

Spiritual Growth Handbook



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Beginning the Journey

Calling to Jesus

- **Matthew 10:46-52** – Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”
- Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So, they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. **“What do you want me to do for you?”** Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”
- “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Responding to Jesus

- **Luke 5:4-11** – When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”
- Simon answered, **“Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”**
- ⁶When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So, they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, **“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”** For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” So, **they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.**

Reflection & Discussion

- *If you were Bartimaeus, how would you answer Jesus?*
- *Looking at Peter’s three responses, which do you relate to?*
- *What’s your own story of encountering Jesus?*

Finding our Purpose

God's Purpose for Humanity

- **Genesis 1:27-28** – So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

God's Purpose for His Community

- **Genesis 12:1-3** – The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Christ's Purpose for His Followers

- **Matthew 28:18-20** – Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Reflection & Discussion

- *What similarities do you see between these three purpose statements? What is our job, what is its scope, and what does it rely on?*
- *What are some examples of these purposes being fulfilled? How have we fallen short of God's purposes?*
- *Looking at your own life, what purpose have you been living for? What results have you seen, so far?*

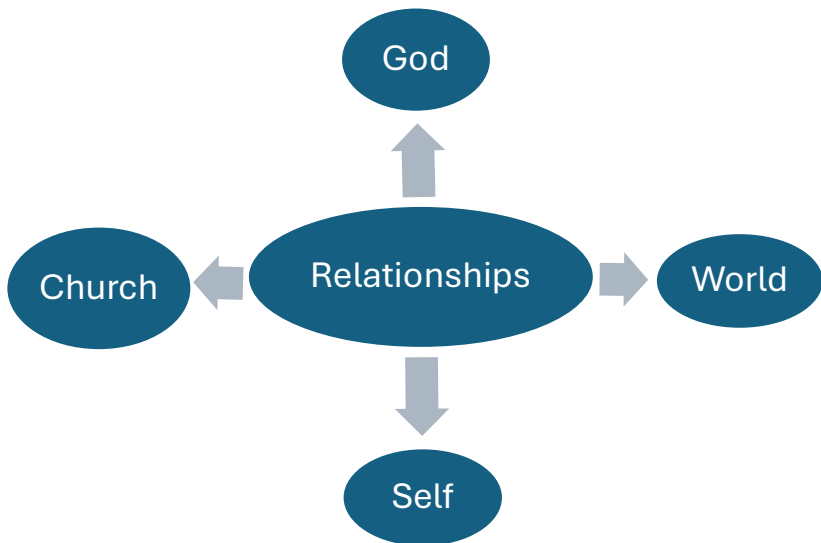
4 Key Relationships

The Greatest Commandments

- **Matthew 22:37-40** – Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your **God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.
And the second is like it: ‘Love your **neighbor** as **yourself**.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Christ’s New Command

- **John 13:34-35** – “A new command I give you: Love **one another**. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”



Reflection & Discussion

- **Taking Inventory:** *Describe these four relationships in terms of past experience, present reality & future hopes.*
- *Is there one that especially needs help right now?*

The Process of Growth

Christ's Invitation

- **Mark 1:14-17** – After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the **good news** of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. **Repent** and **believe** the good news!”
As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, **follow** me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

Foundation

- In seeking growth, we always build on the foundation of what God has already done and provided for us.

Foundation

- Gospel

Formation

- By forming structures and habits in our daily lives, we say “no” to certain things to create time & space for God to work.

Formation

- Repentance

Filling

- Through adopting spiritual practices, we invite God to fill the space in our lives and to transform us from within.

Filling

- Belief

Fruit

- As a result, our lives begin to produce fruit that benefits others and multiples.

Fruit

- Following

Reflection & Discussion

- *Is there an area of your life in which you need to grow?*
- *What fruit are you hoping to see in your life?*

God: Tapping into our Source

1. Foundation – God’s Presence

- a. [Psalm 139](#); [Isaiah 57:15](#); [Hebrews 4:14-16](#); [Romans 8:26-27](#)
- b. **Hebrews 4:16** – Let us then **approach** God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
- c. ***How is God accessible to us? Does this feel true to you?***

2. Formation – Seeking Solitude

- a. [1 Kings 19:11-13](#); [Mark 1:35-45](#); [Matthew 6:5-8](#)
- b. **Matthew 6:6** – But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
- c. ***Are there times & places when you’ve heard from God?***
- d. ***What challenges stand in the way of finding those times?***

3. Filling – Persistent Prayer

- a. [Psalm 55:17](#); [Luke 18:1-14](#); [1 Thess 5:16-18](#); [Eph 6:10-20](#)
- b. **Matthew 6:9-13** – This, then, is how you should pray:
“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.”
- c. ***What do you notice about prayer in these verses? How would you describe your own prayer habits?***

4. Fruit – Finding Peace

- a. [Psalm 37](#); [Luke 11:1-13](#); [1 John 5:14](#)
- b. **Philippians 4:6-7** – Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- c. ***What assurances do these verses offer about prayer? What has been your experience? What do you hope for?***

Self: Seeking Direction

1. Foundation – The Spirit of Truth

- a. [Matthew 28:20](#); [John 14:15-27, 16:7-15](#); [Romans 8:14-17](#)
- b. **John 16:13** – But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.
- c. ***What assurances did Jesus offer before He departed? Have you experienced this in your own journey?***

