

**DEVELOPING YOUR COMMITTED
THROUGH A PROCESS OF DISCIPLESHIP**
Purpose Driven Church Conference
Tom Holladay

“...building up the Church, the body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity...”
Eph. 4:12 (TLB)

“Our greatest wish and prayer is that you will become mature Christians.”
2 Cor. 13:9 (TLB)

**SADDLEBACK’S STRATEGY IS BASED ON
6 BELIEFS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH:**

I. GROWTH BEGINS WITH _____

FACTS ABOUT COMMITMENT:

1. We become what _____

“A Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission”
will not only produce a Great Church but also a Great Christian!

2. Every Church _____ by what it is committed to.

“...among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith and all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.” II Thess. 1:4 (NIV)

3. You **MUST** _____ or else you won’t get it.

How to elicit commitment:

4. The greater the commitment you ask for _____

“Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.”
Luke 14:33 (NIV)

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5. If your church doesn't ask for commitment _____

6. People want to be committed to something that _____.

“‘Come, follow Me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men’” Matt. 4:19

7. Build _____ commitment, rather than _____ commitment.

II. GROWTH IS A _____

This means that we as leaders must:

1. DECIDE ON _____

Ask yourself: What does a person *have to know* to grow?

We want people to have:

Regular practice of 3 habits

A working knowledge of 5 Books

(Genesis, John, Romans, Ephesians, James)

A basic understanding of 11 doctrines.

Beginning development of 8 skills

2. DESIGN A _____

Ask yourself: How can we help people to take the next growth step?

3. DEVELOP YOUR _____

Provide as many options as possible for people to grow.

Deliver the truth in a variety of ways.

People learn in different ways... at different times...

for different reasons... at different speeds...

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III. GROWTH INVOLVES

The term, “spiritual habits” is less threatening to new believers than “spiritual disciplines.”

“The second half of a man’s life is determined by the habits he acquired during the first half.” Dostoyevski

“...take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit...” 1 Tim. 4:7 (Ph)

**THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL HABITS
(Putting Christ first in my Time, Money and Relationships)**

- A. A DAILY _____
Mark 1:35
- B. A WEEKLY _____
1 Cor. 16:2
- C. A COMMITTED _____
Heb. 10:25

MY 1999 GROWTH COVENANT

- A Daily Time With God Matt. 1:35
Personal Bible reading and prayer
- A Weekly Tithe To God 1 Corinthians 16:2
Giving the first 10% of my income
- A Committed Team For God Hebrews 10:25
Fellowship with believers in a small group

Signature

Pastor

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IV. GROWTH IS MEASURED BY FIVE FACTORS
(Not just knowledge)

FIVE LEVELS OF LEARNING
The Building Blocks of Spiritual Growth

KNOWLEDGE: Knowing the Content of God’s Word.
Gaining a working knowledge of the books, events and people of the Bible

“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.” Hosea 4:6 (MV)

Saddleback’s “knowledge” program: Life Development Institute Classes and W.O.R.D. Bible Studies

PERSPECTIVE: Seeing things from God’s point of view
Understanding WHY God does what He does

“Solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Heb. 5:14 (NAS)

“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God... because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. 2:14 (NIV)

Saddleback’s “Perspectives” Program: Life Perspectives

LIFE PERSPECTIVES

<u>Doctrine</u>	<u>Primary Perspective</u>
God	God is bigger and better than I can imagine.
Jesus	Jesus is God showing Himself to us.
Holy Spirit	God lives in and through me now.
Revelation	The Bible is God’s inerrant guidebook for life.
Creation	Nothing “just happened.” God created it all.
Salvation	Grace is the only way to have a relationship with God.
Sanctification	God’s will is for us to grow in Christ-likeness.
Good and Evil	God has allowed evil to provide a choice. God can bring good even out of evil events.
The Afterlife	Death is not the end but the beginning. Heaven and Hell are real places.
The Church	The only true world superpower” is the church. It will last forever.
Second Coming	Jesus is coming again to judge the world and gather His children.

