



DeoGloria
Community Church
Rockingham

GROWING FAITH

G

GO TO GOD IN PRAYER DAILY

R

READ GOD'S WORD DAILY

O

OBEY GOD, MOMENT BY MOMENT

W

WITNESS FOR CHRIST BY YOUR LIFE

T

TRUST GOD FOR EVERY DETAIL OF YOUR LIFE

H

HOLY SPIRIT CONTROL YOUR DAILY LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

Faith is a journey, where the believers grow both closer to God and in spiritual maturity. From the very beginning of Christianity, growing in faith has been a pre-requisite. In 2 Thessalonians 1:3 Paul rejoiced in the fact that the Christians in Thessalonica were growing in their faith.

But what does it truly mean to be growing in faith? Simply put, it is to mature in knowledge of God and in godly living in such a way that faith has an effect and bears fruit. Ultimately, to become more like Christ.

When we place our faith in Jesus, the Holy spirit begins a process of making us more like Him. That is called spiritual growth. This means that our faith in Jesus is not a stagnant feeling or just a certain knowledge, but it is a living and growing love for the One who saved us as well as an ever-changing life to become more and more like Jesus. This will manifest in our relationship with God as well as our relationships with others.

Growing in faith requires both time and effort. God ultimately causes the growth, yet He expects us to follow his ways and seek to grow and yield a crop.

In this study, we are going to spend time to evaluate our own spiritual growth, but also to discover the areas in which He desires us to grow.

To help us to evaluate our own spiritual growth and to understand what we need to grow in Godliness, we are going to study the parable of the Sower as we find it in Matthew 13:1-21 as well as 2 Peter 1:1-11.

We pray that, as you do this study, you will be encouraged to grow in your faith.

Soli Deo Gloria!

INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

In his gospel, Matthew has presented Jesus Christ as King. He has shown us beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is the anointed of God, the Messiah, the Christ, the King, the Saviour of the world. He has come to bring His kingdom. Jesus offered a kingdom. He talked of the kingdom. He taught of the kingdom. And He called people to acknowledge Him as the King.

Jesus was a dynamic preacher. People came from all over to listen to Him. They formed big crowds, and everyone tried to get as close to Him as possible. However, by the time we reach Matthew 13, His people have rejected the King and they have refused His kingdom. And so, we are at a monumental point in redemptive history.

On this specific day there were so many people that He had to get into His boat and address them from there while they listened from the shore. Jesus started by telling them the parable of the sower – He used that image because that practice was well known to the people.

During the biblical times, farmers used broadcast sowing as their sowing method. This means they took a bag of

seed in their hands and scattered them across the ground in which they wanted them to grow. Thus, not every seed would take root in good soil and there would be varied growth. However, they still sowed with the expectation of reaping a multiple harvest.

Have you ever wondered why the same book, or the same sermon will produce such different results in different people?

In the parable of the sower Jesus talks about different types of soil in order to tell us why this happens. We all have areas in our hearts and minds where our “soil” is soft and receptive to God, as well as areas where our “soil” is hard and less receptive. This study will help us to identify the types of soil in our own spiritual acres.

Week 1

God's Word on the Path

Memory verse:

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

Matthew 13:19

PERSONAL STUDY

Read Matthew 13:1-23

OPENING REMARKS:

Jesus was the master teacher and He taught in parables. He used parables to illustrate spiritual truths about God's reign and His Kingdom.

Parables are stories or analogies involving people or activities that were familiar to the listeners. They often contain surprising twists that helped the listeners understand God's ways with humanity from new perspectives.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

If you were part of the crowd listening to Jesus in Matthew 13, what would have been your view of His message? Would you have described it as a good sermon, or would you have been puzzled by the meaning? Do you think the parables are an effective way of teaching?

In verse 9 Jesus urges people to hear. Why do you think He thought it was necessary to call on the people to pay attention to what they hear?

The disciples did not understand why Jesus was using parables to teach. Why do you think Jesus spoke to the people in parables? How would you summarize his answer in verses 11-16?

In this parable, who or what is represented by the seed? Who is represented by the Sower? And by the soil?

In his book about the parables of Jesus, God's Picture Book (Das Bilderbuch Gottes), Helmut Thieliicke described the parable of the sower as the parable of the quadruple acre.

What different types of soil do we find in this parable?

The types of soil refer to the different ways in which people respond to the message about the Kingdom of God.

Refer to verse 19. What type of reaction is represented by the seed sown along the path?

