

SPIRITUAL HEALTH PLAN

This Spiritual Health Plan is designed to help you focus on growing spiritually by taking concrete steps in areas for growth indicated in your assessment. Obviously we can all grow in every area; but by focusing on 1 or 2 areas at a time, you'll soon discover that excelling in 1 area your growth will overflow to others.

Based on your assessment responses in each area, choose 1 area (2 at the most) you want to focus on for the coming months. (You may wish to look over the whole packet to help you decide which area you want to focus on first).

This packet has a section for each area of Discipleship. Each area includes 5 components.

1. ◆————◆ **Related passage(s)** of scripture corresponding to each question you answered in the assessment. This can be used to read more about each facet of Discipleship. These passages may be a good starting point for a biblical study of areas where you can grow. We have included the text and some questions for further study.

2. ◆————◆ A list of **resources** to help you understand the area of Discipleship, which will hopefully strengthen your understanding of its importance and provide more paths for growth in it.

3. ◆————◆ Some **concrete steps** to choose from to implement or which may spark ideas for other steps you would rather implement.

4. ◆————◆ Some **general practices** relevant to the area of Discipleship you may want to consider starting (Note: some general practices may be found in several Discipleship areas).

5. ◆————◆ **My Response and My Plan**— in each section there is space to list what it is that you believe God has said to you and what you believe He wants you to do with it

Table Of Contents

Discipleship Process.....	2
Worship	3— 6
Transformation	7— 10
Fellowship.....	11—14
Ministry.....	15— 18
Evangelism.....	19—22

Cross of Glory's Vision is to become a Biblically Functioning Community

Our Purpose

is to glorify God by leading people in becoming
fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ
by connecting them to God, each other and the world.

*They committed themselves to
the apostle's teaching,
life together, shared meals and to prayer.
Acts 2:42*

Our Discipleship Process

Becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ is a lifelong process for everyone! Jesus calls us to Follow Him! No one will be forced to participate, but we strongly encourage you to get involved.

What is involved?

- Discipleship is a process— a journey with you and God. It is NOT a program.
- These materials are provided to help you in your journey.
- There are 3 main components: A 10 week series on Discipleship, the Spiritual Health Assessment and the Spiritual Health Plan.
- CD's of the Bible messages on Discipleship, including each of the five facets of Discipleship, will be available at the Discipleship Resource Center beginning October 26.

When will this journey start and what is the schedule?

- Pastor Jon has already presented 5 Bible messages— CD's are available at the Information Center.
- We will start this journey on October 12 by taking the Spiritual Health Assessment.
- For the next five weeks, be in prayer to discern which area(s) God is leading you to work on. To help you in this, Pastor Jon will be presenting Bible messages on the five areas of Discipleship as outlined in the Assessment and Plan. Please bring these documents to church starting October 26 through November 23.
- Your goal should be to have your evaluation completed and one or two areas of focus identified by November 30. To help you on your journey, it is strongly recommended that you find another person to talk and pray with. We are suggesting that person be in your small group. If you are not in a small group, see Pastor Ron.

How To Get Started On Your Journey

- Complete the Spiritual Health Assessment – copies are available at the Discipleship Resource Center.
- Be in prayer with God to lead you in one or two areas to focus on.
- Use the Spiritual Health Plan as a resource to help you in your journey in becoming a more fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.
- Find someone in your small group to help you stay accountable.
- If you need to talk to someone, please contact Pastor Ron (952-935-3696) or Pat Lambert (952-934-9753) .

Worship

Worship is ascribing honor and awesomeness and dignity to God. This is something actively done by us—either internal or external or both, but it is based on something done by God. In other words, it is a right response to God and His works. Since the person and works of God are first in this relationship and spark our worship, learning about God and His works is a way to grow in worship by providing a basis and reason for worship. Another way to grow in worship is to pay attention to and focus on what you already know of God and His works and choose to respond rightly to them, rather than ignore them.

Assessment statements with related verses and questions for further study

Circle most accurate... transfer from your assessment or prayerfully retake as you go through the series.

not me
kinda me
really me

a. Pleasing God with my life is my highest priority 1 2 3 4 5

Romans 12:1 *1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

What is Paul urging us to do?

