

Spiritual GROWTH:

Life Group Guides

Week 1: The Journey of Spiritual Growth

I. Review:

This week, we look at the beginning of our walk with Jesus. The goal is for each of us to understand what it means to follow Jesus and to be able to share the story of how we turned in faith to follow Him.

Read the passage from Sunday's sermon: **Matthew 4:18-22**.

Review our description of discipleship: "Learning to follow Jesus together."

Note the significance of this phrase:

1. A disciple is a learner.
2. We are always learning.
3. We are learning to follow Jesus, not just to gain more knowledge. The goal of spiritual growth is become more like Jesus.
4. We follow Jesus on mission, to be "fishers of men." Sharing Jesus with others is part of growing to spiritual maturity.
5. Discipleship best happens in community.

II. Dig a Bit Deeper

It is important to understand what happens when we turn to follow Jesus. We looked at several important "Gospel Doctrines" that teach us about God's work in saving us. Read these verses to see how they are taught in Scripture.

1. The Gospel Call - we are called into relationship with God as we hear the message of the gospel. Read **Romans 8:30** and **1 Corinthians 1:9**

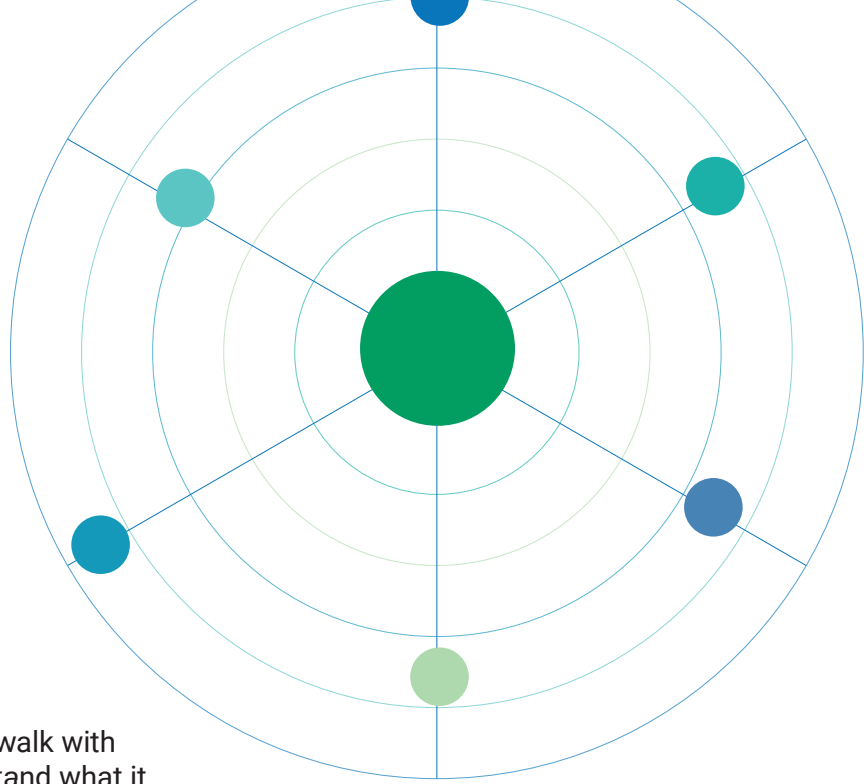
These four passages summarize the message of the gospel:

Romans 3:23 — everyone has sinned.

Romans 6:23 — the penalty for sin is death.

Romans 5:8 — Jesus paid the price for our sin, so we can be forgiven.

Romans 10:9-10 — We respond to Jesus in faith.



As we continue, note that 2-5 happen simultaneously as we turn to follow Jesus.

2. Regeneration - we are made alive in Christ. Read **John 3:1-3** and **Ephesians 2:1-7**.
3. Conversion - we turn to God with faith and repentance. Read John 20:30-31 on the response of faith. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 and notice the importance of "turning from" and "turning to" as examples of repentance.
4. Justification - a legal act of God by which our sins are forgiven and we are given the righteousness of Christ. Read Romans 5:1, Galatians 2:16, and 2 Corinthians 5:21.
5. Adoption - we become members of God's family. Read Romans 8:15-17 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.

The next two doctrines describe the present ongoing work of God and His future work in Christ followers:

6. Sanctification - the ongoing work of God and us, in which we progressively turn from sin and become more like Christ. Read Colossians 2:6-7 and Colossians 3:5-10.

Sunday, we heard that some note a "Sanctification Gap:" that many people make the initial step to follow Jesus but do not continue to grow to be more like Jesus. The goal of our series is to learn and put into practice what it means to follow Jesus.

7. Glorification - we are freed from the presence of sin and given glorified bodies when God makes all things new. Read Philippians 3:20 and Revelation 21:1-4.

III. Apply

Ask a few people in the group to share their story of turning to follow Jesus. This is a personal faith story of conversion and a witness to God's work in our lives.

Look for an opportunity to share your faith story with someone this week.