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CONVICTIONS: Developing godly values, commitments and motivations.

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
Heb. 11:1 (NAS)

“The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God.”
Rom. 14:22 (NAS)

EVERY CLASS OR MESSAGE MUST BUILD CONVICTION

SKILLS: Learning the “how-to’s” of Christian living and ministry.

“If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.” Eccl. 10:10 (NIV)

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman... who correctly handles the word of truth.” 2 Tim. 2: 15 (NIV)

Saddleback’s “skills” program: LIFE SKILLS SEMINARS

CHARACTER: Becoming like Christ in attitudes and actions

“The GOAL of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” I Tim. 1:5 (NAS)

“We must become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ and have His perfection.” Eph. 4:13 (NCV)

“You are living a brand new kind of life that is continually learning more and more of what is right, and trying constantly to be more and more like Christ.” Col. 3:10 (TLB)

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THE FIVE LEVELS BUILD ON EACH OTHER

LIKE CHRIST

The result is CHARACTER

This gives motivation to develop SKILLS

Seeing from God's perspective produces CONVICTION.

Knowing how God has worked in the past produces PERSPECTIVE

Start with a Foundation of KNOWLEDGE

FIVE VITAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

THE GOAL

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. What do our members have to KNOW in order to grow? | Know the Word of God |
| 2. What PERSPECTIVES do we want them to have?
God (About God, the Bible, themselves, Satan, the world, etc.) | Have the mind of |
| 3. What CONVICTIONS do we want them to hold? | Have the heart of God |
| 4. What SKILLS do they need for life and ministry? | Do all to the glory of
God |
| 5. What CHARACTER qualities do we want them to exhibit? | Have the character of
God |

Remember that people learn in different ways!
Provide as many options as possible for people to grow.

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V. GROWTH IS STIMULATED BY _____

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”
Heb. 10:24 (NIV)

More in the session on “Purpose Driven Small Groups”

VI. GROWTH REQUIRES PARTICIPATION IN _____

- In Discipleship - We learn how God want us to grow
- In Evangelism - We Share what we know
- In Ministry - We Apply what we know
- In Fellowship - We're Held Accountable for what we know
- In Worship - We Express appreciation to God for what we know

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“My dear children, for whom / am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you...” Gal. 4:19 (NIV)

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***SADDLEBACK'S 2020 VISION
FOR A MATURE CHURCH***

We dream of 15,000 members who have committed themselves to the Maturity Covenant. Having a daily time with God, giving a weekly tithe to God, and participating in a weekly team (small group) for God.

We dream of a network of 1,000 small groups within our church providing support, encouragement, and accountability to our members as they seek to grow in Christ-likeness. These groups will continue to be led by trained Lay Pastors and leaders who lovingly lead, feed, and care for those in their group.

We dream of our Life Development Institute for our members offering a balanced program of Bible studies, classes, topical seminars, and annual conferences for building knowledge, perspective, conviction, skills, and character. We expect 7,500 members to receive the LDI basic diploma by 2020.

We dream of our midweek Believer's Service Involving 5,000 adults, children, and youth who are not involved in a small group fellowship.

We dream of a faculty of 250 gifted lay teachers, equipped with the vision, character, knowledge, and expertise to feed our flock. We dream of a teacher training program that produces experts in individual Bible books, doctrine, apologetics, and Christian growth. We dream of the day that it can be said, "The best Bible teachers in the country are the lay teachers at Saddleback"

We dream of an age-appropriate Life Development Process that leads our children and youth to love Jesus and His church, grow spiritually, discover their shape for ministry, and understand their life mission in the world.

We dream of Saddleback as a model of Christian education that focuses on life change, not just comprehension. We intend to make available resources, tools, and training to thousands of other Purpose-Driven churches.

