ESSENTIALS TO GROW

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Essentials to Grow. This teaching series is designed to give new believers and anyone else who wants to build up the foundation of their faith an encouraging space to talk about who God is and what having a relationship with Jesus means for your life. This group is a safe place to ask genuine questions that may have challenged your faith. There may not always be a perfect answer, but that's ok. God's Word tells us that "His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways." A god that could be fully understood by us would be no God at all. Aren't you grateful to have a God who is bigger, wiser, and who can do more than we ever could?

Our hope is for you to flourish in your relationship with and understanding of God. We believe that you can break old thought patterns, grow tremendously in faith, and experience extraordinary life-change, both personally and spiritually, through this teaching series as you begin to seek after Jesus every day.

To get you started, here are some practical next steps for you to take now that you have decided to follow Jesus:

- **Take our One-Year Challenge.** For one year, go all in. That includes attending Sunday services, Saturday Morning Prayer, and other events and conferences. Complete Grow Steps, join a Grow Team, and build relationships through Grow Groups. We believe that if you dedicate one year of your life to doing these things, you will see God transform your life in new and exciting ways.

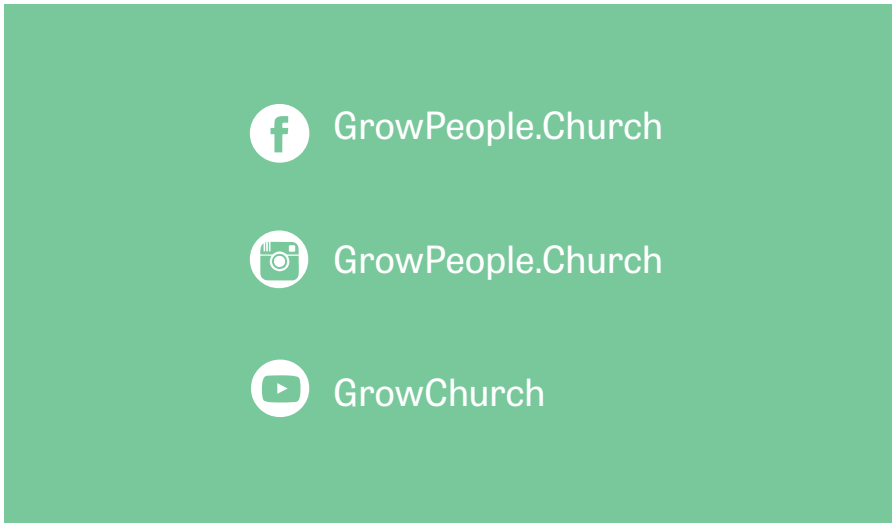
- **Get Water Baptized.** This is an important step of obedience that shows others we have personally trusted Jesus for our salvation. If you have not been water baptized, the opportunity to do so is available several times a year. Visit Growchurch.com to sign up for an upcoming water baptism.

- **Start attending Sunday services regularly.** It's important to be plugged in to a church with other believers. There are probably many good churches in your area, and although we'd love for you to call Grow Church home, and invite you to join us regularly, the most important thing is to pick a place and commit. If you would like to become a member at Grow Church, attend Step One of the Grow Steps available the first and third Sundays of the month.

- **Complete Grow Steps.** Grow Steps is a two step process designed to help you discover your redemptive purpose and live the full life God created you for. Grow Steps is available on Sundays.

- **Join a Grow Group.** We also want you to know that there are a variety of Grow Groups available – from Bible and book studies, marriage and financial groups, to running and lunch groups, there is something for everyone. Grow Groups have one simple purpose: to bring people together because we believe that real life change happens in the context of relationships. Check out the Grow Groups directory at GrowChurch.com to find and get involved with one that interests you.

- **Stay connected to what's going on at Grow Church**, hear testimonies of life change, and see all kinds of other inspiring content through social media.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you process the video teachings and kick-start group discussions each week as you grow deeper in your faith.

Watch

Each week we will address and explain a main topic through the video teaching and group discussion. Each video is 15-20 minutes long.

Big Idea

This is a summary highlighting the main point or key thoughts of the video message for that week. Each "Big Idea" is followed by a supporting Scripture.

Discussion

This section contains questions that are designed to encourage discussion and group interaction, while hopefully moving people closer to God and to others.

Prayer Focus

Each week you'll find a suggested prayer focus tailored to your group's current step in the journey.

