I am able to sense whether people are being honest when they tell of their religious experiences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 71. I enjoy presenting the gospel to persons of other cultures and backgrounds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 72. I enjoy doing little things that help people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 73. I can give a clear, uncomplicated presentation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 74. I have been able to apply biblical truth to the specific needs of my church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 75. God has used me to encourage others to live Christlike lives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 76. I have sensed the need to help other people become more effective in their ministries.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 77. I like to talk about Jesus to those who do not know Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 78. I have the ability to make strangers feel comfortable in my home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 79. I have a wide range of study resources and know how to secure information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 80. I feel assured that a situation will change for the glory of God even when the situation seem impossible.

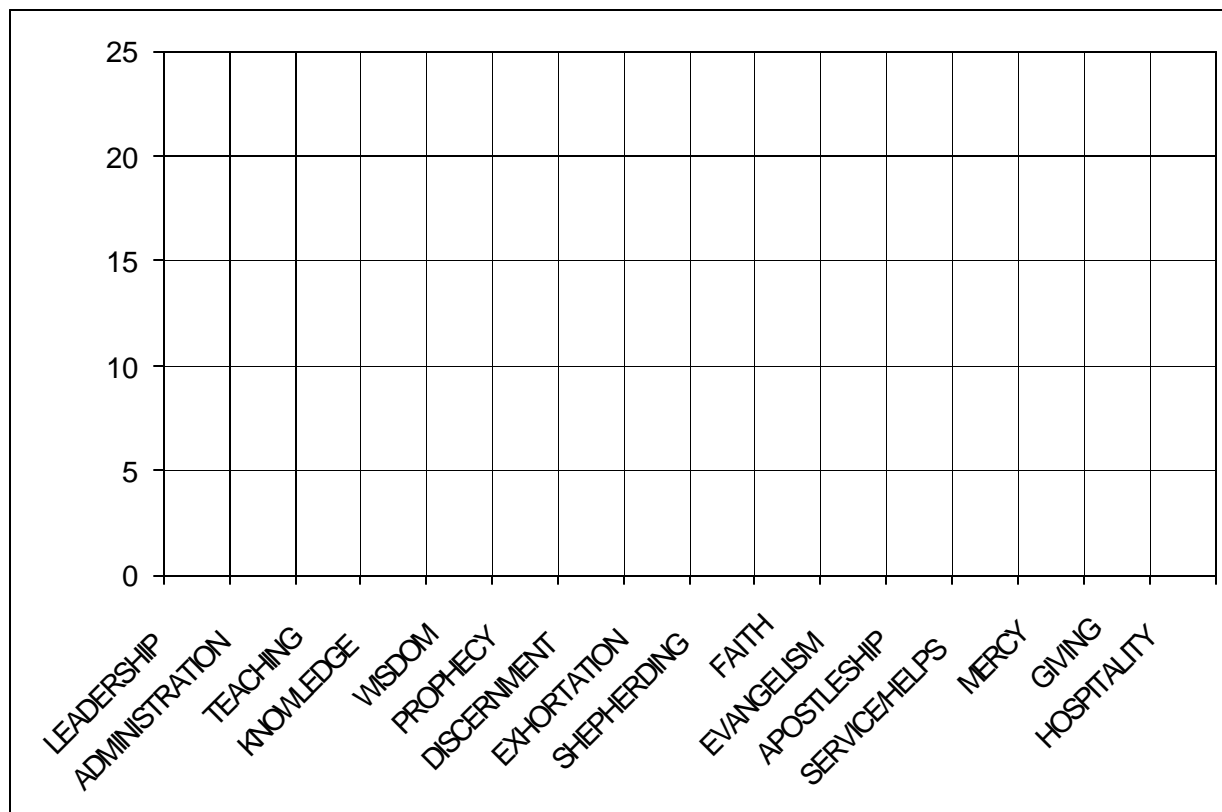
## SCORING YOUR SURVEY

Follow these directions to figure your score for each spiritual gift.

- Place in each box your numerical response (1-5) to the item number which is indicated below the box.
- For each gift, add the numbers in the boxes and put the total in the TOTAL box.

<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 6		Item 16		Item 27		Item 43		Item 65		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 1		Item 17		Item 31		Item 47		Item 59		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>TEACHING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 2		Item 18		Item 33		Item 61		Item 73		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 9		Item 24		Item 39		Item 68		Item 79		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>WISDOM</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 3		Item 19		Item 48		Item 62		Item 74		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>PROPHECY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 10		Item 25		Item 40		Item 54		Item 69		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>DISCERNMENT</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 11		Item 26		Item 41		Item 55		Item 70		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>EXHORTATION</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 20		Item 34		Item 49		Item 63		Item 75		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SHEPHERDING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 4		Item 21		Item 35		Item 50		Item 76		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>FAITH</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 12		Item 28		Item 42		Item 56		Item 80		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>EVANGELISM</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 5		Item 36		Item 51		Item 64		Item 77		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>APOSTLESHIP</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 13		Item 29		Item 44		Item 57		Item 71		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SERVICE/HELPS</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 14		Item 30		Item 46		Item 58		Item 72		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>MERCY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 7		Item 22		Item 37		Item 52		Item 66		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>GIVING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 8		Item 23		Item 38		Item 53		Item 67		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 15		Item 32		Item 45		Item 60		Item 78		<b>TOTAL</b>

## GRAPHING YOUR PROFILE



1. For each gift place a mark across the bar at the point that corresponds to your TOTAL for that gift.
2. For each gift shade the bar below the mark that you have drawn.
3. The resultant graph gives a picture of your gifts. Gifts for which the bars are tall are the ones in which you appear to be strongest. Gifts for which the bars are very short are the ones in which you appear not to be strong.

