

CORE VALUES

for Spiritual Growth & Membership



A word from the pastoral staff at Grace Church:

Our goal in providing this study is to aid you in your growth as a follower of Christ, and help you to better understand a handful of areas in the Christian life that we believe have personal and corporate implications. We pray that as you learn more about our Core Values, you would learn more about your relationship with Jesus Christ and grow in your faith.

It is important to understand that no amount of effort to conform your life to these core values can produce a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. That is by the grace of God, through faith in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ for your sin. If you are not a follower of Christ, or are unsure about your understanding of his message and work, please allow us to meet you where you were you are in your faith and help you grow in clarity of the Gospel. You can contact us through the website, by phone, or drop a Connect Card during worship to put us in a position to serve you.

www.gracechurchsc.org

864.284.0122

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Introduction

Introduction

Mission is an end toward which all our efforts and ambition is directed. Yet all too often we as Christians either lack purpose or fail to have a common mission as a church. Here at Grace Church, we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ clearly outlined His mission for the church with His final instructions to His followers: “Go throughout the world and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19-20). A **disciple** is a follower of Christ who is growing in **spiritual maturity**. A spiritually mature person lives a life of **spiritual passion** for God AND for others. All three descriptions - discipleship, spiritual maturity, and spiritual passion - can be used interchangeably because they all connote the same image: individuals who have trusted Christ as their personal Savior and have committed their energy and ambition to a common end - becoming more and more like Christ (Romans 8:29, 1 Corinthians 3:8-10).

Our Mission Statement:

**Grace Church exists to make mature followers of
Jesus Christ by equipping believers
for a life of spiritual passion that impacts their
home, their community, and the world for Jesus Christ.**

Observe the following verses:

Ephesians 4:11-13

11 He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, 13 until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.

Q: From these verses, what is the responsibility of the church? What are the characteristics of a mature follower of Christ? How do we attain this maturity?

Introduction

Few Christians seem to possess a 'big picture' of spirituality and even fewer believers (less than one out of five) describe spiritual success in terms broader than a single aspect of personal maturity. Most born-again adults have a very narrow view of what they are striving to become as Christians, what spiritual maturity might look like in their lives, and what it would take for them to maximize their potential as followers of Christ.

George Barna, *Growing True Disciples*

Q: When such a large majority of Christians lack a "big picture" of spirituality, what is the result in the church?

Q: How does the Barna quote relate to your own experience as a Christian?

Q: How would you define a spiritually mature Christian?

Our research also points out that most born-again adults are limited in their ability to grow spiritually because they have failed to set any goals for their spiritual development, failed to develop standards against which to measure their growth, or failed to establish procedures for being held accountable for their growth. Only four out of every ten church members responded that they had set personal spiritual growth goals for themselves.

George Barna, *Growing True Disciples*

Discipline is a key ingredient for any type of growth, especially spiritual growth. Discipline is difficult to cultivate and even harder to maintain. However, there is one thing that makes the act of becoming disciplined easier. We are disciplined about the things that we are **passionate** about! As Christians, we should be passionate about reaching our full potential in Christ.

Q: When would you say you have been the most disciplined in your life?

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Q: How would you describe what it means to be “passionate”?

Q: Is the idea of being intentional about the Christian life Biblical?

Consider **1 Timothy 4:7-8:**

7 Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives’ tales. Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. 8 Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next.

One glaring and difficult question still remains. How do we go about cultivating this life of spiritual passion? There are many areas of the Christian life that are keys to this pursuit. As a church, we have identified six areas that we believe are “foundations” to becoming more like Christ and living a healthy and balanced Christian life. Therefore, we have developed a tool to address these six areas and to help you become intentional about the pursuit of spiritual passion.

We refer to these areas as the “core values” for spiritual passion in the life of a believer:

Relationally Connected

Developing relationships of encouragement and accountability

Biblically Oriented

Conforming your life to biblical truth

Anchored in Prayer

Pursuing an intimate and dependent relationship with God

Ministry Focused

Utilizing your gifts and abilities to serve others

Culturally Engaged

Creating opportunities to communicate the message of salvation

Courageously Generous

Managing, not owning, the resources God has given us

Introduction

Our prayer is that as you work through the material, you will honestly assess where you are in each of these areas and set some realistic goals for your personal growth.

The goals that you set should be:

- A. **Spirit-directed** – (Rom.8:14) “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

The Spirit of God dwells in every believer. The primary work of the Spirit is to glorify Christ by reproducing His character in the life of believers. The indwelling Spirit reveals God’s will for our lives and enables us to walk in it as we submit to and depend on Him.

We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit...God is always previous. In practice, however, man must pursue God.

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- B. **Self-administered** – (Matt. 23:4) “They (Scribes and Pharisees) tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.”

Every person’s goals are different because everyone’s needs are different. We are not trying to encourage rules to earn favor with God. Rather, we are trying to realize the purpose that God has for our lives.

- C. **Community based** – (Heb. 10:24) “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds”

The Christian life was never intended to be a solitary existence. We need the love, encouragement and even the rebuke and challenges of other believers to help us grow. Setting goals in the context of community motivates us to strive together to meet those goals. To be accountable to others means to be regularly answerable for each of the key areas of our lives to qualified people.

Final Thoughts:

- ◆ Pursuing a life of spiritual passion involves personal transformation and not just participation in a community group or church community.
- ◆ Pursuing a life of spiritual passion seeks to encourage the aggressive pursuit of spiritual growth and not just the passive embrace of mediocrity.
- ◆ Pursuing a life of spiritual passion involves a lifelong journey to imitate Christ, not just the completion of short-term tasks, responsibilities, or goals.