The road referred to is not meant to germinate seed but is meant for travel. It is a walking place for people, animals and vehicles. The road is trampled and almost impenetrable. And no one will blame the road for being hard, on the contrary, that is what you expect a road to be. Why then do Jesus use this as an example of people who do not understand the Word?

It is easy for us to think that this image does not apply to us, because we are not that important or influential. But beware, it is not only the main roads that is referred to, but also the small foot paths.

Does evil have the power to take away what God has given? Under what circumstances does the evil one gets a chance in a person's life?

What warnings do we find in the following Scripture references?

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|----------------------|--|
| 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 | |
| 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 | |
| 1 Peter 5:8 | |

CLOSING REMARKS:

A person who is like a busy road on which the daily traffic moves, and on which there is never a moment's rest,

cannot give the eternal seed a chance to germinate. But we must be careful and understand that sometimes we are all part of this group.

The evil one can only take away what God has given if the recipient does not care much about what he has received. Satan gets a chance at one's life when you have lost your grip on God, because he is finely tuned to people's inner disposition. For example, if someone goes to church without any expectation, Satan will very easily blur the message from such a person's life, or provoke an altercation with another person, causing strife, or use technical problems to cause irritation, etc.

Therefore, we need to ensure that we are willing to be an acre, at least once a day - An acre that is being ploughed and waiting for the Lord to sow in its furrows.

PRAYER:

Do you have some softness in you – a place where the seed of the Word can germinate?

Talk to Father about your busyness.

Ask Him to help you to make time with Him and to grow in your faith.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

Matthew 13:19

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 13:1-19

Discussion questions

Why do you think some people seem unable to grasp the simplest and most obvious spiritual truths while others are transformed by them?

In verse 9 Jesus urges people to hear. Why do you think He thought it was necessary to call on the people to pay attention to what they hear?

Discuss the fact that seed fell on the path. Do you think it is an effective and true image of what can happen when people hear the Word of God? Why/why not?

Does evil have the power to take away what God has given? Under what circumstances does the evil one gets a chance at a person's life?

Applying the text

Encourage each other to apply the text that we studied in our lives. Share and discuss the following personal questions with each other:

Do you agree that all people have some aspects of being a path in their lives? Is this a permanent condition or it is just from time to time?

Do you have some softness in you – or only rock-hard ignorance and denial? Do you think softness is a necessity?

Close in prayer

Week 2

God's Word on the Rocky Soil

Memory verse:

The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Matthew 13:20-21

PERSONAL STUDY

Read Matthew 13:5-7, 20-21 and Mark 4:13-20

OPENING REMARKS:

At first glance, it looks as if the second type of soil is a bit better.

When these people hear the Word, they are excited. They speak of repentance and are involved and enthusiastic. They care about others and are very motivated, but only for a while. The seed does not take root, because the layer of soil is only thin - it is just enough for the seed to germinate. Therefore, this faith only lasts for a while.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

Verses 20-21 describes the reception of the Word by the people represented as the rocky soil by using the words: at once and joy. What does these words teach us about their attitude and mindset?

In the rocky soil, the seed might find enough soil to produce a plant, but it will never yield a crop. Can such people be described as Christians? Why/why not?

Unfortunately, because their faith has not developed deep roots, it is often fleeting. Refer to verse 21. What reason do we find for their falling away from Christianity?

Charles Spurgeon made a good point when he said that the fault did not lie in the suddenness of their supposed conversion. Many sudden conversions have been among the best that have ever happened. The problem was their lack of depth.

These people are often attracted to the benefits of the Gospel, but they are not willing to endure the hardships associated with it.

Read Matthew 5:11-12 and Hebrews 12:4-11. Why are believers subjected to trials and tribulations?

Read James 1:2-3 and Hebrews 10:35. What should the believers' reaction be when they endure trials and tribulations?

How can we avoid this attitude of being rocky soil in our own lives and discourage it in the lives of others?

CLOSING REMARKS:

The rocky soil does not allow the seed to take root. In the same way we can prevent the Word from taking root in our lives by catering for our own personal preferences and needs.

In his book about the parables of Jesus, God's Picture Book (Das Bilderbuch Gottes), Helmut Thielicke says that: *"The Word of God is not a caress to the mind - it is a hammer that should strike the truth into us."*

Hearing the Word is not enough. It needs to take root in our lives and change our lives. It should bear fruit. However, as believers we should expect to face trouble and persecution. That is part of being a follower of Christ.