We dream of working with seminaries to establish a church-based training program for pastors. We intend to train leaders for the 21st Century church in how to start, develop, and lead Purpose-Driven churches.

The goal of this vision is to bring glory to God by presenting Jesus Christ with as many Christian disciples we possibly can before He returns! (Col. 1:28)

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And I'll tell you as we begin this session I have a lot of passion about what we're going to talk about. My ministry at Saddleback is helping people do this very thing, to be the second base pastor, to help them move from membership (first base) to maturity (growing in Christ). I'm sort of the second base coach. It's my job to say, "Safe!", help them get themselves up, dust themselves off and then look a little bit towards third base and what's going to happen in their lives with that.

Ephesians 4:12 *"Building up the church, the body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity."* is what God's will is for our lives. 2 Corinthians 13:9 *"Our greatest wish and prayer is that you will become mature Christians."*

Isn't that your wish for the people in your church, for God's people in your church? That they'll grow in Christ? That's the value of what we're going to talk about. What would a family be like if the children of that family never grew? They were always at that one, one and a half-year-old stage where it was really tough at mealtimes. What would that be like if you had to have that all your life? That would be a very difficult family situation.

There are some churches like that, where every time you get together it's a mess. When people start to mature in Christ they become a better part of God's family. All of you have experienced what it's like to try to have ministries with people who aren't yet mature in Christ. They do their best and they're trying but the jealousy factor gets involved. It looks a lot like the New Testament when you read about churches in Corinth and places like that. The letters of the New Testament were written to say, "Let's see how we can grow and mature."

We're going to look at six beliefs about spiritual growth that we have here at Saddleback and some of the things that are behind those and the way we help people grow and mature.

1. GROWTH BEGINS WITH A COMMITMENT

You don't slowly figure out whether you're going to make a commitment. It begins with a commitment. That's the beginning point. That's how Jesus challenged His disciples and that's how He challenges us. One of the ways that you tell if a church is growing spiritually is that the standards for leadership and commitment and going up each year. The commitment of a church is a key factor in the maturity of that church. If you're going to raise the level of maturity you have to raise the level of commitment.

Here's a few facts about commitment.

1. We become what we're committed to.

That's the value of it. A Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission which we talked about yesterday not only produces a Great Church but it also produces a Great Christian. We tend to become like whoever or whatever we're committed to.

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Have you noticed this in relationships? How, if you hang around someone a lot, you start to become interested in the things that they do? You take on their hobbies. Their pet phrases become your pet phrases. Look at a couple that's been married for fifty years. They start to actually look like each other. Like a lady who has the same pet poodle for 25 years... We become like whatever we're committed to.

Guess what? If you make a commitment to Jesus Christ, guess who you start to look like? You start to look more and more like Jesus Christ.

2. Every Church is known by what it is committed to.

That's why we have to be great managers of the commitments of our people. We're not going to be known for our buildings in the end. We're not going to be known for our buildings in the community. What we're going to be known for is the commitment in the heart of the people. *"Among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith and all the persecutions and trials you are enduring."* What you see in people's lives is what you see in the church. The church is people.

3. You must ask for commitments or else you won't get them.

You have to ask. *"We have not because we ask not."* Somehow we expect that people will automatically fall down and make great commitments but they won't. Look at the ministry of Jesus Christ. Did Jesus ask for great commitments? *"Follow Me and I'll make you fishers of men... Leave all you have... Let everything go..."* Because He asked for great commitments He received great commitments. Yet, sometimes we think that people are just going to automatically fall down (maybe because of our personal holiness) and make these incredible commitments. It begins by asking.

How do you ask in a way that helps people make those great commitments in their lives?

One, be specific. It's one thing to say, "Make Jesus Lord of your life." It's another thing to say, "Make Jesus Lord of your life in the way that you talk." It's another thing to say, "Make Jesus Lord of your life in the way that you talk to your kids." Do you see how as it becomes more and more specific it becomes more and more powerful? That helps people to make commitments, to take the next step. We all want Jesus to be Lord of our lives if we're a believer. But we need to know how. So you be specific.