Relationally Connected

Relationally Connected

Developing relationships of encouragement and accountability

One of the things that people look for in a church is “good community.” All of us have a deep longing for community in our lives. Nobody likes to be alone, nor is anyone at their best when they are alone. Never in the Bible do we see an individual with a “lone ranger” mentality. Unfortunately, our American culture promotes this type of mentality and lifestyle. Not only does this limit our effectiveness for God, but it can also be fatal to our personal lives.

Q: When you think of the word “community,” what images come to mind?

Community is not a human invention. The Trinity exists in constant community with one another; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1:26 God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” God created a Helper for Adam because He said it was “not good” for man to be alone.

Community is God’s dearest creation. It is only within community that there is the possibility of knowing and being known, loving and being loved, serving and being served, celebrating and being celebrated. It is in our relationships that we are able to demonstrate the love of Christ.

Observe the following passages:

John 13:34-35

34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

John 17:22-23

22 “I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are—23 I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one. Then the world will know that you sent me and will understand that you love them as much as you love me.

Christ indicates that our relationships with believers give testimony to the world that; 1) Jesus is God’s Son, 2) God loves us and 3) love is essential to the Christian faith.

Relationally Connected

Q: In what ways are our relationships with other believers indicative of what our relationship with God is like?

Two essential elements of good relationships are **encouragement** and **accountability**. A beautiful picture of how this fleshes out in the church is painted for us in **Acts 2:42**:

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.”

Here we see a group of believers in the early Church, bound together in Christ, choosing to study the Scriptures together, pray with one another, share resources, and spend time together to spur spiritual growth in one another.

Q: Do relationships in the church today typically look like Acts 2:42? What are some obstacles to being relationally connected that we face in our society?

The word encourage literally means “to give or speak courage.” Encouragement is the kind of expression that helps someone want to be a better Christian, even when life is rough. Not only is living life apart from encouraging relationships unbiblical, it’s also miserable.

Consider **Hebrews 10:24-25**:

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

Q: What are some observations we can make about encouragement from this passage?

Q: What are some benefits we receive as a result of “motivating” one another?

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It is essential that our relationships be grounded upon **accountability**. To be accountable to others means to be regularly answerable for the key areas of our lives to like minded individuals. We need others around us to keep us from thinking too highly of ourselves and call us to act when we need to change. We need people to point out blind spots in our life that we may not see, so we can sharpen our character and not hurt or offend others. Few would disagree with our need for accountability.

However, many of us are surrounded by unhealthy relationships. In these relationships, we don't love people enough to tell them things that they may not like even though it will produce good results in their life. The irony in these relationships is not that we will hurt others, but we fear being rejected by that person.

Consider these verses:

Proverbs 27:6

"Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy."

Proverbs 27:17

"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."

Q: What are the difficulties of being in a relationship with true accountability?

Final Thoughts:

- ◆ The vision of Grace Church is to grow a body of believers that are interdependent and not independent.
- ◆ We need relationships that are marked both by encouragement AND accountability.
- ◆ Choosing to invest in relationships can be risky and painful. However, the sacrifice is worth the benefit – life change.

Relationally Connected



Personal Application

Are you Relationally Connected?

Answer these questions:



1. *Who in my life do I trust enough to discuss problems with?*
2. *Aside from my family, do I have any authentic relationships?*
3. *Do I wait on others to initiate relationships, or do I seek people out in developing relationships?*
4. *If I am in a crisis, who are the people in my life that would rally around me and give me support, encouragement, etc.?*

Relationally Connected



Examples of Personal Goals to help you become Relationally Connected

1. Rather than waiting for people to come to you, initiate conversation with a new person each Sunday.
2. Set up a monthly lunch with someone you would like to have a closer relationship with.
3. Practice listening and waiting for others to finish before offering an opinion.
4. Write encouraging notes to others.
5. If you don't have any close friends, begin to pray daily for God to bring you one or two.
6. If you are in an inauthentic or hollow relationship, confess your desire to see it taken to a "relationally connected" level.
7. Join a community group at Grace Church.
8. Don't be afraid to give a gentle rebuke when you see a friend in error.
9. Pray before you point out errors in friends' lives. Make sure you're doing it because God wants you to and not out of selfish motives.
10. Be open to the rebuke of others, without getting defensive or blowing up.
11. Seek the counsel of others before you make a big decision.
12. Tell others when you are hurting.
13. Find someone to mentor you. / Find someone for you to mentor.
14. Take a personality test in an effort to learn how you relate to others and how others may perceive you.
15. Read a book a year on relationships Ex: (Connecting by Larry Crabb, Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman, Dropping your Guard by Chuck Swindoll)
16. Constantly evaluate whether you are a "giver" or a "taker" in relationships.
17. Ask people three questions about themselves before you talk about yourself.
18. Invite a new friend or neighbor over for dinner once a month.

***At Grace Church, community groups are the primary means for developing Christ-centered relationships, accountability, and encouragement. Contact the church office if you are interested in joining a group.**

Biblically Oriented

Biblically Oriented

Conforming your life to biblical truth

Each of us regards the Bible as God's written word. However, if we are honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that we don't know the Bible as well as we would like. Furthermore, we also have a difficult time applying the things that we do know from Scripture to our everyday life. The goal of this session is to examine the discrepancy that exists between what we believe about the Bible and what we practice, i.e. how we conform our lives to Biblical truth.

God has given each of us special revelation through His written Word, the Bible. The Bible is God's holy, inerrant word. God's word serves as the foundation of our life. It is essential to understanding God, mankind, history, and life in general. It is not merely a book of stories or of suggestions to regulate our behavior.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (NAS)

Q: What are some observations you can make about these verses?