PRAYER:

Are you part of the rocky soil? Did your faith take root and are you bearing fruit or was it just a fleeting joy that quickly faded away?

Talk to Father about your faith.

Ask Him to show you the condition of your spiritual life.

Ask Him to help you grow in your faith.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Matthew 13:20-21

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 13:5-7, 20-21 and Mark 4:13-20

Discussion questions

Verses 20-21 describe the kind of person referred to as a stony or rocky soil. How will you describe this in your own words?

What examples have you seen of people who respond this way? Discuss a few examples.

How can we avoid this in our own lives and discourage it in the lives of others?

Applying the text

Encourage each other to apply the text that we studied in our lives. Share and discuss the following personal questions with each other:

Do you agree that all people have some aspects of being rocky soil? Is this a permanent condition or it is just from time to time?

Can you remember a time when you were a typical rocky soil for God's message? Share with the group.

How do you move from being rocky soil to being able to bear fruit?

Close in prayer

Week **3**

God's Word amongst Thorns

Memory verse:

The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Matthew 13:22

PERSONAL STUDY

Read Matthew 13:5-9, 22, Mark 4:18-19, Luke 8:11-15 and Jeremiah 4:3-4

OPENING REMARKS:

The third type of soil seems to be fertile soil, because the seed apparently grows for a longer period than in the rocky soil. However, it cannot deliver a crop because the plants are choked by the thorns.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

What kind of person does the third type of soil describe in verse 22?

What examples does Matthew use to explain the “thorns” in the field? Explain it in your own words.

Read Jeremiah 4:3-4. What are the thorns compared to in this passage?

It is incredibly significant that, in addition to the work of the devil and the threat of prosecution, life's worries, wealth and pleasures are such powerful forces, that they can prevent people from following Jesus.

Have you ever struggled with life's worries, wealth, or pleasures in such a way that it drew you away from God? What happened?

How can we avoid being choked by the weeds and thorns Jesus mentioned?

The seed falling amongst the thorns ultimately proves to be unfruitful. These people may make a profession of their

faith and continue in Christian circles or activities longer than the second ground, but in the end the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth overcome their interest in the One who calls people to serve Him.

How can we avoid this attitude in our own lives and discourage it in the lives of others?

CLOSING REMARKS:

Life-threatening and Life-pleasing. Think very carefully about these two words. These are the two opposites of our everyday existence.

Life-threatening are the things we are afraid of - the things we spend a lot of time and energy on to prevent this from happening to us. Our lives become so focused on the things we want to prevent, on the worries that we have, that we lose our complete trust in God.

Pleasure and wealth are often what we pursue - because we think it will bring us joy and happiness. We forget that

true joy and happiness can be found in Christ and we load our programs so full of all kinds of activities aimed at relaxation and enjoyment that we no longer have time to experience an intimate relationship with the Father.

We are all born in sin and the inclination to evil can easily entangle us. Material wealth and possessions can easily lead to a false sense of self-sufficiency, security and well-being, making it exceedingly difficult to let go and to follow Jesus.

PRAYER:

Are you part of the soil filled with thorns? Can you recognize the thorns in your soil that prevent the seeds from germinating and bearing fruit?

Talk to Father about your faith.

Ask Him to show you the “thorns” that are choking you and preventing you from bearing fruit.

Ask Father to help you eradicate the weeds and thorns in your life.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Matthew 13:22

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 13:5-9, 22, Mark 4: 18-19, Luke 8:11-15

Discussion questions

Verse 22 describes the third type of soil. How will you describe this in your own words?

What examples have you seen of people who respond this way to the Word? Discuss a few examples.

Share with each other about a time (or times) when you were more focussed on wealth and material or relational issues than the effect of the Word in your life and that it made you unfruitful.

How can we avoid being choked by the weeds and thorns Jesus mentions?

Applying the text

Encourage each other to apply the text that we studied in our lives. Share and discuss the following personal questions with each other:

Do you think it is possible to uproot all thorns from the soil of your heart? Discuss how it can be done.

How can we assist one another in uprooting the thorns and preparing the soil for seed and growth?

Close in prayer

Week 4**God's Word on
Good Soil****Memory verse:**

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:23

PERSONAL STUDY

Read Matthew 13:5-9, 23 and Luke 8:11-15

OPENING REMARKS:

The fourth type of soil is the good soil. It refers to *someone who hears the Word of God and understands it and produces a crop.*

Hearing and understanding the Word requires more than just listening. It means that you hear the Word of God, take it to heart and apply it in your life.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

What kind of person does the fourth type of soil describe in verse 23?