Two, you show the benefits. Show them the benefits of making these great commitments – which God does throughout the Bible. He doesn't have to but He does. He's not like I am sometimes with my kids. When I tell my kids to do something and they say, "Why?" I have the habit of sometimes saying, "Because I say so!" God doesn't do that. He shows us the benefits of giving, here's the benefits of having a loving heart, here's the benefits of sharing with others in the body of Christ. If you can look at the biblical benefits of living out God's commitments, those are powerful motivators.

4. The greater the commitment that you ask for the more people will respond.

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Jesus asked for great commitments like in Luke 14:33 *“Any of you who does not give up everything he has...”* He didn’t say “Could you just give up a little bit to begin with?” He starts by saying, “Give up everything you have.” That great challenge brought great commitments in people’s lives.

I know we’re afraid we’re going to drive people away. But people don’t resent great challenges if they see the purpose behind it. You’ll find that the response often goes up as the level of commitment rises. There’s something about greater commitments that challenge people in their lives.

We’ve talked about the Registration-Communication cards that we fill out. But there are some people that don’t fill those out. They come to church and sort of hang out in the back and they don’t even want to give us their names. A couple of years back, Rick did a message in which he talked about a total commitment of your life to Jesus Christ. There were dozens of people who filled out a card and said, “I want to commit everything to Christ,” who’d never taken the time to even fill out a registration card. That’s where we first got their names. We finally hit their level. It didn’t seem important to fill out a registration card but that was their level of commitment.

5. We have to realize that if our church doesn’t ask for commitment from people others will.

Others are going to ask for commitment. I’m not talking about other churches. I’m talking about PTA, Little League, Scouts, square dancing, bridge clubs and everything else in the world. You have to make some commitments to have one of your kids in Little League. Do they ask you? Do they say, “Do you want to do this?” No! You get a sheet of paper one-day that says, “You will do this, this and this!” That’s the rule.

In church, sometimes, we’re afraid to ask for commitment for the most significant cause in the world and eternity. Baby boomers are looking for significance. They’re volunteering their time. So we ask so they can make great commitments.

6. People want to be committed to something that gives their lives meaning.

Jesus looked at fishermen and said, *“Come follow Me and I’ll make you fishers of men.”* They wanted to be committed to something different, something that gave their lives real meaning. We can offer this. The church of Christ can offer it like no one else can.

7. Build on commitment rather than building toward commitment.

Build on a commitment that someone has already made rather than building towards a commitment that they may or may not ever make. Jesus talked to the rich young ruler and said, Here’s the commitment. Leave everything you have and come follow Me. The rich young ruler walked away. Jesus didn’t chase after him saying, “Wait! Let’s reduce the level of commitment a little bit!” and reel him in. Jesus let him walk away. He took those people who had made the commitment – the disciples – and built on the commitment they’d already made. Those weren’t perfect men. But they’d made a commitment.

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My deepest hurts in ministry have come over this – trying to build toward a commitment in somebody's life. I could see their potential. I could see how God could use them. But it never came. All the while there was a person who had already made a commitment and if I'd only built into their lives what could have happened? They had a heart to do it. You build on the commitment they've already made in their lives.

That's why it's important to give small steps, something that people can grow into. This is the next step of commitment.

2. GROWTH IS A GRADUAL PROCESS.

It's a gradual process, because it doesn't happen overnight. There's no such thing as instant spiritual growth. We'd like a pill but there's no such thing as instant spiritual growth. No microwave Christianity. It takes time. You develop inch by inch. Just like you grow physically, you grow spiritually.

As leaders, that effects us. That means we have to decide on some things and design some things. that means

1. We have to decide on priorities. You can't teach everything. We often think at Saddleback "What if we only have people for five years?" which is about the average these days – five years or less. Some of you in military communities, you have them for maybe eighteen months. What are you going to do to make sure that when they leave they have a foundation?