"Teaching" is the most general term and refers mainly to imparting doctrine. "Reproof" is used for the "conviction" of a sinner. "Correcting" literally means challenging behavior in hopes of "restoring to an upright position or a right state." This term would apply to believers. "Training in righteousness" refers to instruction given for the purpose of Godly Christian living, i.e. how we relate to God and to one another.

The Bible is not an end in itself, however. Merely reading it or even memorizing it does not produce magical results in our lives. It serves as a means to a greater end: glorifying God in our thoughts, words, and actions. This can only be done through careful study and meditation on the scriptures. It is in the application of Scripture that we see the type of life change that God's Word is designed to bring about. Through the application of Scripture, we set our lives apart from the world and become more like Christ.

Biblically Oriented

James 1:21-25

21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the message God has planted in your hearts, for it is strong enough to save your souls.

22 And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. 23 For if you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law—the law that sets you free—and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

Q: What is the benefit we receive when we become doers of the Word?

Three Blessings of a Biblically Oriented Life

1. Change in Life Perspective (Romans 12:1-2) “And so, dear brothers and sisters,* I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? 2 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 know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

One of the results of the fall of the human race is that we were born into a selfish world with a self-centered nature. This condition can be seen in even the smallest members of the human race, children. Paul, writing to the church in Rome, reminds us that we need to experience a transformation from a human centered approach to life to a God centered approach to life. Paul refers to this as a renewal of the mind or changing the way you think. One way that this renewal of our minds occurs is through the study and application of God's Word.

Q: What does this verse say about the benefits of a “renewed mind?”

2. Strengthened Character (Psalm 119:11) I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

The Scriptures tell us that what we hear in our words or see in our actions are an overflow of what exists in our hearts. A corrupted heart is capable of all sorts of evil thoughts and actions. Fortunately, God has given us a standard of moral excellence in His Word to constrain this type of behavior. As Christians, our character is strengthened and we become more like Christ as we follow His commandments for our lives.

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Q: Can you think of an example when God's Word treasured in your heart kept you from disobeying Him?

Roles and Responsibilities Defined (2 Tim. 3:16-17) "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Every day each of us performs several different roles. Each of these roles also comes with various responsibilities. Unfortunately, we get many of our ideas about what roles and responsibilities we should have from the culture. God's design and intent for the universe often runs contrary to our culture. We must make a personal decision about who we will listen to. Will we conform our lives to Biblical truth or to cultural pressures?

Q: What are some of the roles and responsibilities of men, women, parents, kids, etc. that the Bible addresses?

Final Thoughts:

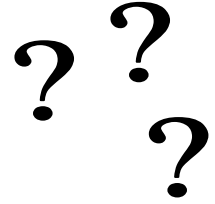
- ◆ It is the vision of Grace Church that the Scriptures would become your basis for all of your decisions.
- ◆ You can only grow in this area if you are willing to ask yourself some hard questions:
 1. Am I studying my Bible?
 2. What areas of my life do I need to focus on (marriage, finances, attitude, etc.)?
 3. How can I start applying what I have learned in this study?
- ◆ You can build your life around your own beliefs and ignore God's Word, but it will still be inspected according to His Word.

Biblically Oriented



Personal Application

*Are you Biblically Oriented?
Answer these questions:*



- 1. If someone asked me to tell them what the Bible is about, would I be able to answer them? What would be my answer?*
- 2. How often does the Bible factor into my decision making process?*
- 3. When I process through decisions, am I able to recall scriptures or easily find scriptures that guide me in that decision?*
- 4. How often, aside from weekend worship services, do I open my Bible and spend time reading/studying it?*
- 5. If the Bible is central to the Christian life, what keeps me from knowing the Bible as well as I would like?*

Biblically Oriented



Examples of Personal Goals

to help you become Biblically Oriented

1. Commit time every day to reading the Bible.
2. Keep a journal of what you read and write down questions, observations, etc.
3. Find a “biblical” mentor to help you work through your questions.
4. As you read and interpret the Word, think through measurable ways that you will apply what you’ve learned.
5. Attend the worship service regularly.
6. Take notes on the sermon, follow up on those notes during the week and come prepared for the following week.
7. Choose a system for memorizing scripture.
8. Listen to recordings of sermons (by whomever) in the car, while exercising, etc.
9. Read through and “master” a book of the Bible each month.
10. Purchase and read through a commentary as you study the Bible.
11. Attend a conference or class that focuses on some aspect of scripture each year (i.e., Walk Thru The Bible Conferences, Grace Institute, etc.).
12. Join a community group where you and a couple of others keep one another accountable in your study of the scripture and share your personal insights.
13. Complete one “topical” study in the Bible a month to familiarize yourself with how the Bible addresses certain issues (i.e., marriage, parenting, prayer, etc.)
14. Set aside a time away from your desk, family, phone, TV, etc. and meditate on God’s Word.
15. Study an Old Testament character (Moses, Ruth, David, etc.)
16. Choose a topic related to a current event once a month and study how the Bible addresses that issue.
17. Before making major decisions, get alone, fast, pray and study the Word to seek God.
18. Pick one verse a day to write on an index card, keep in your pocket or on your desk, and memorize and meditate on it each day.

Anchored in Prayer

Anchored in Prayer

Pursuing an intimate and dependent relationship with God.

Communication is important in any relationship. It is that much more important in our relationship with Christ. As a church, we have identified six areas that we believe are “foundations” to becoming more like Christ and thus living a healthy and balanced Christian life. However, all of our efforts are in vain if they are not anchored in prayer. Prayer is the common thread that runs through all areas of our Christian walk. Through prayer we can pursue a relationship with God that is both intimate and dependent.

Q: What are the most common obstacles to anchoring your life in prayer?

