

IN ALL THINGS
GOD WORKS

GOD WORKS THROUGH GROWTH

Matt VanCleave
October 20, 2019

GROUP ICE BREAKER

What is an area of life you've grown in the last year?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will trust that God is at work in healing.
- I will bring the whole truth to Jesus.
- I will humble myself before God and turn to him for healing.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

Growth is such an incredible thing of which we have no control, and each day we have opportunities to move toward or away from God, to move toward becoming loving or becoming hateful, to live in confident hope or to live in despair. A formula for spiritual growth is elusive, and extremely challenging, but still God is at work to bring growth. The following four, "I believe" statements about growth are vastly significant in transforming our spiritual growth. The first, "I believe spiritual growth is worth my full devotion." To know Jesus, to love Jesus, to follow Jesus, to serve Jesus, to be aligned with Jesus, to be changed by Jesus--that's worth every ounce of devotion we can bring. The second, "I believe full devotion to spiritual growth should be normal in church." Full devotion to spiritual growth shouldn't look heroic or extraordinary, it ought to be what we call each other to. The third, "I believe spiritual growth requires community." We get into relationship with each other, we tell the truth to each other, and we encourage each other, we don't grow without this. The fourth, "I believe every moment is an opportunity for spiritual growth." The trials and tribulations of life gives us opportunities to grow and to be full of joy when we know that the Lord is continually working in our hearts even in times where spiritual growth seems unattainable. When it comes to following Jesus, to giving your full devotion to growing into the man or woman God intended you to be--are you all in?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Recite Romans 8:28 together. How has your perspective changed over the last three weeks of God being at work in all things in your life?
2. Can you think of a time in your life that was characterized by spiritual growth? What was it? How did you change as a result of it? What prompted the growth?
3. Can you think of a time when you were disappointed by your spiritual growth? What was it? What did you hope would happen that didn't?
4. Matt expresses frustration that growth, grace, and kindness sometimes appear more often in people outside of the church than in it. Do you share his frustration? Has there been any advice or wisdom you've gleaned that allowed you to make peace with this?
5. Matt quotes an old book: "The disciple of Jesus does not ask what is allowable and pardonable but what is commendable and praiseworthy." What is the distinction here? How do these two types of people differ fundamentally in how their lives look?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

6. Matt talks a lot about the difference between **wanting** something and actually **doing** it. How are these different when it comes to the spiritual life?
7. Read James 1:2-4. Dallas Willard said, "You will find in your life circumstances come every day from when you wake up that provide you the opportunity, the place to be with God, to grow precisely where you need to grow." Growth comes through trials and perseverance. How is this meant to encourage us?
8. Would you describe yourself as an admirer or a follower of Jesus? Is there anything in your life that keeps you from being "all in"?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- I will be fully devoted to spiritual growth.
- I will engage in practices that will allow growth to happen.
- I will join a small group to find relationships that will help me grow.
- I will make spiritual community a priority.
- I want to go from being an admirer to being a follower of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Romans 8:28
- Mark 4:26-29
- Matthew 13:44-46
- Proverbs 11:28
- Matthew 18:20
- Proverbs 27:6
- James 1:2-4
- Galatians 6:9
- 1 John 3:2
- Ephesians 4:14-16