

**Time to Grow**  
**Vision Lesson #05**

*Engaging people*  
*Leading them into a relationship with Jesus Christ*  
*Declaring hope, healing, and redemption.*

**Text:**

See Attached Listing

**Leader Notes:**

Last week, you asked your group to answer the following questions:

- When we look at the Bible, what are some of the ways we are told we can grow in our relationship with Jesus?
- When we look at scripture, what are some specific practices that we see healthy, growing disciples doing?

You will want to spend the first part of your time together in group sharing the things your group members came up with as they searched through scripture this past week. The “Discussion Question” section contains a few questions that will help you as you work through this process.

Once you have done that, I want you to introduce your group to the list (included below) that contains what I would call: Spiritual Growth Opportunities. These serve as disciplines by which we are formed spiritually, while at the same time, show us benchmarks that indicate we are maturing in Christ.

Here is a reality about spiritual growth or spiritual formation you need to consider. Most often, the very practices we exhibit that show we have grown spiritually are also the practices that help us grow. For instance, one of the common ways we know we are maturing in Christ is we spend regular time in Bible study. But how do we learn to Bible study? By studying the Bible.

As you introduce this list to the people of your group, I want you to watch and listen to their reactions. My hope is that members will see the benefit of engaging in these practices because of the ways it helps them grow spiritually. If there is some hesitancy to embrace them, my guess is they will fall on one of a couple of different lines.

The first is the reaction that says: “No one is going to tell me what to do.” While I get that reaction, (we’re Americans after all and it is the core of our DNA in many ways), I also know that it is not a Biblical reaction. Following Jesus requires us to undertake some disciplines that move us toward him. To not want to do that is to not want to follow him fully as we are called to do.

NOTE: None of these growth opportunities are “Do or else...” items. While we want to encourage people to grow spiritually and we think there are some specific practices that help individuals grow, there will not be a test people must take to determine their competency or ongoing membership status. We simply want to be able to provide for people the most and best opportunities possible for growing in a relationship with Jesus.

The second hesitancy I think you might see is the fear of not knowing how to undertake these opportunities. It would be the: “Just what do you want me to do?” question. Bible study and prayer tend to be our go-to items, but we may be a little more uncertain as to how to practice “Justice,” and “Sharing our Faith” typically is something most of us feel incompetent about doing. Reassure people that we learn as we grow, just as we grow as we learn.

I would like you to close your discussion time by doing the following.

Ask your group members to review the list of growth opportunities and then have them come up with a list of how you could practice these opportunities as group, so as to help each other grow.

To me, this means we focus on these opportunities in two ways. The easiest way to look at them is how we ourselves do them together. Obviously, we can all commit together to read through a common text. (This is why we talk about our 1 Home Bible Study readings. We are trying to get everyone on the same page as we read scripture.)

The second way we need to focus on these opportunities is through the lens of someone who has no common spiritual ground with us. Imagine you were a non-churched person, who had grown up outside of going to church. Some of these practices would not make much sense to you, so we need to think of a way to incorporate those just coming to Christ in these exercise.

Let me give you an example. For those of us who grew up in the church or have attended for some time, praying is not really an unknown. We may not pray as much as we need to or we may even feel insecure about praying, but it is a common part of our experience. We were taught to pray around the dinner table as a small child. When you think about someone who never attends church, prayer may be a completely foreign practice. They may know nothing about it, including how to even go about praying. The question becomes, therefore: How do we encourage an un-churched person to be in the practice of prayer as is appropriate.

That last phrase is key: “as is appropriate.” I remember a job I once had in a profession I had never worked and on the first day of my job, I was told (literally – I wish I was making this up): “Here’s your desk. Here’s your phone. Have at it.” At some point in that job, those instructions would have made a lot of sense to me, but at the time, what I really needed was someone to say: “Sit next to me today and watch what I do. It will help you learn what you will do day in and day out.”

It is hard for us to think like someone who does not know Jesus, so walking with them through this growth process will be tough. Therefore, be sure to ask the question often: “I see how your suggestion might help someone here at South Plains grow. How would it affect someone who has yet to come to us? Is there another way we could engage them in this growth opportunity?”

Please notice the exercise listed in the “To Do For Next Week” section, which will encourage people to actively participate in two of these growth opportunities this week.

### **Suggested Group Meeting Agenda:**

Use the “Discussion Questions” to review the things you found in scripture throughout this past week.

Using the attached list of Spiritual Growth Opportunities, discuss the latter half of the discussion questions.

Assign the “To Do For Next Week” assignment.

Close your group time in prayer.

