

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you as our guest today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and "at home."

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

November 16, 2008

WHAT DOES SPIRITUAL GROWTH LOOK LIKE?

"Strengthening your journey with Christ"

Hebrews 6:1

- Did you know God's desire for close relationship is even greater than yours?

Song of Songs 4:9 "You've [ravished] captured my heart, dear friend. You looked at me, and I fell in love. One look my way and I was hopelessly in love!" MSG

- The growing process: The Bible describes the different stages as "babe", "little children", "young men" and "fathers".
- Our survey's statistical data revealed we have four segments: "Explorers" (pre-natal), "Growing" (babes & little children), "Close to Christ" (teenagers), and "Christ-centered" (adults).

† o o o ... with its endless ups and downs

- Please try to identify where you are -- keeping these words of the apostle Paul in mind ...

Hebrews 6:1 "We must try to become **mature** ..." CEV

1. SEGMENTS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

◀ EXPLORER

- Those of us in this group are on the left side of the cross. God has started His work in us. "*I believe in God, but I'm not sure about Christ.*"
- Christianity is a growing process, not a crisis point.

◀ GROWING

- Those of us in this group have chosen to cross the line and have committed to trust Christ with our salvation and for our eternity.

• "*God is for me. I do feel His support and help. This does work. I just need to keep growing.*"

- Because we are still learning the disciplines of spiritual life, we are very vulnerable to not being able to get past a bad habit, wrong relationship or past emotional bruises, etc. This can cause us to "stall".

◀ CLOSE TO CHRIST

- Those of us in this group genuinely love Jesus, feel close to Him and depend on Him for daily guidance.
- Lots of growing Christians mistranslate this “God being for me” thing into: “God is for my all-American dream in this world ... my next promotion, health, etc., etc.”

◀ CHRIST-CENTERED

Acts 20:24 “my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus - the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.” NLT

- You can grow to the point where you can honestly say “*Okay, God, enough of my program, enough of me. I am ready here and now to surrender my agenda for the rest of my life and do Your program.*”
- One way of knowing who is on the “Christ-centered” side is by asking whose program you are asking help for in your prayers.

2. THE JOURNEY

- This progress is driven by one common factor -- a deep desire to know and love God.
- How quickly you grow through these stages is largely dependent upon how much you respond to and nurture your desire for God.
- The survey measured the heart of a person, **not** their behavior. **Yet** unless a person’s behavior soon follows their heart, they will stall out and fall.
- The dots after the last symbolic person indicates your journey in becoming like Jesus never stops.

The focus of New Life’s leadership is primarily on one thing:
Strengthening your journey with Christ.

Ephesians 3:20 “God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.” MSG

“What Does Spiritual Growth Look Like?”

For personal or small group study

Week of November 16, 2008

SPIRITUAL GROWTH SEGMENTS

EXPLORER – experiencing first steps in spiritual growth and not involving God in daily life. Unsure about Biblical truths. [left side of the cross]

GROWING – discovering faith through church experiences and starting to incorporate spiritual practices. [prayer, Bible reflection, etc.]

CLOSE TO CHRIST – experiencing higher levels of personal spiritual practices and more involved in serving. Still holds back from full commitment.

CHRIST-CENTERED – living a fully surrendered life demonstrated by much higher levels of spiritual practices and involvement in mentoring.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Pastor and author John Ortberg said, “*No one can be a disciple of Jesus because they think they should. They have to actually want it.*” Discuss what this statement is saying to you. How does it impact you?
2. **Why is it important** to understand the segments of your spiritual journey? What are they measuring? Do you know where you are, and where you want to go, according to what these segments are saying? Explain. [Matthew 22:36-40; James 1:22]
3. **How important** is it to know where you are in regards to the spiritual growth scale above and from the sermon notes? Why is it important to know where you are? What is the next step after you have discovered where you are? What part does this have in strengthening your spiritual journey? [James 1:23-27; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Philippians 2:12-16]
4. What do you believe are some catalysts that trigger spiritual growth? What **does** spiritual growth look like? [Psalm 119:11, 105; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17; Hebrews 2:1]
5. If where you are in your spiritual journey is based on the attitude of your heart and not on your behavior ~ **how important is it for your behavior to follow your heart?** What consequences can come if this doesn’t happen? [James 2:14-20, 24]
6. How has this group study helped you grow spiritually? Share it with a friend.