What word is the crucial difference between the soil in verse 23 and the three types of soils in the other verses?

Do you think it is possible to listen and not truly hear what is said? Whose responsibility is it to make sure that you understand what you hear?

What are some practical examples of how we can become good soil?

Read Matthew 3:8-10, Luke 3:8-14 and Revelation 2:4-5. What type of crop should the believer yield?

Read Isaiah 5:3-7. What does the Lord say will happen to His vineyard if it does not bear fruit?

Read Matthew 7:16, Romans 6:22 and Galatians 5:22-23. Fruit is the true test of salvation. What kind of fruit should be visible in the believers' life?

Do you think this parable of the sower is applicable to believers, or do you think it is just applicable to unbelievers?

CLOSING REMARKS:

Parables frequently contrasts two or three bad examples with one climatic good example. This positive example of the fruit-bearing crop does not mean that all Christians must do the same things – it means that all Christians should produce fruit of value in keeping with the Kingdom priorities.

Hearing is easy but understanding the Word of God and living according to it is the great test for our faith. Believers will never experience spiritual growth if they only listen and listen and think about what they hear. They need to apply

the message, obey the Word, and live according to the Word.

The seed of God's Word now lies on the bed of your heart.

What will become of it?

Will the birds pick it up, the sun dries it out or the thorns choke it?

Or will it bear fruit and change your way of life?

PRAYER:

Which of the four types of soil do you mostly identify with?

What is there in your life that holds you back from being good soil?

Talk to Father about your faith.

Ask Him to show you what you need to change to be able to hear and understand His Word.

Ask Father to help you be good ground, in which the seed of His Word can germinate and bear fruit.

Thank Him for the ways He has opened your heart and mind to His message of life.

Invite Him to continue to work the soil of your life and to help you be more receptive to His love.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:23

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

Read Matthew 13:5-9, 23 and Luke 8:11-15

Discussion questions

Verse 23 describes the fourth type of soil. How will you describe this in your own words?

What examples have you seen of people who respond this way? Discuss a few examples.

Do you think this parable of the sower is applicable to believers, or do you think it is just applicable to unbelievers? Discuss.

Applying the text

Encourage each other to apply the text that we studied in our lives. Share and discuss the following personal questions with each other:

Do you think it is possible to listen and not truly hear what is said? Whose responsibility is it to make sure that you understand what you hear?

Discuss ways in which we can help each other to ensure that we all produce a crop – that we all grow in our faith.

Close in prayer

INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON 2 PETER 1

As we have studied the parable of the Sower, we realized that the parable is about the hearers (soils) and their effectiveness (fruit) in response to the Word of God (sown seed). Jesus does not tell the parable just for the sake of knowledge, but to put us to work. He expects us to weed out the weeds and give the seed an opportunity to germinate and bear fruit. It is not easy because it requires sacrifice and self-examination, and we must be alert in order to grow.

If anybody in the early church knew the importance of being alert, it was the Apostle Peter. He had a tendency in his early years to feel overconfident when danger was near and to overlook the Master's warnings. He rushed ahead when he should have waited; he slept when he should have prayed; he talked when he should have listened. He was a courageous, but careless, Christian. But he learned his lesson, and he wants to help us learn it too.

In his second letter, Peter's emphasis is on the knowledge of God. The word know or knowledge is used at least thirteen times in this short epistle. The word does not mean a mere intellectual understanding of some truth, though that is included. It means a living participation in the truth,

in the sense that our Lord used it in John 17:3 : *Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

God wants us to grow in faith, and He provides everything we need to grow. We do not have to do it on our own, God gives us the power.

But such growth or productiveness must become visible and part of your everyday life. Our next three studies will be from 2 Peter 1:1-11 which teaches us how to grow in holiness by God's power.

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Week 5

Godly power to live Godly lives

Memory verse:

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2 Peter 1:3

PERSONAL STUDY

Read 2 Peter 1:1-4, Philippians 3:8 and 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

OPENING REMARKS:

From the parable of the sower, we have learned that we need to ensure that we weed out the weeds and give the seed of the Word of God an opportunity to germinate and bear fruit. But this does not mean that we must do it on our own and through our own strength, because then we are doomed for failure.