What does this verse say our “spiritual act of worship” is?

How does that maybe change our traditional view(s) of worship?

b. I often acknowledge my dependence on and gratitude to God for the good things of the moment1 2 3 4 5

Colossians 2:6-7... *So then just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

How did you receive Jesus into your life?

How can you continue to live in Him in that same way?

How do dependence and thankfulness flow together?

c. God's goodness often overwhelms me.....1 2 3 4 5

Psalms 31:19 *How great is Your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear You, which You bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in You.*

*Worship is ascribing
honor and
awesomeness and
dignity
to God.*

Psalm 145:7 *They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.*

List evidences of God's goodness in your life...

How can you celebrate His goodness to you?



d. I increasingly realize my need for God's grace to make me who He wants me to be1 2 3 4 5

II Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.*

Where do we receive what we need to be pleasing to God?

Is it already available?

What is our part?

e. I am able to praise God during difficult times and ultimately can see them as opportunities for God to refine me 1 2 3 4 5

Job 1:20 *At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."*

James 5:11 *As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

What do you find yourself saying when life gets really difficult?

How can Job's example help you?

What does James say about God in the Job incident?

f. I have a growing desire for solitude and silence in order to spend time with God.....1 2 3 4 5

Mark 1:35 *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.*

Luke 5:16 *But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*

What do we learn from Jesus' prayer habits in these verses?

How can you become more like him?

g. I regularly meditate on God's Word and invite Him to be present in my everyday activities.....1 2 3 4 5

Psalm 1:2 *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

Joshua 1:8-9 *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

What does the Psalmist say about God's word?

What does God command of Joshua?

What does God promise to Joshua?

How can you make God's word more central to your everyday life?

Resources

Knowing God—JI Packer (Very popular introduction to the study of who God is)

Your God is Too Small—JB Phillips (Dismantles false and small views of God and shows the reality of the greatness of God)

Practicing the Presence of God—Brother Lawrence (Classic simple devotional)



Concrete Steps

- Set aside time to study God's Word on a daily basis. Pray and ask God for insight into His Word.
- Memorize Scripture. Choose some scriptures from your daily reading (or this study) to memorize. Make it a priority to hide God's Word in your heart.
- Set aside some time or a few days to go on a spiritual retreat to be alone with God.
- Identify a place you can go to focus on God and worship Him. Make it a habit to spend time in this place on a regular basis.
- Study the names of God using the Psalms. You may want to keep a journal to remind yourself what you have learned about God. Bring these names to mind throughout the day and acknowledge and worship God as revealed by them.

My Response...

What was the most meaningful statement of Scripture you read in the section on Worship?

Reword the statement in a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to the study of Worship?

My Plan...

1.

2.

General Practices

1. Practicing the Presence of God: Practicing the presence of God involves looking for God in every detail of life. To do this you may want to think of God as ever present in every situation, and remember you are never alone. Look at everything you do, not as something you do by yourself, but something you do together with God. Spend time speaking with Jesus as if He were right there with you. Take some time to think about Him every hour of the day.

2. Fasting: The purpose of a traditional fast is to abstain from food in order to focus clearly on your relationship with God. You can also fast from television, entertainment, reading, or anything that distracts you from God. Those who are diabetic, pregnant, or who suffer from severe physical disorders should consult a physician, and might consider fasting from other things than food. Remember, the goal is to develop a focus on God.

In order to fast you may want to consider the following:

- What is the purpose of this fast?
- Begin with something small like one meal or one time slot.
- During the fast, commit the time you would have spent eating to prayer, Bible study, worship, etc.
- Use it as a time to focus on God.

3. Journaling: Sometimes it is helpful to journal in order to see God's work in our lives. You may want to start a journal that allows you to record some of the victories and struggles you are having. Record your thoughts and feelings as you go through a process of self-examination. Make it a point to review your journal annually to see how God has worked in your life over the past year.

4. Worship: Find a place where you can worship God privately. It may be a spot outdoors, in the privacy of your bedroom, or even in your car while commuting to work, possibly using a good CD of musical worship. Wherever it is, make a habit of visiting this place regularly and worshipping God there.