Even though we know that the Scriptures are full of admonitions to pursue a vibrant and consistent prayer life, it is still one of the most neglected spiritual disciplines. There are many things that make a consistent prayer life difficult. We can sometimes get so overwhelmed with these things that we avoid prayer all together. In order to improve in this area, we must first examine the way we think about prayer. For instance, prayer is less about an event or activity and more about a lifestyle. There are plenty of resources available that instruct us in how to pray. Unfortunately, though, pursuing an intimate and dependent relationship with God is less about method and more about a mindset. A life anchored in prayer must begin with the realization that we all struggle with self-sufficiency and independence. Self-sufficient people have no need for anything bigger than themselves, and thus, their prayer life is stifled!

One way to combat self-sufficiency is to deepen our knowledge of God. So much of our religious activity is anchored to the pursuit of our own happiness and fulfillment. God becomes the Great being who meets our needs and fulfills our aspirations. We do not pause to think about what He is like or what He expects in us. If we are not careful, we can “domesticate” God making Him serve us rather than us serving Him. If we lose sight of His holiness, sovereignty, goodness, and love, then we rely on our own abilities and we only turn to God when we have failed or disastrous circumstances strike.

In the biblical view of things, a deeper knowledge of God brings with it massive improvement in other core areas of Christian maturity: personal purity, integrity in relationships, better study of the Scriptures, a heart that desires to serve, better effectiveness at engaging the culture, and improved private and corporate worship. However, if we seek these things without passionately desiring a deeper knowledge of God, we are selfishly running after God's blessing without running after Him. One of the most important foundational steps in knowing God better is prayer – spiritual, persistent, biblically minded prayer.

Anchored in Prayer

Prayer Principles

1. Seek the Will of God in Scripture

1 John 5:14-15

14 And we can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. 15 And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure that he will give us what we ask for.

How do we know if what we are praying is according to the will of God? (See John 15:7)

Q: What is a good way to have Jesus' Words remain in you?

2. Come to God with Pure Motives

James 4:2-3

2 You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can't possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it. 3 And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

Q: What type of motive for prayer is described here? How can we purify our motives?

3. Seek Holiness Before the Lord

Psalm 66:18

18 If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, my Lord would not have listened.

Q: What is the relationship between sin and our prayer life?

Q: What can we do if God reveals sin in our lives? (Remember 1 John 1:9)

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4. Believe

James 1:5-8

5 If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. 6 But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 They can't make up their minds. They waver back and forth in everything they do.

Q: What must we do to receive from God?

Three Categories of Prayer

1. **Disciplined** (Matthew 14:23, Luke 5:16, Luke 11:1-10, James 5:16)

Christ Himself makes prayer a priority in His life. Even though He is the Son of God, many times in Scripture we see Him escape by Himself to pray. Once we are in the habit of praying, scripture does give us some insight to shape our prayers.

Q: What are some principles these verses teach us about the discipline of prayer?

2. **Spontaneous** (Nehemiah 2:4, 1 Thess. 5:17)

Our prayer life should not be confined to select times when we are able to get alone and connect with God. Our activities throughout the day should be filled with prayer. Stopping for a moment throughout the day to quietly acknowledge God's presence and His faithfulness is an important step in developing a life that is anchored in prayer.

Q: What types of events most often lead you to spontaneous prayer?

3. **Corporate** (Acts 12:5-16, James 5:14-15)

Corporate prayer is also to be a priority in our lives. When you read through the book of Acts, big things always happen whenever the Church gathers to pray. There is something special about the body of Christ meeting together and lifting up both corporate and

Anchored in Prayer

individual needs. Galatians 6:2 tells us to bear one another's burdens. Also, think through the "Lord's Prayer." It only contains plural pronouns like "us and "our."

Immediately after giving the disciples this prayer He stresses to them the importance of being in a right relationship with one another.

Q: What are some of the benefits / results that you have seen through corporate prayer?

Final Thoughts:

- ◆ God is much more concerned about our **attitude** towards prayer than the **methods** we use to communicate with Him.
- ◆ The transition from self-sufficiency to intimacy and dependence on Him often includes brokenness.
- ◆ God uses events, trials, and tests in our lives to draw us into a life that is more deeply anchored in prayer.

Anchored in Prayer



Examples of Personal Goals to help you become Anchored in Prayer

1. Set aside ten minutes each day to pray.
2. Pray through a Psalm each day.
3. Pray while you shower/get ready in the morning.
4. Pray while you exercise.
5. Instead of turning on the radio, pray during your drive to and from work.
6. Read a book on the subject of prayer (ex. *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* by D.A. Carson, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference* by Phillip Yancey, *The Autobiography of George Mueller*)
7. Do a word study in the Bible on prayer.
8. Ask someone to be your prayer partner.
9. Journal your prayers.
10. Create a list of people to pray for each day of the week.
11. Before you begin each week, write down the events of your week and pray about them.
12. Before every major event or decision that you make, pray for wisdom.
13. If you're married, set a regular time to pray with your spouse.
14. Pray for opportunities to become more relationally connected.
15. Pray through Scripture as you read it in an effort to become more biblically oriented.
16. Pray for opportunities to become more anchored in prayer.
17. Pray for opportunities to become more ministry focused.
18. Pray for opportunities to become more culturally engaged.
19. Pray for opportunities to become more courageously generous.

Anchored in Prayer



Personal Application

Are you Anchored in Prayer?

Answer these questions:



1. *Do I pray every day?*

2. *Is there anyone in my life that I pray with?*

3. *When I make decisions, how often do I pray through them?*

4. *Do I pray with my spouse about decisions?*

5. *Do I pray consistently for the needs of others?*

Ministry Focused

Ministry Focused

Utilizing your gifts and abilities to serve others

When most of us think of ministry, we think of the work done by pastors, missionaries, Christian conference speakers, or evangelists. Somehow in America we have the notion that the church is divided into two halves: those who “do” ministry (the pastors and staff) and those to whom the ministry is “done” (the members of the church). However, this limited idea of ministry is inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture. A proper understanding of ministry will help us find a greater fulfillment in life as we begin to see all that we do as opportunities to glorify God and serve others.