The fear that I have is that somebody will come to Saddleback for five years, love this church, minister in this church, move to New York City and never get involved in a church again. Which means they didn't have the foundation built.

So what do people have to know to grow? You have to decide on priorities.

We've decided on three habits that will become a regular part of their lives,

An understanding of at least five books of the Bible. We want them to understand all the books of the Bible but we'd rather them understand Genesis before Leviticus. Simple things.

A basic understanding of eleven doctrines in the scriptures.

A beginning understanding of eight skills – skills like relationships and time management and money. But also skills like how to study the Bible and pray. Those kinds of skills

You have to decide on priorities. What do you feel like people have to know? And then teach that again and again and again. Sometimes we teach too much and people just can't get it all.

2. You design a plan. Based on those priorities you design a plan. That plan shows people where to go next. You can make it into a diploma. You can make it into certificates or awards. You can make it into something that's up on the wall or sent to them in the mail. The point is you let them know how they're doing in this growth process. We have a plan called CLASS 101, 201 and 301 and eventually 401 to help people follow a growth process.

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What's your plan?

I'm amazed at the power of a pathway. When you see a path, you give people a path, the next step to go on, it tends to draw them in. A while back, Chaundel (my wife) and I had our twentieth anniversary. We went up on a bluff near the beach close to here. We're standing there and saw this little cement path going down the bluff. I wouldn't have thought to just walk down the bluff if there were no path. But a path... you just have to see what's at the end of it. We got on this and started down it. It was a long path. We finally weaved our way all the way to the end and found a beautiful freeway at the bottom. We would have never walked to the bottom of the bluff except there was a path there that drew us in and drew us down.

It's incredibly powerful to show people what the next step is. Design a plan and based on that you develop your program – programs that show people how to make the next step.

As you develop your programs remember you want to provide as many options as possible for people to grow. It's better to teach the book of John in five different ways than five different books the same way. People learn in different ways, they learn at different times, they learn for different reasons. If you want to make sure that people learn we've got to be redundant in our teaching.

We learn differently. Suppose you have a computer and you can't get a program to work. Some of you would read a book about it, to understand the problem. Others of you would listen to a tape. You like to learn through hearing. Some of you would attend a class and you'll sit there and listen to someone else teach about it. Others of you would join a computer club because you like the relationships. Some of you would just kick the computer – a different kind of learning process!

We all learn differently. And because of that we have to provide for those different ways that people learn as we develop those programs.

It's our habit sometimes to provide only one way for people to learn in church. Often that is cognitive – knowledge based. But we have to realize how different we all are. You learn differently. We all learn differently.

3. GROWTH INVOLVES DEVELOPING HABITS.

Spiritual habits means the same thing as spiritual disciplines. "Habits" is a little bit less threatening term these days. It's more understandable of what spiritual disciplines are all about. Habits and disciplines are vital. They're the building blocks of our character. It also tends to break down the mystery that sometimes is in spirituality.

Americans want to be spiritual today. If you look at magazine titles and book titles from the 1980s in America they were all about success. In the 1990s one of the number one words that shows up in magazine titles and book titles is "spiritual" or "spirituality". People want to be spiritual. They just don't know how. They have no idea what it means. Habits have the power to take the mystery out of spiritual growth for people.

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Dostolevsky said, “The second half of a man’s life is determined by the habits he acquired during the first half.” That’s the power of habit.

In our 201 class we talk about beginning three habits. We picked out three as vital. All the spiritual habits and disciplines are important but we picked three that were vital to help people begin in their spiritual walk.

A. A daily time with God. That's a quiet time. Ten, fifteen minutes a day, sitting down, thinking about who God is, reading His word, praying.

B. A weekly tithe to God. Giving ten percent to the Lord. You have to help people understand what tithe is. That’s important. It’s not just giving to the Lord. It’s giving ten percent. We teach about what the Bible has to say about that.