### **Discussion Questions:**

*Ice Breaker Question:* What is one skill or talent that you absolutely do not have now, but would love to have it at some point in your life? What items would be on your bucket list, in other words? When you think about gaining this skill or talent, what would it take for you to learn to be able to do it? What sort of things must be a part of your life for this skill to happen?

- When you looked through scripture to determine the ways you are told to grow in your relationship with Jesus, what examples did you find?
- How does Jesus or Biblical authors describe the importance of this activity?
- When you look at scripture, what sort of practices do you find that healthy disciples or followers of Jesus practiced?
- When you think about people you know that you would consider “spiritually mature,” how do they demonstrate some of these practices you read about in scripture? What commitments have they made to learn these practices?
- What sort of things do you think would make it a challenge for people to practice these disciplines in their lives? How would you suggest they overcome these things?

Look at the list of growth opportunities listed on the attached page. Take a moment or two to read through them, along with the descriptions.

- As you read through these, what are your initial reactions to this list?
- Which one of these growth opportunities do you find appealing? Which ones might be a challenge? Why is this the case?
- How does this list compare to the ones you collected as you read through scripture looking for examples of things Jesus called his disciples to do or that you found healthy disciples doing?
- What, if anything, would prevent you from taking advantage of one or two of these growth opportunities over the next few weeks to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

### **To Do For Next Week:**

Look through the list of Spiritual Growth Opportunities. One of the ways we lead others into a relationship with Jesus Christ is to be sure we are also growing closer to him.

Pick one of the opportunities on this list that you think to be an easy one for you, perhaps one you have practiced before or are currently practicing. Then pick one that would be the most difficult for you to do or furthest outside your comfort zone.

Spend time this week practicing both of these two opportunities you have selected. Be prepared to share about your experiences during your next group meeting.

## Spiritual Growth Opportunities

*Engaging people ... Leading them into a relationship with Jesus Christ ... Declaring hope, healing, and redemption.*

In order to lead people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, people need the opportunity to grow in specific practices that help us become more like Christ. These practices, when demonstrated regularly in individual's or our own lives' actions, also serve as an indicator that we and other individuals are being spiritual formed in Christ's image.

Read through the following list and think of ways that you—both individually, as a group, and as someone walking beside a new believer, helping them know Jesus—could put these growth opportunities into practice.

### **Community**

*I spend time regularly within a community of other Christ followers.*

Acts 2.46-47 – All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

Example: Spend time meeting regularly with your One Group.

### **Denying of Self**

*I actively deny myself, putting others before myself.*

Matthew 16.24-25 – “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”

Example: Serve someone else by doing a job or task no one else wants to do.

### **Giftedness**

*I use my spiritual gifts to equip and build up the body of Christ.*

Romans 12.4-8 – For 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, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Example: Teach a specific skill you have to others as an opportunity to engage them to build a relationship for Jesus.

### **Giving**

*I give of my money, time, ability, and resources.*

2 Corinthians 8.7 – But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Example: Give up a meal out once a week and donate that money to South Plains Food Bank.

### **Justice/Mercy/Humility**

*I model a life that acts justly, loves mercy, and walks humbly with God.*

Micah 6.8 – He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Example: Sign up to support a cause that seeks to give justice to a marginalized or oppressed people.

## **Prayer**

*I spend time regularly in prayer.*

Ephesians 6.18 – And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Example: Spend regular time in prayer every day.

## **Service**

*I serve others.*

Matthew 10.42 – And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Example: Volunteer to teach a children's class at church.

## **Sharing of Faith**

*I share my faith with others who do not know Jesus Christ.*

Matthew 28.18-20 – “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Example: Commit to developing a relationship with someone you interact with regularly (as defined in our early lessons of this series) in order to let them see Jesus through your life and conversations with that person.

## **Study**

*I spend regular time reading and studying God's word.*

Psalms 119.2 – Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.

Example: Read the 1 Home Bible Study texts everyday this week.

## **Trust/Faith**

*I make a commitment to the belief and confession that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice for our sins and that salvation comes through him.*

John 6.40 – “For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Example: Determine that Jesus' sacrifice for you means you will make changes in your life and begin to make those changes.

## **Virtue**

*I commit to eliminating my “old self” and sinful ways, replacing them with a life filled with the Spirit.*

Ephesians 4.22-24 – 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.

Example: Give up a sinful habit you practice now through whatever means necessary.

## **Worship/Praise**

*I acknowledge the greatness of God, both through specific times of worship, as well as a general life of praise.*

Psalms 150.6 – Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

Example: Keep a “List of Gratitude” on you at all times so you can list the things for which you are thankful to God.

What other examples can you come up with in each of these areas?