

GROWING IN FAITH



Our First Love

“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false; **3** I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. **4** But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. –Revelation 2:2-4

“Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready” Revelation 19:7

GOING DEEPER

The book of Revelation is a letter, written by John. It is God calling the church back into a relationship with him?

What does a relationship with God look like for you? What does a relationship with God look like for the church?

John wrote the book of Revelation in a difficult time in history. The world was in political and social turmoil.

How would a better relationship with God help our society today?

Our focus on our relationship with God will improve our other relationships.

What do you think about this statement?

What is one example of our relationship with God strengthening our relationship with others?

How do we develop our relationship with God?

Prayer, Study, Service...others?

Can you think of a person who is an example to you of a strong relationship with God?

“Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.” –Richard Foster, *The celebration of Discipline*

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Prayer

“Who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?”

–Jeremiah 30:21

“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

–Hebrews 4:16

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Relationships are built on communication. Our relationship with God is no different.

How important is communication in your relationships? How often do you talk with family, friends?

Richard Foster writes that, “Prayer is the central avenue that God uses to transform us.”

What do you think about this statement?

Our focus on our relationship with God will improve our other relationships.

How can prayer help with our relationships with others? How does prayer change how we interact with other people...especially if we pray for them?

It is very important to set aside time in the day to pray. Jesus himself offers us the example of prayer - “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.” -Mark 1:35

When do you pray during the day? What tips would you offer to help others establish a quality prayer time?

“Prayer is an effort of the will.” –Oswald Chambers

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Study

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2** Do not conform 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.” –Romans 12:1-2

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The Apostle Paul believes that our minds are influenced by outside forces (this world or God).

What are the possible forces that shape your mind? The video mentions a few; billboards, TV, radio.

John Wesley wrote, “It cannot be that the people should grow in grace unless they give themselves to reading. A reading people will always be a knowing people.”

What does John Wesley’s quote tell you about the importance of growing in your faith and being intentional about study?

A very important part of study is to limit distractions.

What distracts your attention when you are trying to study? Do you find yourself being distracted before you even begin to study?

Study is both and individual and group experience.

What is something that you have studied lately that you would share with your class?

“Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction.” –Richard Foster

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Service

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, **4** rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. **5** Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.”

- John 13:3-5

GOING DEEPER

How do you define service?

*Using our abilities to bear one another’s burdens and joy.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux writes, “Learn the lesson that, if you are to do the work of a prophet, what you need is not a scepter but a hoe.”

What does this quote from one of the early church leaders tell you about the work we are to accomplish as a family of faith?

There are many varieties of service; Hospitality, meeting physical needs of others, giving, and presence to name a few.

What type of service have you been a part of in the past? How did it make a difference in another person’s life? How did it make a difference in your life?

Service is part of our calling from God. We connect to God and to God’s people through service.

Why do you think people struggle with committing to serving others? Time, resources?

Take time to share with each other about how you may serve together or encourage each other into service.

“When he saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.” -Luke 5:20-