C. A committed team for God. That’s a small group.

Why are these important? Why did we pick these three?

Because a time with God involves my time. A tithe to God involves my money. And a team for God involves my relationships. If you can help people build a habit into their lives for spiritual growth at the point of their time and their money and their relationships, you’ve got most of their life. Because that’s where my life is lived in those areas. So at the end of class 201 we sign the Growth Covenant Card together. We say this is our commitment together. We’re going to pray for each other as we live out these habits in our spiritual life.

4. GROWTH IS MEASURED BY FIVE FACTORS

Spiritual growth is not measured just by knowledge. I know some people who are not even believers and they have an incredible amount of knowledge about the Bible, but they don’t have any spiritual growth in their lives. It’s not just knowledge. It’s not just cognitive.

Five levels of learning begin with knowledge but then they spread into some other things. The five levels are:

1. Knowledge – knowing the content of God’s word. You do have to have a working knowledge of the books and the events and the people of the Bible. Without this you don’t have an essential foundation. I'm not knocking knowledge. I believe deeply in people knowing who and what the Bible talks about. Yet it’s the first part, the building block that you begin with. The Bible says in Hosea, “*My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.*” That’s how important this is.

But is knowledge all you need? Obviously not. The Bible, in 1 Corinthians 8, says if all I have is knowledge it just puffs me up, makes me prideful. “*Knowledge puffs up but love builds up.*” So I need both. I need more than knowledge. There are some people in church, they come in and fill up notebook after notebook but somehow they never get from the notebook knowledge

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into their heart. They have a whole notebook about Compassion but they're the sourest person you've ever met. What's happening? They have a whole notebook about what the Bible says about the power of Jesus in their life but you look at their life and there is no power. What's happening? It's the fact that knowledge is not enough. Some people just fill themselves more and more with knowledge. They've got lots of knowledge. They think they're spiritual giants. But they're really bloated believers. They're fatter and fatter with knowledge. They get so fat with knowledge when they come to church you have to roll them down the aisle to get them to their seats – holy rollers. They have so much in their head but somehow it never gets in their heart. You have to have knowledge but you also need...

2. Perspective. Knowledge is knowing the content of God's word. Perspective is seeing things from God's point of view, having a Christian worldview. Hebrews 5:14 tells us that perspective is a mark of spiritual maturity, "*Solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*" When I have perspective, I can love God more. What if you could see the sin that you struggle with like God sees it? It wouldn't last would it, if we could really see it like God sees it. That's what we're talking about when we talk about perspective. It helps me love Him more.

Another word for perspective, not a very popular word today, is the word "doctrine". Christian doctrine is Christian perspective. Christian doctrine is Christian worldview. Our Life Perspectives program is built on the eleven doctrines that I indicated earlier. When you understand the truth about God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit you understand the truth about life and you see life as God meant us to see it. You need knowledge and you need perspective.

3. Conviction. Godly values and commitments and motivations. An opinion is something that I'll argue with you about but a conviction is very different. A conviction is something that I'll die for. A conviction is something that has caught my life and all of me. When I was a new believer I did things because other Christians did things. They prayed, I prayed. They went to church, I went to church. I found that the more I grew as a believer, the more I developed my own convictions about those things so that whether or not anyone else was doing it, it was something I would decide to do. That's the development of conviction in our lives.

Jesus, of everyone who walked this earth, was a man of deep conviction. Do a study sometimes of the times that Jesus said, "I must do this." His life was guided by conviction. So every class, every study, everything we do has to build conviction in people's lives.

4. Skills. Learning the how-to's of Christian living and ministry. How to share your faith, how to pray, how to get answers. There are some people who have a great conviction about something but they don't have the skill yet. Have you known anybody who had a great conviction about witnessing, for instance, but didn't have the skill? So they'd beat people over the head, almost, with the Bible. They had a lot of conviction but they were chasing people away. Somebody just needed to give them the skills. Some people have a great conviction about prayer, but they don't have the skill yet. No one has set down and taught them the way to pray, what the Bible teaches us about prayer. You take the convictions and build skills on those things. People are very interested in learning skills these days. That all builds into ...

