

Overview

If we walk closely with Jesus, we will find ourselves constantly being invited to something new. In fact, a life-long process of spiritual growth is not possible unless we are open to change. Many times we find ourselves frustrated with our own growth. Understanding that spiritual growth is a process; that God is proud of us right where we're at, that God wants us to keep growing in freedom to become the person we were created to be, and that spiritual growth is a result of God's work, can help us to enjoy the journey. We can do our part as we choose to follow Jesus into the new understandings and places He is inviting us to.

Big Idea

Re-engaging spiritual growth means that we are constantly open to the new understandings and places that God takes us as we engage with Him.

Connect with Each Other

Describe the last time you faced something new that totally frightened you. How did you react?

Connect with the Big Idea

What is spiritual growth?

Interact regarding the following case study:

I've been a Christian since I was very young. I go to church and I pray before meals. I heard this message on spiritual growth last week- but honestly, what's in it for me? Why would I want to grow?

(Leaders- don't allow yourself or group members to correct the answers of others at this point. Simply transition to the next section as you invite members to discover through the discussion to follow.)

Notes:

Connect with the Message

Spend some time in Colossians 3:7-17 using the following spiritual practice.

Spiritual Practice- Contemplative Reading

1. Invite God to reveal Himself and tune your hearts to hear His voice.
2. Close your eyes and focus in as I read Col 3:7-17 slowly.
 - What tone of voice do you hear as I read this invitation?
 - What pictures do you see as I read the description of newness?
 - Picture yourself transforming into the type of person described in this passage.
 - How does your heart respond to this invitation?
3. Read the passage once again, contemplating the same questions.
4. Share your experience with the group.

In fact, somewhere deep inside us, we long to become the persons God created us to be. I have a deep longing to be free from anger, bitterness, self-centeredness and to live freely and joyfully the life Jesus would live if Jesus were me. This is why I want to grow.

How do I get there? (rhetorical question)

1. Read Matthew 13:51-52. Restate Jesus' message to His disciples in your own words. Why was it so important especially for the scribe to hear this instruction?
2. Jesus is inviting us to follow Him into newness throughout our lives on earth with Him; from the beginning to the end. What keeps us from being open to the new understandings and experiences He invites us to?
3. Spiritual growth is a process and God is in charge of our spiritual growth. Looking back on your life with God, describe the process of spiritual growth/transformation that has taken place so far.
4. God is proud of you where you are now. Why does God desire for you to continue to grow? (leaders- guide your members to be inspired by the vision God has for all of us to become the persons He created us to be- to live freely and joyfully.)
5. Just like your parents could not cause your to physically grow, you cannot make yourself grow spiritually. Thinking back on the message answer these questions:

What is God's part?

What is your part?

Connecting the Message to Our Lives

In what ways will you become more open to new understandings and experiences with God:

in the places you currently connect with God and others in community?

in your choices as you seek to connect with God and others in community in the coming year?

Prayer

Pray for each other regarding the desires expressed in “Connecting the Message to Our Lives”.