Next Steps

Next Steps are your opportunity to take what you learn each week and put it into practice. They are practical, attainable, and stretching actions you can take to grow and move forward in your journey following Jesus.

Notes

Use this space to jot down noes and insights during your discussions.

Resources

This area contains additional resources based on each week's topic. If you would like to continue learning outside of the group, this would be a great tool for you.

LEADER RESOURCES

Leader Tips

These are practical steps and tips for the leader(s) of this Grow Group to help them lead well and create a positive group dynamic.

Common Questions

This group is designed to be a fresh start for new believers and anyone else who needs to build up the foundation of their faith. With that in mind, you may get some questions each week that aren't already covered specifically in the video or Big Idea. Each week, this section will include some of the questions that might come up and suggested answers to equip you to respond.

WEEK ONE

MADE FOR LOVE

WATCH *Made for Love*

Big Idea

God created you out of a desire to love and be loved and to have a family. He is a Father that would do anything for you, even sending His son to die in our place in order to save us from our sins and set us free to be in a loving relationship with Him. In essence, God reversed what happened in the Garden- the fall of man- through Jesus to bring us right back where He started with us.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16 NIV

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

1 JOHN 1:12 NKJV

Discussion

- What was God's purpose in creating Man?
- What is your relationship with your earthly father like? How could that effect your relationship with your heavenly Father?
- Why do you think Adam and Eve listened to Satan?
- Satan lied to Eve. Do you feel you have listened to some of his lies?
- How did humanity end up with a negative mindset?
- Why did Jesus have to die for humanity?

Prayer Focus

In your daily prayer time, pray using the scriptures from the Big Idea. Thank God for loving you so much to send His son for you, that you could be with Him forever. Thank Him for making you a child of His. Ask God to reveal His love for you more and more. Renew your commitment each day to seek Him with all your heart.

Next Steps

Spend time in the presence of the Father this week and develop a personal time of connection with Him. Don't worry about being formal. Try calling God by a different name like "Father", "Dad". Just be real, and watch how your time with God transforms.

Notes

Resources

Grow Group: Authority of the Believer

Reading: "Authority of the Believer"

Series: "What's in Your Mouth"

WEEK TWO

THE REAL YOU

WATCH *The Real You*

Big Idea

Now you are born again, a child of God, you have a new identity to discover: It's the real you that God has always intended for you to be. This new identity is discovered daily as you spend time in the Bible. The new data of the Bible pushes out negative knowledge that we've acquired from living in this world and replaces it with new data that is in sync with God's design of us. This is so crucial because we will live out what we are thinking. As we daily go through this process and hear His voice, we experience transformation - becoming more like Him.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

ROMANS 12: 2 NLT

Discussion

- Do you struggle with negative thoughts?
- How do we get negative thoughts?
- Can you see how observation, associations and teachings have shaped how you think?
- What are some ways we can guard our heart?
- How does “renewing your mind” transform your life?
- How does the Bible transform us?

Prayer Focus

In your daily prayer time, thank God for transforming you more and more to be like Him. Ask the Lord to help you uncover beliefs about yourself and God that are lies. Ask the Lord to help you see your new identity every time you read the Bible.

Next Steps

Set a time aside daily to read the Bible so you can discover God’s character - what He is like. As you do, you discover what you are like since you are made in His image. Have pen and paper ready to right down what you feel God is saying to you.

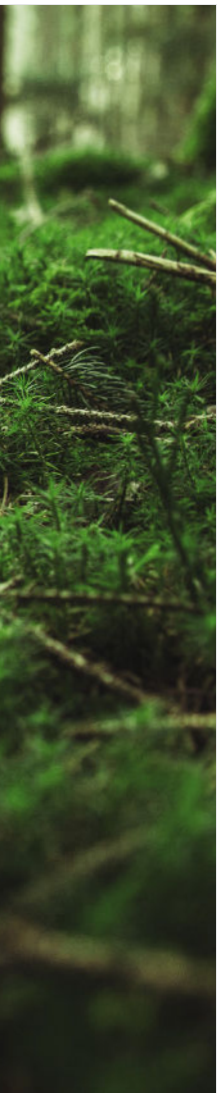
Notes

Resources

Grow Group: Freedom

Reading: "God's Creative Power" by Charles Capps

Series: "I Am"



WEEK THREE

YOU HAVE A HELPER

WATCH*: You Have a Helper*

Big Idea

God, in His great love for us, had this amazing plan to have Himself live in us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes in us when we receive Christ as our savior. He is the 3rd part of the trinity - He is God even as Jesus and the Father are. He not only makes us born again, but He is there to help us to be as Christ is as well as to live our lives in the character, purpose and power of God. He is ready to help every moment of our day! Being filled with the Holy Spirit does not make you better than anyone else, it makes you better than yourself.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.