5. Meditate on God: Take some time to meditate on who God is and to get a sense of His greatness. You may want to use the Psalms as a guide. Read through a Psalm and note what the psalmist says about God's character and about his experiences with God. Take some time to praise God for who He is and for what He has done in your life.

6. Worship as a Lifestyle: Make it a point to see every action as a worship sacrifice to God. When you wake, thank Him for the day. As you go to work or school, sing praise music or adore Him for who He is. Throughout the day, try to commit every word, thought, and action to Him as a way of thanking Him and worshipping Him, realizing every breath is His gift to us. At home, bring God into every activity. Talk with others about the things God has done in your life.

7. Preparation for Corporate Worship: Spend some time preparing yourself for your church worship service. As you approach the building, take a moment to stop and thank God for your church. Before the service begins, say a prayer of thanks to God. Tell Him you are looking forward to meeting Him in worship. Pray that God would prepare your heart to worship Him. Spend some time praying for the pastor and everyone involved in worship that day. Look around at those entering the church and pray for as many as you can specifically that God would touch their hearts and souls during the service. During worship, try to picture Christ seated on the throne (read Isaiah 6:1-8) and thank Him for His sacrifice.

Transformation

Transformation is the process of becoming more and more who God wants you to be. This is not primarily a change in action, but a change in who you are which will then overflow into changed actions. These actions fall into the other four categories of Discipleship, so this category focuses on the internal change. Another word for transformation is sanctification, which means to be made sanctified, sacred, or holy. Transformation is ultimately caused by God, but we can contribute and enter into the process ourselves in many ways. Being renewed in your mind (Romans 12:1-2), disciplining yourself, studying the Bible (and learning how to study it) all can contribute to transformation.

Assessment statements with related verses and questions for further study

a. I increasingly love good and hate evil.....1 2 3 4 5

Romans 12:9 *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*

How do we know if love is sincere?

When you “cling” to something, what is true of you?

1 Thessalonians 5:21 *Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.*

Why test everything?

b. Prayer has changed how I view and interact with the world.....1 2 3 4 5

1 Timothy 2:1-3 *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior.*

Why do you think Paul says, “requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone”?

What are the two outcomes of this kind of praying?

Acts 4:13 *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*

How does someone who “has been with Jesus” act?

Transformation is the process of becoming more and more who God wants you to be.

Will more time with Jesus make you more courageous?

How can you follow through on this?

c. I am slower to anger and can resist temptations more consistently than I could in the past.....1 2 3 4 5

Proverbs 14:29 *A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.*

What does patience demonstrate?

d. How I spend my time and money shows God-honoring priorities.....1 2 3 4 5

Matthew 6:19-21 *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

How do we store up treasures for ourselves here on earth?

How can you start or consistently store up for yourself treasures in heaven?

I Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

How does being eager for money cause us to wonder from the faith?

What are some of those many griefs we pierce ourselves with?

e. I know how to study the Bible in order to grow in understanding of it, to answer my questions, make good decisions, and learn about God1 2 3 4 5

II Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

What will it take to get to the point where the word of God is what directs your decisions and paths?

How can you begin to study the Bible more consistently?

f. I pursue habits to transform and renew my mind to model my life after Jesus.....1 2 3 4 5

Romans 12:2 *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.*



How can you renew your mind?

What is in the way of letting this process take place in your life?

Ephesians 4:22 *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

How does God want to make you new in the attitude of your mind?

g. I quickly confess anything in my character that does not reflect Christ.....1 2 3 4 5

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

What happens when we confess our sins?

Why do you think we are slow to confess?

James 5:16 *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

Where is the emphasis on confession in this verse?

What happens when we confess our sins to one another?

Is God prompting you to follow through with this verse?

Resources ♦

Love Your God With All Your Mind—JP Moreland (Highlights the place of thinking and the mind in the life of a Christian)

Imitation of Christ—Thomas a Kempis (Classic daily devotional, used by the church for 500 years, very powerful)

Grasping God's Word—Scott Duvall (Practical guide to biblical interpretation and study)

Mere Christianity—CS Lewis (Classic explanation of the various facets of the Christian life)

Words of Delight—Leland Ryken (Highlights the literary nature of scripture and helps to read it accurately)

Proverbs—Read One Chapter a Day (There are 31 chapters so this can be a good daily habit to go through the book once a month for a few months)

How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth— Gordon D. Fee

Growing True Disciples— George Barna



My Response...