Q: What do you tend to think of when you hear the word “ministry?”

Q: Do you consider yourself to be a minister even though you are not employed by a church?

The Greek word in the New Testament that we most often translate as “ministry” carries the basic meaning of “service.” It can be used of tasks as basic as waiting tables (Acts 6:1), caring for the poor through monetary gifts (2 Cor. 9:12), or proclaiming the gospel (Acts 20:24). The important thing to note about the use of the term is that the term is not limited to a select few individuals who hold a particular position within a church. All of God’s people are called to serve in a variety of ways. Ministry is what happens when God’s people utilize their gifts and abilities to serve others in ways that bring God glory, build up His church, and reach out to the world.

Consider **Ephesians 2:8-10**:

8 “God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 10 For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

Q: According the above, what are we saved “by?” And what are we saved “for?”

Ministry Focused

Notice how there is nothing that we can do on our own to earn God's grace, His unmerited favor or unconditional acceptance. However, there is an interesting comparison that is being made in these two verses. Verses 8-9 clearly state that we are not saved **BY** good works, however verse 10 states that we were saved **FOR** good works. The fact is that God has ordained "good things" (ministry) for life, and He has even gone before us and prepared the way for us to minister.

The ultimate example of being ministry focused is Jesus Christ himself. Jesus set aside the glory that was due Him and took the form of a bondservant. He was others-oriented. Jesus' entire existence on earth, including His work on the cross was a selfless act of obedience to the Father. In John 17:4 Jesus says, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." If you find it too difficult to relate to the ministry of Jesus, consider Timothy. In Philippians 2:19-21, Paul sends Timothy to the church at Phillipi because he is a kindred spirit who will look after the church's needs rather than his own. Looking after the needs of others provided Timothy with plenty of opportunities for ministry.

Striving Towards a Ministry Focused Life

The core ingredient of a ministry focused life is spiritual gifts. Each member of the body of Christ has been given a spiritual gift. These gifts are given supernaturally by God and not through asking or wanting. Gifts are also not given to make individuals look good, even though the selfish nature of man often abuses them.

Consider these passages:

1 Peter 4:10-11

10 "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11 Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen."

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

4 "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other."

Q: According to these verses, what are some of the reasons why God gives spiritual gifts to believers?

Ministry Focused

According to Ephesians 4, God gave leaders to the church to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Therefore, some of the primary responsibilities of the leaders at Grace Church are to help you identify your gifts, train you to serve, and make sure there are opportunities for you to serve both inside and outside the church body. Just as each individual has a distinct fingerprint, every believer also has a distinct ministry fingerprint. Beginning with spiritual gifts and supported by our interests (talents, skills, passions, personality, and experience), each believer has an endless number of ministry opportunities.

For example, a believer with:

- a. the spiritual gift of teaching plus a passion for children has an opportunity to lead a community group of preschool or elementary age children
- b. the spiritual gift of hospitality plus an outgoing personality has an opportunity to greet and make people feel welcome as they arrive at church
- c. the spiritual gift of service plus experience holding babies has the opportunity to take care of babies while parents go to the worship service

Your Ministry Fingerprint



Final Thoughts:

- ◆ At Grace, we want all members to experience the power of God working through them as they use their gifts and abilities to serve others.
- ◆ In order to become ministry focused, we must choose the eternal over the temporal, realizing that God wants us to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.
- ◆ If you were only given one more year to live, what in your life would you change in order to be more ministry focused?

Ministry Focused



Examples of Personal Goals

to help you become Ministry Focused

1. Take a spiritual gifts assessment. / Ask others what spiritual gifts they have observed in your life (see the following page for a list of common spiritual gifts).
2. Serve in one of the essential ministries of the church (children's ministry, student ministry, campus impact, etc.).
3. Complete a Bible study of Jesus' life making careful note of how he was "ministry focused."
4. Do a Bible study on the spiritual gifts.
5. Seek out a younger believer to disciple.
6. Take some time to spend alone with God. Pray for God to show you opportunities to use your gifts, both in the church and the community.
7. Look over your budget and gauge how much of your resources are going to support God's work. Align your budget in a way that you can make an impact in God's work with your finances.
8. Read three (3) biographies a year on Christians who made an impact for God in their life.
9. Pray that God would make you sensitive to the opportunities you have each day to minister to someone in the workplace.
10. Take a meal to someone who is hurting.
11. Invite a person from church, your neighborhood, or your work that is new to the area over to your house for a meal.
12. Aside from giving to the church and other ministries, set aside a "miscellaneous" fund each month that you can use for a need that someone suddenly has.
13. Take a week of vacation and use it to serve God somewhere.
14. Take responsibility to organize meals for someone who has a need (i.e. new baby, hospitalization, etc...)
15. Offer to baby-sit for a couple you know so they can take a date night.
16. Be willing to share your personal resources (car, truck, lake house, etc.) to help someone in need.
17. Try a Grace Church "Jump-In" Opportunity in a ministry area where you may be willing to serve.

