

PURSUING GROWTH AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

As we ring in a new year and dream, plan and pray through our goals and desires for 2016, it is only fitting that we take time to focus on our lifelong pursuit of growing in maturity in Christ and our relationship with Him.

Our relationship with God affects every area of our life.

As John 15:5 states, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” When our relationship with God is healthy and authentic, it will be reflected through our thoughts, behaviors, actions, work and relationships.

We have developed the following sets of questions as a tool to help you prayerfully reflect on areas of your life where you can invite the Holy Spirit to do His work in you, in cooperation with your intention and discipline. They are a vehicle to help you assess ways that you can grow and become more mature in Christ.

It is always helpful to take time to reflect and pray about each aspect of our lives – our character, relationships, words, actions, behaviors, deeds – and identify areas where we can invite God to do His sanctifying work and help us be transformed into His likeness.

We don’t want to turn our walk with Christ into a bunch of “to do’s.” Our hope is that the following questions, and setting some intentions (goals), will spark thoughts and spur excitement to invite the Holy Spirit to do His work in you.

Before you begin responding to the questions, seek the Lord in prayer. Tell Him that you want to know Him, to know His Word in order to do His will. Ask Him to open the eyes of your heart and lovingly show you areas that He desires you to grow in. Ask God to lead you and guide you in all truth. Then, in faith, thank Him for what He reveals and for what He is going to do.

Prayerfully read the questions below and be honest in answering. Ideally, after you have responded to the questions, it will reveal growth opportunities, and you will have more clarity and intentionality in pursuing transformation in all areas of your life, through self-discipline and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Consider sharing the areas that you have identified as opportunities for growth with a prayer partner so that the two of you can encourage one another as you each pursue the life that God intended for you.

As you prepare, consider first these verses. What do they say about personal evaluation?

“The wisdom of the prudent is to give careful thought to their ways.” (Proverbs 14:8)

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.” (2 Cor. 13:5)

“Each one should test his own actions.” (Gal. 6:4)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Psalm 129:23-24)

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

I. WORD & PRAYER

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

1. How would you describe your relationship with God right now?
2. What parts of your relationship with God do you feel like “a tree planted by streams of water”? In what areas are you encouraged in your daily walk with God? In what areas do you feel stuck or stagnant?
3. Two anchors in our journey to know God are reading his Word and personal prayer. How would you describe your time in the Word? What is working? What is missing? How would you describe your personal prayer life? What is working? What is missing?

4. Are you presently being disciplined or mentored by someone? If not, who is someone you know that you could ask to help you grow in maturity in Christ?
5. Are you presently discipling or mentoring someone? Who is a person younger in their faith that you can help grow in maturity in Christ?
6. Are you currently walking in obedience to God? In what areas in your life is God calling you to surrender and seek and trust Him?

Based on the above reflection on WORD & PRAYER, what is something specific you will do to pursue growth in these areas?

What resources and help do you need?

II. COMMUNITY

1 John 4: 6-8

We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1. Have the relationships with people in your life been growing deeper? Do you have some that are stagnant or staying at the surface level? What can you do to create more depth in your relationships?
2. Where is there relational difficulty or unresolved conflict with anyone in your life? List the names of people in your life where you are experiencing a strained relationship. How is God refining you in this relationship? What is He asking you to do?
3. How are you honoring the Lord and reflecting Jesus in all your relationships? What needs to change?
4. If dating, are you honoring physical purity in your relationship? What are the healthy boundaries in your relationship?
5. If dating, is the man/woman a follower of Jesus? Are you each growing individually and together in your relationship with Christ?
6. If married, how are you honoring your marriage covenant? How are you growing in your marriage?

Based on the above reflection on COMMUNITY, what is something specific you will do to pursue growth in these areas?

What resources and help do you need?

III. WORK LIFE | HOME LIFE

1 Corinthians 10:31

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1. How do you see God bringing purpose in your work? How would you describe to a friend the reasons God has placed you in your workplace?
2. How are integrity, purpose, and intention showing themselves in your work and home life? What is God calling you to do?
3. How do you seek God's guidance at work?
4. For parents, how are you investing quality and quantity time in your children? How are you parenting them to their unique God-given temperaments?

Based on the above reflection on WORK LIFE | HOME LIFE, what is something specific you will do to pursue growth in these areas?

What resources and help do you need?

IV. PHYSICAL LIFE

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1. Do you see your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit? Where do you struggle?
2. Describe your physical health. What is going well? Where do you need to improve?
3. Are you getting adequate sleep? How can you adjust your schedule and allow for sufficient rest?

Based on the above reflection on PHYSICAL LIFE, what is something specific you will do to pursue growth in these areas?

What resources and help do you need?

V. SERVE | RENEW

Philippians 1:3-6

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-14

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ ...

1. What ministry are you currently serving in at Park? How are your spiritual gifts utilized in that ministry?
2. If you are not currently serving, what are your spiritual gifts? (Use the Spiritual Gifts assessment on Park's website, or the mobile app "Spiritual Gifts Test"*)
3. Where and how are you renewing the city outside of the church? How are you experiencing growth?
4. Are you a partner at Park Community Church? What does it mean to be a partner? What is expected of you? What do you expect?
5. If you are not a partner at Park, what is holding you back? What information do you need or what questions need to be resolved for you?

Based on the above reflection on SERVE | RENEW, what is something specific you will do to pursue growth in these areas?

What resources and help do you need?



* Download the Spiritual app from your App store (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/spiritual-gifts-test/id680234954?mt=8>). It's available on iOS and Android devices.

NOTE TO SMALL GROUP LEADERS

FOLLOW UP

Choose a small group night to have small group members share some of their growth goals, allow time for members to get in groups of 2-3 and share specific growth goals—discuss how to add encouragement and accountability as they pursue growing in the areas they have identified.

Have your small group close in prayer in groups of 2-3 people, using Col 1:9-14, inserting their specific names, and praying for the specific growth goals they each have established.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for _____, asking that _____ may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May _____ be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified _____ to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.