What was the most meaningful statement of Scripture you read in the section on Transformation?

Reword the statement in a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to the study on Transformation?

My Plan...

1.

2.

Concrete Steps

- Develop the habit of reading for spiritual and intellectual growth. Just 10 pages a day can get you through 15 good sized books a year and can have a tremendous impact on your life.
- Learn to understand God's word by reading some books on interpretation. A lot of times our inability to understand and read the Bible well robs us of the riches that it contains.
- Give something to the church or someone in need.
- Pray a one sentence prayer from time to time to consciously bring God into your circumstances.
- Develop the spiritual habit of praying. After waking up, take a moment to offer a prayer to God.
- Examine the areas of your life where you struggle with temptation. What are those areas of struggle and what should you start doing to avoid them?

General Practices

1. Book Study: Choose a book of the Bible and commit to studying it in depth. Read through the entire book a few times. While doing this, get a basic understanding of how the book is structured, what the author's message is, who he is speaking to, etc. Then start with a section of one chapter and read this through a few times asking the same questions as above. To help you in your study, you may want to pick up a commentary that helps explain things verse by verse. A book on biblical interpretation such as the ones suggested above could be read alongside as you study to aid in your study skills and insight.

2. Money Management: Take some time to look over how you manage your money. If you don't have a budget you may want to establish one. Spend some time praying over what God wants you to do with the money He has given you. This will then help you budget with God's priorities in mind. If you need help with this it may be a good idea to see a Christian financial counselor.

Fellowship

Fellowship is the unique community and circle of relationships between and among believers in Christ. Christians are all part of the family of God, and need each other to continue to grow into who God wants them to be. There are many examples of believers going off to a new place in which they have no fellowship with other believers, only to fall away from their faith. We are not meant to be followers of Christ alone, we are meant to be in a community. Another reason for fellowship is the witness it is to the world. The deep, strong, and loving unity shown by believers is a big contrast to the shallow and antagonistic communities of the world, and shows the world that believers have a source of unity beyond themselves.

Assessment statements with related verses and questions for further study ◆————◆

a. I am humble and honest with others about who I am1 2 3 4 5

Romans 12:3 *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.*

How do we think about ourselves with sober judgment?

Proverbs 27:2 *Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.*

Why is this so important when it comes to humility?

b. I have a deep and fruitful friendship with others in the Church.....1 2 3 4 5

1 Peter 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

What is the prerequisite for sincere deep brotherly love?

Proverbs 27:17 *As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*

How do we sharpen each other without injuring each other?

c. I have an easy time allowing or asking someone who knows me to speak truth and advice to1 2 3 4 5

Proverbs 19:20 *Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.*

What are we to listen to and accept?

What will be ours in the end?

Fellowship is the unique community and circle of relationships had between and among believers in Christ.

How do you develop a willingness to do this?

James 1:19 *My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.*

Why this formula for relationships?

Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*

What is the problem with relying on ourselves only for knowing the right way?

d. There is nothing in my relationships that is currently unresolved.....1 2 3 4 5

Romans 12:17-18 *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

Whose responsibility is it to live at peace with everyone?

What if "someone" refuses to live at peace with you?

Matthew 5:23 *Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

In this verse, what does Christ put ahead of worship?

Why do you think he does?

e. There is nothing in the way I talk or act concerning others that I would not be willing to share with them.....1 2 3 4 5

1 Peter 3:10 *Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.*

Why is gossip and slander so hurtful?

What is deceitful speech?

Ephesians 4:25 *Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.*

Why are we commanded to speak truthfully to our neighbor?



f. I regularly use my time and resources to care for the needs of other believers.....1 2 3 4 5

Galatians 6:10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Why do you think there is an emphasis on especially doing good to other believers?

2 Corinthians 8:7 *But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*

Should followers of Christ set the standard in giving?

What are you doing to excel in giving?

g. I gather regularly with Christians for fellowship, encouragement, and accountability.....1 2 3 4 5

Hebrews 10:25 *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching.*

Why keep meeting together?