JOHN 14:16 ESV

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

JOHN 14:26 ESV

Discussion

- What have you believed about the Holy Spirit? Where do you think your beliefs came from?
- Did hearing about the Holy Spirit change how you think about Him? If so, how will this new perspective change how you make decisions in the future?
- Have you ever had an encounter with the Holy Spirit where He convicted or guided you to an action? Did you feel a signal from God or hear His "still, small voice"? Did you listen and do what the Spirit was leading you to do? What were the results?
- Share steps you can take to grow in your relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Prayer Focus

Cultivate an intimate and daily friendship with the Holy Spirit. Pray using Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ask the Holy Spirit to operate in your life and for Him to show you, change you, and fill you daily.

Next Steps

- Ask the Holy Spirit these two questions: "What am I doing that I should not be doing?" and "What am I not doing that I should be doing?" Listen for His answer, and make a decision to move forward in obedience to the Spirit.

Notes

Resources

Grow Group: The God I Never Knew

Reading: "The God I Never Knew"

Series: "My Honored Guest"

WEEK FOUR

CONVERSING WITH GOD

WATCH *Conversing With God*

Big Idea

The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13 walks us through how to pray. The Lord's Prayer is not the only way to pray, but it does provide a guideline for how we can pray effectively. Many of us have repeated the Lord's Prayer by memory or read it word for word as a more general prayer, but it is also very valuable as an outline for our prayer life. The Lord's Prayer is simple, beautiful, and powerful. If we draw out the principles in His prayer, we can use them to help us develop our own prayer life.

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."

MATTHEW 6:9–13 NIV

Discussion

- Does prayer tend to be your first response or your last resort? Why do you think that is?
- After hearing this week's message, what do you think your prayer time should look like?
- What are some potential distractions that get in the way of spending time in prayer?
- God responds to the prayers of His people, and His answers sometimes surprise us. Share a time God answered your prayer.

Prayer Focus

Ask God to help you fully surrender anything that you need to release to Him. Pray for a healthy, vibrant daily prayer life. Utilize the scripture prayer outline this week in your prayer time.

Next Steps

Begin familiarizing yourself with the tools in the Pray First Guide (see "Resources"). Plan your prayer time by establishing a time and place that you can see yourself using daily.

Notes

Resources

Grow Group: Conversations With God

Reading: Pray First Guide - at GrowChurch.com

Series: “Whispers”

WEEK FIVE

GROWING WITH OTHERS

WATCH *Growing With Others*

Big Idea

God created us to live in community and not in isolation. In fact, we can't grow effectively unless we are growing with others. As organs of a body are interdependent on each other so it is with each member of Christ's body - the Church. This is why God calls us to nurture and initiate meaningful relationships as well as stay away from harmful relationships. Developing strong relationships takes time. So take the time to develop Godly relationships with your church family, friends, co-workers. Take the time to be in community for "we" is always better than "me".

A mirror reflects a man's face, but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses.

PROVERBS 27:19 TLB

Discussion

- Discuss how your personal growth is connected to others.
- Talk about a time when you walked through a difficult season on your own. How do you believe the support of a Grow Group would have impacted the way you experienced that season?
- Can you think of any relationships in your life that feel negative, draining, or unhealthy? What are ways you could start to step away from those relationships?
- What new relationships do you need to start? How could those existing relationships be strengthened?

Prayer Focus

Pray to have healthy relationships. Ask God to help restore any relationships that have been broken, and for the strength and wisdom to sever harmful ones.

Next Steps

Ask God to show you any relationships in your life that need to be restored. Take a small step towards reconciliation. Starting may be as simple as making a phone call.

Consider joining a team to serve on so that you can be in greater community

Ask the other members of your group how you can pray for them. Write down their prayer requests and pray for them throughout the week. You might even text them with an encouraging word sometime during the week.