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5. Character, the goal of Christian maturity – being like Jesus Christ. *“The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”* The five areas of growth build on each other to become like Christ. There’s some questions you can ask regarding these: What do our members have to know? What perspectives do we want them to have? You can build those things that are your priorities in helping people to grow.

5. GROWTH IS STIMULATED BY RELATIONSHIPS

In the last session we talked about what it meant to be a member of the family. People stay in the family because of relationships. People grow in the family because of relationships. It’s what enables us to grow. *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds.”* When I look at my own life – and you’d probably say the same thing – the reason that I have grown is not because of my own personal super spirituality. I’d like to say that’s what it was, that there was something in me that was so holy that I grew closer and closer to God just by the nature of who I am. I’d like to say it was my spirituality or intelligence or something I did. But the truth of the matter is, I can look at just about any growth that’s happened and it’s because I’ve hung around other people that are growing. Because I’ve been around other people growing, having that privilege has helped me to grow, helped me to change. We’ll talk about this a lot more in the next session.

We’re also going to talk about number six in the next session.

6. GROWTH REQUIRES PARTICIPATION IN ALL FIVE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH.

To be a growing Christian, discipleship means more than just studying God’s word. To be a growing Christian means I also have to be involved in reaching the world for Christ. It means I have to share what I know and apply what I know and be held accountable for what I know in a small group and express appreciation for what I know. In the next session on small groups we’re going to talk about how do you do that in a way that’s personal to people so that in relationship with one another they’re growing in all five of these purposes.

Galatians 4:19 talks about the leadership factor in helping people to grow to spiritual maturity. Paul wrote to those in Galatians whom he had heart for. He wanted to see them grow and he said to them, *“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.”* I don’t know that Paul completely understood what the pains of childbirth felt like. There’s some – many – in here who could give a testimony of what those pains are like. But he understood the picture. And I understand the picture. I was there for the birth of our three kids. The incredible pain of bringing a child into the world is the picture that Paul chose for the kind of pain, the kind of heart, that goes behind helping people grow in Christ.

I used to think that you got people saved with that kind of prayer and pain but then it was the Holy Spirit’s job. You pray and you get them into the church and you get them baptized and you get them saved and then let’s go out and pray for some other people and get them to know Christ.

**DEVELOPING MATURE MEMBERS
MOVING PEOPLE FROM CONGREGATION TO COMMITTED
Purpose Driven Church Conference**

Let the Holy Spirit grow those people. They've got the Holy Spirit in them now. Why do they need me any more?

But when Paul writes he says, "You want to know how people grow in Christ? There's going to have to be someone in your church who prays for them and teaches them and loves them. And sometimes it'll be like the pains of labor pains. But when someone loves them that much, you are the person that is making a difference in their life. They're going to be someone they would not have been otherwise. They're going to spend time with God they would not have spent otherwise. They're going to have a heart for God they would not have had otherwise because of the leadership factor, how God uses us through the power of the Holy Spirit in a person's life to energize them and enable them for Christian growth.

As we close let's pray that God would use us to reach others and to help them grow.

Prayer:

Our Father, help me to be a growing Christian. Help me to be the kind of person who not only has knowledge of You but a perspective and a conviction and the diligence to keep developing skills. God, help me to never give up until I become like Christ. That's a goal I'll never reach in this world. I'm committing once again to being a growing Christian myself the rest of my life. Also enable me, strengthen me, empower me to help others to grow. I don't know how You do that. I'm so imperfect. It seems like I can't even grow myself sometimes. But I do ask that You'd use me. Help me to help others to see what You're like so that they can have knowledge and perspective and conviction and skills and character that's different and changed. I ask this, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.