How is meeting together potentially encouraging?

Romans 12:15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

Why both rejoicing and weeping with others?

Resources ◆—————◆

Community 101— Gilbert Bilezikian

Life Together: The Classic Explanation of Faith in Community—Deitrich Boenhoffer

The Four Loves—CS Lewis (Explanation of the various kinds of love and ultimately how they are all perfected in God's love for us and our love for God)

Truly The Community— Marva J. Dawn



Concrete Steps ◆—————◆

- Honestly share your faults and struggles with someone who will commit to praying for you on a regular basis.
- Pray for a need that someone has. Make it a point to ask them about it when you see them and pray for them on the spot.

My Response...

What was the most meaningful statement of Scripture you read in the section on Fellowship?

Reword the statement in a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to the study of Fellowship?

My Plan...

1.

2.

- Find someone who has a need in your small group or at church, and then meet that need.
- Rally your small group to care for someone who has a need.
- Contact the church for more information on people who have needs in the church or community.
- Pray for someone you have a conflict with. Make this a regular prayer that will move you towards reconciling the relationship.
- Make it a point to seek forgiveness or give forgiveness to someone you have a conflict with.
- Mend a broken or hurting relationship in your life, and seek to reconcile with that person.
- Don't participate in gossip.
- Challenge those who gossip to speak with the person directly.

General Practices

1. Spiritual Partners: Search out a spiritual partner who will commit to meeting with you regularly and help you grow in your relationship with Jesus. It could be an older person or a peer. Set up a consistent time to meet together. It could be through e-mail conversation or in person. This needs to be a person with whom you can openly share your struggles and ask for prayer, discuss behaviors you need to change and want to be held accountable for, share devotional insights you have learned in your personal study of scriptures, and talk about general life issues.

2. On-The-Spot Prayer: Prayer is usually a great way to build community with others. The next time a person shares a need or concern with you, stop right there and ask if it is okay to pray for them. Make this a regular habit, and watch what it does for the level of intimacy you have with the people around you.

3. Seek Reconciliation: For many of us, there are strains in our relationships that come from false perceptions or hurts we have chosen to harbor instead of heal. Take a look at your own life. Are there any strained relationships? Are you angry with someone else? Are you holding a grudge? Are you mad at God for not coming through for you? Are you always critical of yourself and others? As you reflect on your answers to these questions (there may be other questions you think of), make it a point to seek to be reconciled to people you are separated from because of these issues. You may want to talk with a counselor or your pastor before you seek reconciliation.

4. How Do You Relate? What relational problems are unmanageable for you? Are there patterns in your relationships that you repeat over and over again? What bad habits do you bring to your relationships? Many of us experience relational problems due to the ways we relate to others. Make it a point to explore these issues with a counselor, pastor, or spiritual partner.

Ministry (Service)

Ministry means the community of believers' loving service to each other and the world. We display God's character when we love others, and especially our enemies. We also, hopefully, truly help unbelievers and bring them one step closer to a relationship with God. This service can take many forms including physical, financial, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. The Church is supposed to be salt and light in the world, and this is a main way of carrying out that command.

Assessment statements with related verses and questions for further study

a. I have a growing desire to love others in concrete ways with decreasing self-centeredness.....1 2 3 4 5

Philippians 2: 3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

What is the opposite of humble consideration of others in these verses?

1 John 3: 16-18 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

How can we know we have Christ's love in us?

From these verses, is love an emotion or a decision to act?

b. I am growing in wisdom and can give better advice and guidance to others than in the past.....1 2 3 4 5

Colossians 1:10 *And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.*

To live a life worthy of the Lord, what needs to be happening to my knowledge of God?

Proverbs 1:5 *A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.*

Why do wise people get wiser?

c. Those closest to me would say my life is a reflection of giving more than receiving.....1 2 3 4 5

Acts 20:35 *In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

*Ministry means
the community
of believers' loving
service to the world.*



When we are feeling and acting stingily what are we communicating?

d. I am open about my weaknesses and painful experiences and see them as opportunities to minister to others.....1 2 3 4 5

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

How does God want to use our troubles in other people's lives?