***To find out about serving on a ministry team at Grace Church, visit the website or call the church office.**

Ministry Focused

Spiritual Gifts List

Though this list is not exhaustive, the following are known spiritual gifts listed in scripture. Some of these may be natural abilities for you, but a spiritual gift is only present due to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life to carry out the purpose of God through you:

- Administration: To plan, organize and execute procedures that accomplish the goals of the church
- Creative Ability: To use creative abilities such as music, writing, drama, painting, etc. for the benefit of the church
- Discernment: To distinguish between truth and error and to be able to discern the difference between good and evil spirits
- Encouragement: To present God's truth to strengthen, comfort or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering
- Evangelism: To effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship
- Faith: To act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief in God's ability to fulfill his purposes
- Giving: To contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord with a giving heart and positive attitude
- Hospitality: To care for people by providing fellowship, food and shelter
- Intercession: To recognize the prayer needs of others and consistently pray for them
- Leadership: To motivate, lead, and direct people to accomplish the purposes of God
- Mercy: To cheerfully, compassionately, and practically help those who are in need or are suffering
- Prophecy: To reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance or edification
- Service: To possess the grace to minister to the needs of the body, both spiritually and physical
- Shepherding: To nurture, care for and guide people toward ongoing spiritual maturity
- Teaching: To understand, clearly explain, instruct and apply the word of God

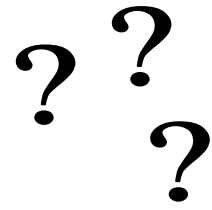
Ministry Focused



Personal Application

Are you Ministry Focused?

Answer these questions:



1. *Do I view myself as a “minister of the Gospel?” Do I focus on ways that I can serve others, or do I expect the church to do this work?*

2. *If I were to leave Grace Church one year from now, would my absence create a void in a particular ministry?*

3. *Do I know what my spiritual gifts are? If so, how am I using them?*

4. *What do I think about when I hear the term “good works?”*

Culturally Engaged

Culturally Engaged

Creating opportunities to communicate the message of salvation

Q: Does the church give the impression that the world is supposed to come to us or are Christians doing a good job of engaging the culture? Why or why not?

It is common for Christians to bemoan the state of affairs in our world. Society has and will continue to decline in moral standards...the Bible is clear on that. Too often we as Christians “hide” from the world and treat the church as a fortress. We can get the idea that the purpose of the church is to protect us from the culture. In his book *Lifestyle Evangelism*, author Joe Aldrich makes this observation as to why some Christians avoid engaging the culture:

“Somehow in the church we’ve made it to where spirituality is defined by how much you can withdraw from culture. However, the true mark of spirituality is how much you can engage the culture and penetrate it for Jesus Christ.”

Q: Why do some people believe that it is spiritual to withdraw from the culture?

In order to understand what it means to be culturally engaged, we need to look no further than the ministry of Jesus himself. Notice this exchange between Jesus and the “religious” people of His day when they see him spending time with “sinners.”

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector’s booth. “Follow me and be my disciple,” Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him. 10 Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. 11 But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?” 12 When Jesus heard this, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” 13 Then he added, “Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’ For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

Culturally Engaged

Q: *If you saw a member of the church hanging out with a group of “sinners,” what would you think?*

Q: *Have you ever avoided spending time with “sinners” because you did not want “religious” people to accuse you of being one?*

We can see that Jesus wasn’t concerned about what the “religious” people would think of His spending time with sinners. He was committed to His mission. Luke 19:10 says that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Jesus’ goal was to reach sinners. He also instructed His disciples that they were to be salt and light in the world (Matt. 5:13-14). Salt is symbolic of the spiritual health essential to Christian virtue and counter to the corruption of the world. Light symbolizes the witness that we have for Christ in a world that is darkened by sin.

However, we can not be salt and light to sinners if we are not engaged with them. If you notice Jesus’ life, He simply reaches out to the people around Him. He never organizes a rally or an event so that people can hear the Gospel. The question, then, becomes where are we engaging the world? Christ’s example is clear, and so are His words. He says in Matthew 28:19-20 to “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

This verse is not meant only for pastors and missionaries. It is directed to all believers as we realize that we all have our own personal mission field. The first step in becoming culturally engaged is to ask the following questions.

Q: *What are the opportunities that I already have to relate with non-Christians?*

Q: *Where can I strategically place myself to develop relationships with non-Christians?*

Culturally Engaged

Four Arenas for Cultural Engagement

Finally, it is helpful to think through the following four arenas of your life as opportunities for you to engage the culture.

1. Conduct (Being) – 1 Peter 3:15-16 15 “Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ”

As a Christian, our lives should be representative of the righteousness of Christ. As we are being conformed to His likeness, we are being called to a lifestyle, or a standard of conduct, that is different from that of the world. Our conduct and behavior gives testimony to the holy work of Christ in our life.

2. Works (Doing) – Matthew 5:16 “In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

In each new situation we should ask, “What can we do in this situation that draws attention to God so that He can be honored?” We can authenticate the reality of the truth of Scripture by caring for the needs of individuals. When the truth of the gospel is combined with the proof of love for God and for man, then the message of salvation becomes more than something religious; it becomes extremely relevant.

3. Money (Giving) – Luke 16:9 “Here’s the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.”

You can use your money (wealth of unrighteousness) to strategically help change lives and reach other parts of the world for Christ. Money is only temporal, but a wise investment can produce eternal results as individuals come to trust Christ and later will welcome you into heaven.

4. Tongue (Sharing) – Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Each individual has the responsibility of sharing their faith in the context of relationships with non-Christians. The church is not the best answer for a non-Christian friend, because of the credibility issue we addressed earlier. You have credibility with your friends because you have the testimony of a changed life.

Q: Which of these four arenas do you feel like you are actively engaging the culture? Which arena needs the most work?

Culturally Engaged

Rick Warren assesses the need for cultural engagement in this way:

“You don’t judge an army by how many people come and sit in the mess hall. Instead, the impact of an army is based on how many trained soldiers are out in the field, protecting, defending, or fighting the enemy.”

