

SPIRITUAL: GROWTH, L. G.

LifeGroup LEADER'S Notes

Heb 5:11-14

INTRODUCTION

As we saw on Sunday, scientifically speaking, humans take a long time, and a lot of energy to go from infant to fully independent. This is often the source of much sarcasm and blame laying - in my day we were paying our way by the time we were 18 . . . the problem with the world today is . . . But the length of time it takes humans to mature is a good news story. We take long to mature because we were created with unfathomable potential. We're not brute beasts - eat, sleep, reproduce, die. We were born with a thirst to learn, love, create, dream and discover. We hunger to know and be known, to contribute and to be transformed. This is what it means to be human. We are both physical and spiritual beings, created in the image of God. And just as it takes time to mature spiritually, so to it takes time, effort and dedication to grow spiritually. This is what this study is about!

DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the following quote: "The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people."
- Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline
2. Bring to mind someone in your sphere of life that has great depth. How is their depth displayed? What characteristics do you admire in them? How could you see spiritual depth displayed in their lives?
3. Read Genesis 2:7, Job 27:3, 33:4. To be spiritual is to be human. "Being spiritual" is not an option among many paths, but *the* reality of our existence as created in the image of God.
 - a. In the sermon Paul said: We are more than brute physical animals chasing basic instincts - eating, drinking, buying, working, playing, having sex, dying. If that's the case we might as well just be a dandelion. But that's not who are or want to be. What does it mean that God breathed in us the breath of life? Leaders: Our goal here is to help people arrive at the conclusion that we have *both* a physical body as well as a spirit. This is essential for our study tonight! The word 'spiritual' comes from the word 'breath' used throughout the Scriptures. God is Spirit (John 4:24, Isaiah 42:5 ESV) and has given us this dimension of our being when he

“breathed” into us. So we are both physical beings in need of air in our lungs, and also spiritual beings in need of connection to God in our soul. Feel free to highlight this to the group.

- b. ***Next Level*** Have there been specific times in your life, or in a friend’s life where you see a hunger for more than just our physical reality and/ or a desire to greater understand our spiritual nature?
 - c. How is growing spiritually in our relationship with God a way we can provide depth and substance in a shallow world?
 - d. Realizing we are spiritual is not the end goal. Our spirituality is meant to facilitate a relationship with God! Refer to the Four Chair Chart below. How does an individual move from simply being aware of their spiritual reality (Chair 1) to understanding their spiritual life was meant to point them to the Creator (Chair 2)?
4. Read Hebrews 5:7-14.
- a. What does the passage point to with the food analogy? How does this help you imagine your own spiritual journey and growth?
 - b. ***Next Level*** If you were to build off of the food analogy, how would you describe your current spiritual nutrition?
 - c. Jesus is God and Saviour, but he is also our *exemplar par excellence*! Reread v.7-10 and discuss how Jesus modelled the Christian spiritual journey for us.
 - d. ***Next Level*** Outside of the spiritual discipline of prayer mentioned in Heb 5:7 what other disciplines did Jesus practice which contributed to his growth? Can you think of our find Scriptural references to these practices?
 - e. Jesus, in becoming human (“during his days on earth” v7), had to work at his own spiritual perfection. How does this encourage you in your journey? Leaders: Remember that in becoming human Jesus took on human frailty and limitations -- i.e.: he needed food to survive and prayer to accomplish his mission. Jesus understood the difficulty, the exhaustion, the hard work of spiritual growth. We have a God who is not indifferent to this journey but has undergone it himself.
5. Look through the 4 Chair Model. Leaders: You have a few options here. Either read through the chart altogether or give each member some quiet moments to read through themselves.
- a. Discuss your first impressions of the chart. Leaders, if you are having a hard time getting conversation going consider using these prompts:
 - i. Does the chart help demonstrate the path of spiritual growth?
 - ii. What in the chart is hard to swallow?
 - iii. What are some things you might add to or change in the chart?
 - b. Take a look at the chair pictures which have been selected with intention. What do they communicate about the spiritual journey? Leaders: If your group is struggling, note how the chairs become progressively less comfortable.

- c. In Hebrews 5:14 the writer mentions how the mature have “trained themselves.” How does this connect to the basic (study, prayer, worship, giving and serving) and broader (cf below) Spiritual Disciplines.
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PRAYER

Spend some time in personal prayer. Reflect on the following.

- What chair am I in right now?
- Ask the Spirit to show you the way He is wanting to help you move from one chair to the next.

Now, if you are comfortable, share.

Please also spend time praying for each other in Huddle-sized groups (groups of 3-4).

- Pray for strength to do the hard work of spiritual training.
- Pray for a hunger for God’s word.
- Pray for the group to challenge and encourage one another to look more like Jesus.

APPENDIX A - FOUR CHAIR DISCIPLESHIP

Inspired by Dann Spader, *4 Chair Discipling* (Moody Publisher, 2014).

				
Jesus' Challenge	Come and See	Follow Me	Follow Me... Fish for people	Go and Bear Fruit
Biblical Verse	<i>John 1:29</i>	<i>John 1:43</i>	<i>Matthew 4:19</i>	<i>Matthew 4:19</i>
Maturity Level	Lost or Infant	Children	Young Adults	Parent
Role in Church	Seeker	Builder	Equipper	Multiplier
Basic Needs	<u>CPR/Revival!</u> The Gospel, Biblical Answers, Community	<u>Milk</u> <i>All previous, plus:</i> Christian Identity, Spiritual Disciplines, Biblical Literacy, Mentorship	<u>Meat</u> <i>All previous, plus:</i> Ministry Opportunity, Theological Depth,	<u>Feasts</u> <i>All previous, plus:</i> Leadership Opportunity & Development
Focus	Me-istic	God & I oriented	God & we oriented	God & others oriented
Next Steps	Understand the Gospel; Begin Reading Scripture; Believe in Christ; Attend Worship; Join LifeGroup; Alpha	<i>All previous, plus:</i> Regular Giving (Tithing); Baptism; Take Communion; Engage in Basic Spiritual Disciplines; Begin Serving; Tell Others About Jesus; Find a Mentor; Freedom Session; Healthy Family Life	<i>All previous, plus:</i> Sacrificial Giving; Next Level Spiritual Disciplines, like: Prayer Journaling, Fasting, etc.; Purposeful Friendships with those in Chair 1; Scripture/Theology Study	<i>All previous, plus:</i> LifeGroup or Church Leadership; Knowing and Using Spiritual Gifts; Regular Confession to God and one another; Pursuing Unity; Purposefully coming alongside others in chair 1 and 2 to mentor and disciple

APPENDIX B - SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Courtesy of Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* & [Grace Church](#).

The Inward Disciplines:

Avenues for self-reflection, quiet contemplation, growth, and renewal



MEDITATION



PRAYER



FASTING



STUDY

The Outward Disciplines:

Avenues for making a positive impact on others and the world



SIMPLICITY



SOLITUDE



SUBMISSION



SERVICE

The Corporate Disciplines:

Avenues for strengthening our relationships with others and God



CONFESSION



WORSHIP



GUIDANCE



CELEBRATION