2 Corinthians 12: 7-10 *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

How is God's power perfected in our weaknesses?

What is sufficient for us?

e. I regularly reflect on my life to cut out wasteful uses of time, talents, and resources and contribute them to the kingdom of God1 2 3 4 5

Hebrews 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

What kinds of things hinder us so we are less perseverant in the race?

Are these always sins?

Ephesians 5:15-16 *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

Why are we commanded to make the most of our time?

f. I am currently serving God in my family and church with the gifts and passions He has given me.....1 2 3 4 5

Romans 12:44 *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.*

Regardless of what the gift is, what does Paul say we need to do with our God-given giftedness?

What are some unproductive ways we use our giftedness?

g. I also serve God in my community with the gifts and passions He has given me.....1 2 3 4 5

James 2:15-16 *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?*

How helpful are kind words without a demonstration of kind actions?

Luke 10:33-35 *"But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'*

What is the lesson in this passage about being a good neighbor?

Resources ◆—————◆

Proverbs—Read One Chapter a Day (There are 31 chapters so this can be a good daily habit to go through the book once a month for a few months)

Don't Waste Your Life—John Piper (A powerful challenge to make the most of the life God has given us)

The Volunteer Revolution— Bill Hybels



Concrete Steps ◆—————◆

- Brainstorm ways to start seeing your family and/or job as a vital ministry.
- Commit to serve in some kind of ministry. Or invent a ministry according to your talents and gifts.
- Take on a volunteer project at your church.

My Response...

What was the most meaningful statement of Scripture you read in the section on Ministry?

Reword the statement in a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to the study of Ministry?

My Plan...

1.

2.

General Practices

1. Join a Ministry: Join an existing ministry at your church that best fits your spiritual gifts, interests, passions, talents, abilities, personality type, and experiences.

2. Jump in Anywhere: You discover your gifts by getting involved in ministry. If you don't know your gifts and abilities yet, then just find something that sounds interesting and get involved. You'll never know what you're good at until you get started. If it doesn't work out, call it an "experiment" and try something else. *"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done"* Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT)

3. Start a New Ministry: You may have an idea for a ministry that does not currently exist at your church. Spend some time in prayer to determine if this ministry idea is something you would like to pursue. If it is, then contact your pastor or church leader who is in charge of ministries.

Evangelism (Outreach)

Evangelism is an important subset of ministry which focuses directly on bringing people into a relationship with God. Effective evangelism will be accompanied and backed up by all the other areas of Discipleship, but once those are in place evangelism itself can begin. This includes “telling people the Gospel” and a lot more. In an increasingly unchristian society, evangelism sometimes requires what some call “pre-evangelism” which make the Gospel understandable and reasonable to unbelievers. Evangelism requires a clear understanding of man’s need for salvation and how God offers salvation along with an ability to lovingly explain those truths to others. It also requires knowledge of how we know the Gospel is true and how it relates to other areas in case an unbeliever asks questions or objects.

Assessment statements with related verses and questions for further study ◆

a. I feel personal responsibility and a desire to give the good news of the gospel to those that God places in my life.....1 2 3 4 5

Matt 28:19 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.."*

Who did Jesus say these words to?

Mark 12:31 *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself.*

Why is this the second greatest commandment next to loving God with our whole being?

b. I am confident I can clearly explain and defend the gospel to unbelievers.....1 2 3 4 5

1 Peter 3:15: *But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*

How can we get ready to make a defense about the hope in us?

How are we to express that defense?

Colossians 4:3-4 *And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.*

What does Paul ask prayer for?

If he asked for prayer for this, what about us?

Evangelism is an important subset of ministry which focuses directly on bringing people into a relationship with God.

c. I am open to going anywhere God calls me in whatever capacity to be a witness for Him.....1 2 3 4 5

Jonah 1:1-3 *The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

When Jonah didn't like his assignment, what did he do?

What was he really fleeing from?

How did he fare?

d. I am prepared to give good answers to those who ask me about my faith.....1 2 3 4 5

1 Peter 3:15: *But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*

What is the "hope that is in you"?