***Now that you have completed the survey, thoughtfully answer the following questions.***

The gifts I have begun to discover in my life are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- After prayer and worship, I am beginning to sense that God wants me to use my spiritual gifts to serve Christ's body by \_\_\_\_\_.
- I am not sure yet how God wants me to use my gifts to serve others. But I am committed to prayer and worship, seeking wisdom and opportunities to use the gifts I have received from God.

Ask God to help you know how He has gifted you for service and how you can begin to use this gift in ministry to others.

## **Discover Your Spiritual Gifts!**

Gene Wilkes

Ken Hemphill defines a spiritual gift as “an individual manifestation of grace from the Father that enables you to serve Him and thus play a vital role in His plan for the redemption of the world.”<sup>i</sup> Peter Wagner defines a spiritual gift as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God’s grace for use within the context of the Body.”<sup>ii</sup> I like to use this definition:

A spiritual gift is an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers which empowers them to serve the body of Christ, the church.

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:9-11 contain representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church. A definition of these gifts follows.<sup>iii</sup>

**Leadership** - Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

**Administration** - Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Teaching** - Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God’s Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

**Knowledge** - The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God’s Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Wisdom** - Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Prophecy** - The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).

**Discernment** - Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

**Exhortation** - Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).

**Shepherding** - The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).

**Faith** - Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).

**Evangelism** - God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).

**Apostleship** - The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

**Service/Helps** - Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).

**Mercy** - Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).

**Giving** - Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).

**Hospitality** - Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

God has gifted you with an expression of His Holy Spirit to support His vision and mission of the church. It is a worldwide vision to reach all people with the gospel of Christ. As a servant leader, God desires that you know how He has gifted you. This will lead you to where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission for the church.

[Download the Spiritual Gifts Survey from LifeWay.com.](#)

*Gene Wilkes is pastor of Legacy Church, Plano, Texas. This article was adapted from [Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders](#), by Gene Wilkes (LifeWay Christian Resources 1998).*

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<sup>i</sup> Ken Hemphill, *Serving God: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts Workbook* (Dallas: The Sampson Company, 1995), 22.

<sup>ii</sup> *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* by C. Peter Wagner, Copyright © 1979, Regal Books, Ventura, CA 93003. Used by permission, 42.

<sup>iii</sup> These definitions exclude the “sign gifts” because of some confusion that accompanies these gifts and because they are difficult to fit into ministries within a typical church’s ministry base.



# Where do you feel God leading you to serve Him?

# Where do you feel God leading you to serve Him?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your spiritual gifts bring great strength and make a difference when you use them to support First Melissa. It takes an army of dedicated people to accomplish all the various tasks within our ministries. This list is just a sample of the many volunteer opportunities available to deploy your spiritual gift. Choose the areas you would like to serve based on your spiritual gifts assessment and turn this form in at The HUB.

## Check all that apply:

### Preschool Ministry (birth to 5)

- ☐ Sunday morning lead teacher
- ☐ Sunday morning assistant teacher
- ☐ Sunday morning Check-In/First Impressions  
Which service? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Wednesday Awana teacher
- ☐ Wednesday Awana assistant teacher
- ☐ Wednesday Awana Check-In

### KIDS Ministry (K-5th grade)

- ☐ Sunday morning lead teacher
- ☐ Sunday morning assistant teacher  
Which service? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Sunday morning 11:30 teacher/assistant
- ☐ Sunday Check-In/First Impressions
- ☐ Wednesday Awana large group teacher
- ☐ Wednesday Awana lead teacher
- ☐ Wednesday Awana assistant teacher
- ☐ Wednesday Awana listener
- ☐ Wednesday Awana assistant secretary
- ☐ Wednesday Awana rec assistant
- ☐ Wednesday Awana Check-In

### Preschool/KIDS Discipleship Ministry

- ☐ Vacation Bible School
- ☐ Parent's Night Out
- ☐ Mother's Day Out
- ☐ Assist with Pine Cove staff meals
- ☐ Pine Cove Host home
- ☐ Pine Cove nurse/paramedic
- ☐ Upward basketball volunteer

### Church Vehicles

- ☐ Maintenance/upkeep of church vehicles
- ☐ Drive for special events

### Prayer Ministry

- ☐ Prayer team
- ☐ Prayer leaders at front
- ☐ Prayer room host

### Student Ministry

- ☐ Sunday morning small group assistant leader
- ☐ Sunday morning cafe assistant at 11:30 am
- ☐ Wednesday chaperones/adult leaders
- ☐ Wednesday student meal
- ☐ Special event leaders
- ☐ Student Praise Band volunteers
- ☐ DNOW Host homes
- ☐ Girls' Weekend volunteer

### Connections Ministry

- ☐ Greeter
- ☐ Usher (help people find seats)
- ☐ Discover First Melissa host

### Small Group Ministry

- ☐ Lead a small group
- ☐ I would like information on attending a small group.

### Hospitality Ministry

- ☐ Serving tea/coffee at The HUB on Sunday mornings  
Which service? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Assist with Wednesday meal preparations
- ☐ Assist with food for special events
- ☐ Bereavement needs

### Auxillary Ministries - I would be willing to assist in the leadership of...

- ☐ Missions ministry
- ☐ Men's ministry
- ☐ Women's ministry
- ☐ SALT ministry
- ☐ Crisis Pregnancy Ministry
- ☐ Disaster Relief Ministry
- ☐ Hope Cancer Support Ministry
- ☐ MOPS
- ☐ Parking Team
- ☐ Christmas Angel

### Communications

- ☐ Photography/Video
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Graphics

My trade/skill that I would like to use to bless the church: \_\_\_\_\_



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