Notes

Resources

Grow Group: Any Grow Group

Reading: "Culture of Honor" by Danny Silk

Series: "InstaFam"

WEEK SIX

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

WATCH *Making a Difference*

Big Idea

God made you in His image and likeness to be loved, to be a part of a family, and with a purpose. That purpose involves making a difference in the lives of others. God wired you in such a way that unless you are impacting people, you won't be content. God has given each one of us unique gifts and talents to be used to make a difference in the form of serving others. There is great eternal reward when we ***live*** making a difference in the lives of others.

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

EPHESIANS 4:10 NIV

Discussion

- Do you ever think about what it means to be made in His image?
- What do you feel like when you have selflessly done something for someone else?
- Do you experience the tension of building your life versus building God's kingdom? Give some examples of this tension.
- What does it mean and look like to "serve others" ?
- Give some examples how we use our time, talents and resources to serve others?
- Do you think much about your eternal reward?

Prayer Focus

In your daily prayer time, ask God to show you what gifts and talents He has placed within you to make a difference and even how you can use them. Ask Him to help you be sensitive to the needs of people around you so you can serve people generously.

Next Steps

If you haven't discovered what your unique talents are, take step two of Grow Steps to help you figure that out. Also this week, think of one thing you can do to serve someone. Tell someone about that so you can keep yourself accountable.

Notes

Resources

Grow Teams: Attend a Grow Steps class to join a team.

Series: “Legacy 2019”

WEEK SEVEN

HEAVEN IS REAL

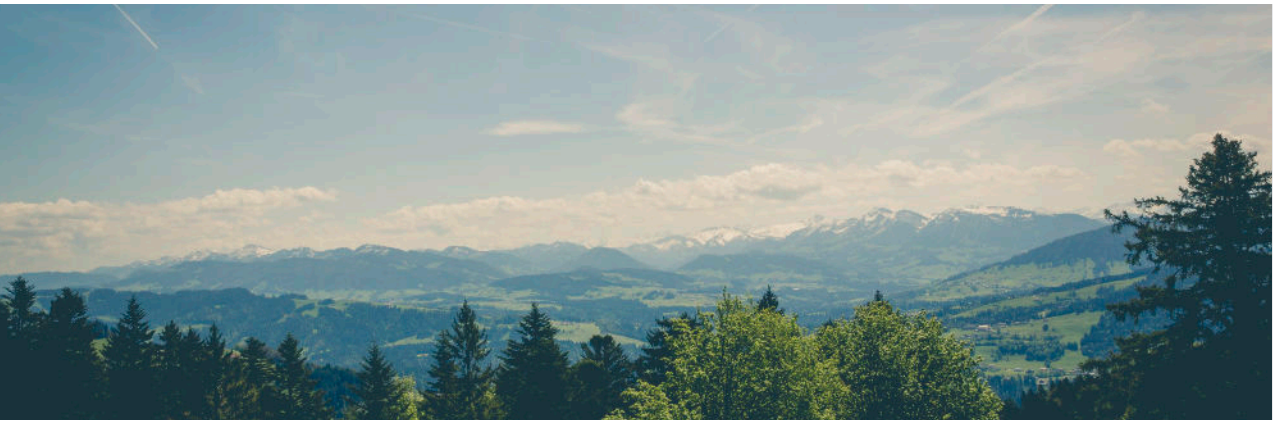
WATCH *Heaven Is Real*

Big Idea

What Jesus did in coming to earth, dying on the cross for our sins, was for humanity to be reunited with God and live forever with God in a real place called heaven. While we remain on earth, God calls us to live with others in mind who may not know Christ and are on a pathway to hell. Living this way allows us to experience a rewarding life here on earth as well as in heaven.

"Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.

MARK 10:29-30 NIV



Discussion

- Discuss what you heard about Heaven in this week's message. Was it different than what you had learned before? How?
- What excites you the most about Heaven?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said to "build your treasure in heaven"?
- Discuss how we can live with an eternity mindset

Prayer Focus

Pray that God would help you live with Heaven in mind and give you the wisdom to make the most out of every opportunity.

Next Steps

Do you know someone whose eternity is still on the line? Identify some ways that you can help them take a next step. Starting may be as simple as reaching out to them and building a closer relationship, sharing what God has done in your life, or inviting them to church. Don't be intimidated! You can start small and be amazed at what God does.

Notes

GrowChurch.com