Proverbs 15:23 *A man has joy in an apt answer, and how delightful is a timely word!*

What is true of a timely word?

e. I am able to bring conversations naturally to the truths of scriptures or the saving work of Jesus with those who don't know Him..... 1 2 3 4 5

Proverbs 22:17-18 *Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge; for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, that they may be ready on your lips.*

What is to be ready on our lips?

Col 4:6 *Let your speech be always full of grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*

How often is our speech to be full of grace?

What does it mean to be "seasoned with salt?"

f. I look for opportunities to love and get to know those who don't know Jesus.....1 2 3 4 5

Colossians 4:5 *Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity.*



How do we act wisely toward those who are not yet believers?

Acts 18: 4 *And he [Paul] was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.*

Is it ok to try and persuade people to come to Christ?

g. I regularly pray for people in my life and others who don't know Christ.....1 2 3 4 5

Matt 6:9-10 *Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

What is God's will for people who don't yet know Him?

1 Tim 2:1-4 *First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Who should be prayed for and why?

Resources

Just a Walk Across The Room— Bill Hybels

Tactics in Defending the Faith (CD, MP3, or Cassette available at www.str.org)—Gregory Koukl (A great introduction to having productive conversations with people who object to Christianity for various reasons)

Stranger on the Road to Emmaus—John R. Cross (This book gives a bird's eye view of scripture and focuses on clearly and accessibly explaining the way of salvation)

I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist—Norman Geisler (A good introduction defending Christianity to those that don't believe it is true)

The Gospel and Personal Evangelism—Mark Dever (Explains the fundamentals of witnessing to increase confidence and decrease intimidation about witnessing to unbelievers)

Questioning Evangelism—Randy Newman (Shows how Jesus used questioning in His interaction with others and how we can use the same method to improve our conversations)



My Response...

What was the most meaningful statement of Scripture you read in the section on Evangelism?

Reword the statement in a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to the study of Evangelism?

My Plan...

1.

2.

Concrete Steps ◆

- Invite an unsaved neighbor over for dinner.
- Identify (3-5) names of unsaved people and pray daily for their salvation.
- Take a situation from your day where you couldn't think of the right words to say and brainstorm (on paper or in thought) how you could have made the most of the opportunity. Pray for God's help to try again and put these into practice.

General Practices ◆

1. Be Ready to Care: Be ready to care for the hungry or needy wherever you go. Carry gift certificates from your local grocery and department stores like Target or Wal-Mart to give on the spot to those who have need, without worrying about cash. Carry the numbers for local shelters and food services with you so you can help the homeless. Buy an extra hamburger or bagel and share it with someone who needs it.

2. Community Compassion: Look for opportunities to care for the needs of your community. There are many community programs that help share the love of Jesus through meeting the needs of others. Look for ways to take your faith outside the walls of your church.

3. Deliver Food: Set aside some time to volunteer at your local food bank with your family or small group. Make it a special day or evening out. Allow everyone to participate in the food delivery process. Go out for a meal or dessert afterwards and talk about how it felt to serve others. How was Jesus seen through your actions?

4. What's Your Style: You may feel pressure when it comes to sharing Christ because you think you have to "sell" someone on Jesus. Sharing Christ can happen in many different ways. Take some time to explore your style. Read some good books on evangelism and pre-evangelism (apologetics), or attend a class at church. You may be more comfortable speaking directly to people about Jesus; or maybe it is easier for you to let it come up naturally in a conversation. Find your style and begin to share your faith with others.

5. Short-Term Mission: Choose to go on a short-term mission trip. Through these mission trips you get a better understanding of other people's need for Jesus, and a better understanding of the heart of God. Check out the short-term missions opportunities that are available at your church.

6. Count Conversations: Often we can put too much pressure on ourselves to "convert" someone or have all the right answers. It is the Holy Spirit who converts, not us. All you have to do is talk about the Gospel (see Matthew 28:19, 20). Instead of counting the number of people you have led to Christ, start counting the number of conversations you have with others about Jesus. You may be shocked to find how easy it is to talk naturally about Jesus when you don't pressure yourself to convert them.

7. Pray for Your Friends: Make it a point to pray specifically for people you know who don't know Jesus. You may want to write their names on a bookmark in your Bible, or in a prayer journal. Set aside a regular time in your day to pray for them.