Final Thoughts:

In order to become more culturally engaged,

- ◆ We need to take a fresh look at our leader, Jesus Christ, and the efforts He made to spend time with non-believers.
- ◆ We need to re-embrace Jesus’ original vision for the church as salt and light and measure our progress as a church against that vision.
- ◆ We need to seek significant non-Christian relationships, serve these individuals in practical ways, and then share our story with them.

Culturally Engaged



Examples of Personal Goals to help you become Culturally Engaged

1. Pray everyday that God would make you sensitive to the daily opportunities you have to connect with non-Christians.
2. Make a list of non-Christians that you will commit to get to know and pray for their salvation.
3. Think through how you came to know Christ and the individuals that God used to draw yourself to Him.
4. Memorize a few key verses of Scripture so you can share the Gospel when you have an opportunity.
5. Introduce yourself to your neighbors.
6. Pray for your neighbors as you drive or walk around the neighborhood.
7. Invite a non-Christian neighbor or co-worker over to dinner once a month.
8. Initiate a social activity (go to dinner, a ballgame, movie, etc.) with a non-Christian friend.
9. Stay up on current events so you can engage non-Christians in meaningful conversations.
10. Educate yourself on something that interests a non-Christian friend in order to stimulate conversation (i.e., a certain sports team, a particular hobby, books they like to read, etc.).
11. Pick one activity (a club, team, project, etc.) to participate in each year specifically for the purpose of meeting non-Christians.
12. When people voice concerns in their life, ask them if you can pray for them, making sure to follow up on their concerns.
13. Summarize your testimony to one or two minutes so you can share it in casual conversations.
14. Read magazines that give insight into our culture.

Courageously Generous

Courageously Generous

Managing, not owning, the resources God has given us

(Note: The following study has been adapted from a book called "The Treasure Principle," by Randy Alcorn.)

Few people, even Bible-believing Christians, grasp the incredible joy available through God's grace. We squander vast resources in our quest for joy, trying to buy happiness. But it never works. According to Jesus, we gain joy in ways that are paradoxical and counterintuitive. We gain what will last only by giving up what won't.

Consider the parable of the hidden treasure:

Matthew 13:44

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field."

Q: In what ways are you like this fortunate man? In what ways are you different?

"Jesus has a treasure mentality. He wants us to store up treasures. He's just telling us to stop storing them in the wrong place and start storing them in the right place." - Alcorn

The Treasure Principle

"You can't take it with you - but you can send it on ahead."

Treasure Principle Key #1: "God owns everything. I'm His money manager."

At the root of our thinking about material wealth should be one truth that is easy to understand yet difficult for many of us to accept: God owns everything. His name, and His alone, is on the title deed to the universe.

Picture your wealth - money, home, clothes, equipment, entertainment system - everything. Make sure you don't leave anything out, especially items you tend to take for granted.

Courageously Generous

Now read the following passage:

1 Chronicles 29:11-14

11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. 12 Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.

13 "O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! 14 But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!

Q. How closely does this passage line up with your thinking about your possessions?

Q. Whenever we begin to think like "owners" of the things that God has blessed us with, a red flag should appear. If God is the owner, the what is our role?

"A steward manages assets for the owner's benefit. The steward carries no sense of entitlement to the assets he manages. It's his job to find out what the owner wants done with his assets, then carry out his will."

Treasure Principle Key #2: "My heart always goes where I put God's money."

"He who lays up treasures on earth spends his life backing away from his treasures. To him, death is loss.

He who lays up treasures in heaven looks forward to eternity; he's moving daily toward his treasures. To him, death is gain.

He who spends his life moving away from his treasures has reason to despair. He who spends his life moving toward his treasures has reason to rejoice."

-Randy Alcorn

Q. How closely does the preceding quote represent your own views? How does giving make us more joyful people?

Q. What do your checkbook, your credit card statements, your receipts, and your appointment book say about the placement of your treasure....and your heart?

Courageously Generous

Treasure Principle Key #3: "Heaven, not earth, is my home"

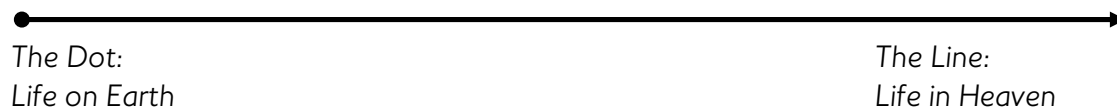
There is a constant struggle that the believer must face as we are tempted to focus too much on the here-and-now rather than on the destination that awaits us all.

"There are many roadblocks to giving: unbelief, insecurity, pride, idolatry, desire for power and control. The raging current of our culture – and often our churches – makes it hard to swim upstream. It's considered "normal" to keep far more than we give. But I'm convinced that the greatest deterrent to giving is this: the illusion that earth is our home." – Alcorn

Q. What draws your heart toward heaven? What draws your heart toward earth?

Treasure Principle Key #4: "I should live not for the dot, but for the line"

Consider the following diagram:



"Our present life on earth is the dot. It begins. It ends. It's brief. But from that dot extends a line that goes on forever. That line is eternity, which Christians will spend in heaven."

"The person who lives for the dot lives for treasures on earth that end up in junkyards. The person who lives for the line lives for treasures in heaven that will never end. Giving is living for the line." – Alcorn

Q. What aspects of this world are most effective at luring your affections away from heaven? What methods have you used to combat this competition for your heart?

Courageously Generous

Treasure Principle Key #5: "Giving is the only antidote to materialism."

"The act of giving is a vivid reminder that it's all about God, not about us. It's saying I am not the point. He is the point. He does not exist for me. I exist for Him. When I give something away... the magic spell is broken. My mind clears, and I recognize God as owner, myself as servant, and other people as intended beneficiaries of what God has entrusted to me... Only giving breaks me free from the gravitational hold of money and possessions. Giving shifts me to a new center of gravity – heaven." – Alcorn

Consider the following passage:

1 Timothy 6:17-19

17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

Q. What are some examples of fruit that comes from our giving?

Treasure Principle Key #6: "God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving."