2. Formation – Silent Study

- a. [1 Samuel 3:10](#); [Proverbs 1:1-9](#); [Eccl 3:7](#); [James 1:19](#)
- b. **Psalms 1:1-2** – Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.
- c. ***What can get in the way of us to hearing from God? What changes might be necessary in your own life?***

3. Filling – Scriptural Meditation

- a. [Philippians 4:8-9](#); [Colossians 3:16](#); [Hebrews 4:12](#)
- b. **Psalms 119:11,15-16** – I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
...I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.
I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.
- c. ***Which words describe a person's ongoing interaction with Scripture? What has been your experience?***

4. Fruit – Wisdom to Persevere

- a. [Psalm 19](#); [119:105](#); [Isa 40:7](#); [Luke 24:27, 45](#); [Mat 7:24-27](#)
- b. **2 Timothy 3:14-17** ...the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation thru faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...
- c. ***According to these and earlier verses, what are some practical benefits of dwelling on the Scriptures?***

Church: A Place to Belong

1. Foundation – God’s Gifts

- a. [Gen 1:27-2:3](#); [Acts 17:24-28](#); [Ephesians 1:1-14](#); [2 Peter 1:1-4](#)
- b. **1 Corinthians 1:1-9** – I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way. ...Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.
- c. ***What blessings has God given to humanity & believers? How can an awareness of this affect our daily lives?***

2. Formation – Sabbath & Stillness

- a. [Dt 5:12-15](#); [Isaiah 30:15,18](#); [Mark 2:23-28](#); [Mat 11:28-12:13](#)
- b. **Hebrews 4:9-11** – There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest...
- c. ***What was the original purpose of practicing Sabbath? What does it mean today? What could it look like for you?***

3. Filling – Communal Worship

- a. [Matthew 18:20](#); [Col 3:12-16](#); [Eph 2:11-22](#); [Heb 10:22-25](#)
- b. **Acts 2:36-47** – Those who accepted his message were baptized...They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...All the believers were together and had everything in common...Every day they continued to meet together...
- c. ***Have you been baptized? Are you in regular fellowship? What have those experiences meant for you?***

4. Fruit – Generous Love

- a. [John 13:34-35](#); [17:20-23](#); [Romans 12:1-13](#); [Eph 4:11-16](#)
- b. **Romans 12:1-13** – ...In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
- c. ***How do these earlier verses describe Christian fellowship? What ongoing purposes does it serve?***

World: Making a Difference

1. Foundation: Christ's Incarnation

- a. [John 3:16-17; 14:6-9; Eph 1:9-14; 3:1-12; Heb 1:1-3](#)
- b. **John 1:9-18** – The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...who came from the Father, full of grace and truth...No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is Himself God...has made him known.
- c. ***What did Christ accomplish in His earthly life?***
What unique truth about God does this reveal to us?

2. Formation – Sanctified and Sent

- a. [Isa 6:1-8; 58; Ps 66:16-20; Rom 12:1-2; Col 3:1-16; 1 Pe 1:2](#)
- b. **John 17:15-18** – My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.
Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.
- c. ***What does it mean to be sanctified, and what purpose does it play in preparing us for our role in this world?***

3. Filling – Vocation: Called to Serve

- a. [Mk 10:42-45; Gal 5:13-14; 1 Cor 10:31, 15:58; 1 Thes 4:11-12](#)
- b. **Colossians 3:17-4:1** – And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him....
- c. ***Are there areas of your life that feel pointless?***
- d. ***For Christians, why does their entire life & work matter?***

4. Fruit – Witness: Sharing our Joy

- a. [Matthew 5:13-16; Colossians 4:2-6; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 Jn 1:1-4](#)
- b. **1 Peter 3:15** – Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
- c. ***When was the last time you joyfully shared good news?***
- d. ***How can our everyday actions contribute to our witness?***

Next Steps

God

- In pursuit of knowing God more, be sure to set aside time in **Solitude** for **Prayer**. See “formation & filling,” above.
- In addition, the [Alpha Course](#) or [Practicing the Way](#) can provide **additional teaching** for groups.

Self

- In pursuit of personal growth and health, be sure to find time in **Silence** with **Scripture**. This can include Sunday sermons too!
- In addition, [Freedom Session](#) and [Authentic Living](#) are intensive **courses** for groups to seek healing & growth.

Church

- In pursuit of healthy fellowship with other believers, be sure to set aside a **Sabbath** day for Communal **Worship**.
- An essential part of following Jesus is to declare our repentance & faith through **baptism**. This also provides a context to share your testimony in fellowship with others ([Matthew 28:18-20](#); [Acts 2:36-47](#)).
- In addition, church **membership** is a way to express one’s belonging and commitment to a particular local church ([Romans 12:1-13](#); [1 Corinthians 12:27](#); [Ephesians 4:11-16](#); [Col 3:12-16](#)). See Parkdale “Intro to Membership” booklet.

World

- In order to make a difference in the world for Christ, we must refuse to be conformed to it – this may require “fasting” from certain things – thus we are **Sanctified** (set apart) and **Sent**.
- Consider where you are **already** sent in the world, and why God might have placed you there for His glory ([Matthew 5:13-16](#)).
- Talk with others in your fellowship about what God may be calling you to do **together** in your community ([1 Peter 2:9-12](#))



Unity. Charity. Jesus Christ



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For more resources, see:

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