Consider the following passage:

2 Corinthians 9:10-11

10 For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

11 Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.

Q: Based on this passage, why does God provide us more than we need?

Courageously Generous

Final Thoughts:

You may already be changing your thinking and habits about money and giving. As you consider your next step of giving maturity, remember that no efforts will succeed without Christ's involvement in the planning and in the implementation.

Consider the following questions that are intended to help you clarify your plans toward giving:

- How am I doing at my basic giving commitment to God, beginning with my church (1 Corinthians 9:9-12; Galatians 6:6)? Am I giving where I am being spiritually fed?
- How much is God leading me to give in freewill offerings? Where should I give them (James 1:5)?
- How strategic or worthy are the organizations or individuals I'm supporting or considering supporting?
- To whom might I pass along what I've learned about the Treasure Principle? What are some creative ways that I can accomplish this?

Courageously Generous



Examples of Personal Goals

to help you become Courageously Generous

1. *I will affirm God's full ownership of me (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and everything entrusted to me (Psalm 24:1).*
2. *I will set aside the firstfruits of all I receive, treating it as holy and belonging exclusively to the Lord (Malachi 3:8-10).*
3. *Out of the remaining treasures God entrusts to me, I will seek to make generous freewill gifts (2 Corinthians 9:11).*
4. *I will ask God to teach me to give sacrificially to His purpose, including helping the poor and reaching the lost (2 Corinthians 8:3).*
5. *Recognizing that I cannot take earthly treasures from this world, I will determine to lay them up as heavenly treasures – for Christ's glory and the eternal good of others and myself (Matthew 6:19-21).*
6. *I will ask God to show me how to lead others to the present joy and future reward of the treasure principle (Hebrews 10:24).*

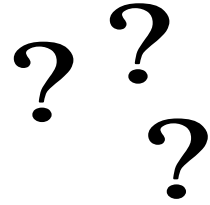
Courageously Generous



Personal Application

Are you Courageously Generous?

Answer these questions:



1. *What does it mean for me to be a good steward?*
2. *What resources (money, possessions, etc.) do I tend to hold on tightly?*
3. *What drives me to keep or hold on to resources?*
4. *When have I given out of excess? When have I given out of sacrifice? What's the difference?*
5. *What blessings have I seen as a result of giving?*

Summary

Summary

The Christian life is more than a set of rules, it is a relationship with Christ Himself in which He has promised to make us like Him. The goal of this study is to help encourage and challenge you as you pursue Christlikeness. Each disciple has a responsibility to follow the Master and pattern his/her life after His. What has been presented in this study is a way of measuring your progress toward spiritual maturity by accomplishing specific goals that you have selected through prayer and accountability. As you attain the goals you have set for yourself, review the lists that have been provided in the manual and choose a new set of goals to continue the process.

Discipleship is not a “one person” task. Once you have prayerfully established your goals, join with another person to travel on this journey with you. Meet regularly to encourage, pray with, spur on, and congratulate each other as you meet your goals. Growing as a disciple of Christ will require changes in your life. The encouragement and accountability of a fellow believer will provide you with the strength and determination to continue developing your spiritual passion.



Where do you go from here?

Membership

Membership at Grace Church is a covenant towards a common goal of spiritual growth under the authority of God's Word with other believers in the church. If you have already attended Discovery and completed the Core Values study, participate in the next Foundations class to complete membership.

Serving

God has given you unique gifts and abilities for the specific purpose of serving him and building up the church. Not only are you called by God to service, but Grace Church needs your help to fulfill our mission. As a follower of Christ, when you rely on God's strength to serve him, you allow the Holy Spirit to work in your life to transform you and others. Connecting with a ministry team is also the primary way, in addition to community groups, to grow in biblical community at Grace Church.

Finding a Community Group

We hold to a core belief that life change happens best in the context of Biblical community and we have come to know this process of change as spiritual formation. We encourage all Grace Church members to be faithfully committed to a Community Group. Community Groups are our primary vehicle for discipleship and member care.

To take the next step or get more information, go to www.gracechurchsc.org/connect

Additional Reading

Understanding the Gospel

A Gospel Primer for Christian
Living the Cross Centered Life
Reason for God

Milton Vincent
C.J. Mahaney
Tim Keller

Relationally Connected

Relationships: A Mess Worth Making
Cost of Discipleship
Connecting
Dropping Your Guard

Paul Tripp / Tim Lane
Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Larry Crabb
Chuck Swindoll

Biblically Oriented

How to Read the Bible Book by Book
A Handbook for the Christian Fatih
Living by the Book
The Holiness of God
The Pursuit of God
BibleGateway.com (A searchable online Bible in over 50 versions)

Gordon Fee / Douglas Stuart
John Schwarz
Howard Hendricks
R.C. Sproul
A.W. Tozer

Anchored in Prayer

The Praying Life
Prayer: What Difference Does It Make
The Complete Works of
E.M. Bounds on Prayer
Answers to Prayer

Paul Miller
Phillip Yancey

E.M. Bounds
George Mueller

Ministry Focused

What's So Spiritual About Your Gifts
The Call
Maximizing Your Effectiveness

Henry & Mel Blackaby
Os Guinness
Aubrey Malphurs

Culturally Engaged

Lost in America
When Helping Hurts
The Church of Irresistible Influence

Tom Clegg
Steve Corbett
Robert Lewis

Courageously Generous

Treasure Principle
Fields of Gold

Randy Alcorn
Andy Stanley