God has given believers all they need to become spiritually mature, therefore, they must actively pursue spiritual maturity.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

How is *grace and peace* meant to be multiplied in our lives? (Refer to 2 Peter 1:2 and Philippians 3:8)

What has been given to every Christian? Why is it given to us? (Refer to 2 Peter 1:3 and 1 Thessalonians 2:12)

How would you explain the meaning of *divine power* in your own words?

How does the Bible explain divine power according to Ephesians 1:19-22?

Peter stresses the importance of living out the values of God's kingdom. Therefore, he reminds his readers that God is powerfully at work to enable them to live such a life.

God's promises are magnificent. What precious promises has God given to every believer? (Refer to 2 Peter 1:4 and 2 Corinthians 7:1)

What is the purpose of these promises? (Refer to Ephesians 4:24 and Hebrews 12:10)

What is *the divine nature*? (Refer to Colossians 3:10)

How can we be partakers of *the divine nature*?

Do you agree that believers have everything that they need to live a godly life? Explain.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Peter wants believers to know that they are the heirs of a wealth of inestimable value. However, there is one condition for the inheritance and that is faith in Jesus Christ.

God provides everything we need to live and serve Him with our lives. Do you realize that what you receive in this way is already more than your mind can comprehend? All the glory and power of God are at your disposal.

God not only shares certain information with you, but He also shares Himself with you. He wants you to partake of His nature, to become like Him.

Think of God's power, His love, His glory, His omnipotence, His wisdom, His justice and goodness. By knowing and following God, you have already begun to partake of this.

PRAYER:

Are you aware of the divine promises that God has given you? Do you live by His divine power?

Talk to Father about your faith.

Ask Him to teach you to live by His power and grace.

Ask Father to show you how you can become more and more like Him.

Thank Him for the ways he has opened your heart and mind to His message of life.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2 Peter 1:3

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

2 Peter 1:1-4, Philippians 3:8, 1 Thessalonians 2:12 and Colossians 3:10

Discussion questions

Discuss the meaning of *divine power*? What does this mean in the life of the believer?

What is *the divine nature*? (Refer to Colossians 3:10)

Why does Peter say a believer has everything that he needs to live a godly life? What are those things?

Applying the text

Encourage each other to apply the text that we studied in our lives. Share and discuss the following personal questions with each other:

What would you say to a professing Christian who says that he or she does not have power to live a godly life?

What are some excuses for not living a Godly life that you have made yourself or heard others make? Are they valid excuses?

Close in prayer

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Week 6

A call to grow in Godliness

Memory verse:

*For this very reason, make every effort to
add to your faith...*

2 Peter 1:5(a)

PERSONAL STUDY

Read 2 Peter 1:5-7

OPENING REMARKS:

A Christian's character begins when he trusts God. The Bible calls this '*faith'. Jesus has given Christians everything that they need. But they are responsible to use what He has given them. Because of this, God has given us precious promises according to verse 4.

Christians must work hard to behave in the right way. This will take a lot of effort and a long time – but His promises guide and encourages us to live Christ-like lives.

Peter names seven qualities of character. Christians do not work on one quality at a time. Instead, Christians should develop all the qualities and keep increasing them. All the qualities link together. The stair-step structure of this passage was a common literary way to emphasize the items, but not the sequence in which the items are listed.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

Read 1 Peter 1:5a. What significance does the pre-supposition, *For this very reason*, have on the rest that follows?

In verses 5 to 7 there are several steps given. Write these steps down in the space provided below:

...make every effort to add to your

.....;

and to

and to

and to

and to

and to

and to

Read Galatians 5:22-25. In what way does the qualities given in 2 Peter 1:5-7 relate to the fruit of the Spirit given in Galatians?

How would you explain the following qualities in your own words? Refer to the scripture references to help you understand the meaning of the qualities.

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| Goodness <i>(Moral virtue)</i> <i>Matthew 22:26-38</i> | |
| Knowledge <i>Hebrews 5:14</i> | |
| Self-control <i>James 4:7</i> | |
| Perseverance <i>2 Timothy 2:3</i> | |
| Godliness <i>James 4:10</i> | |
| Mutual affection <i>John 15:17</i> | |
| Love <i>1 Corinthians 13 and</i> <i>Colossians 3:14</i> | |

CLOSING REMARKS:

Faith, the believer's foundational gift, and love, the final quality, are the virtues that holds the rest together.

The qualities that Peter list in these 3 verses are not extras, added to your faith, but is the way that your faith will come to fruition.

Peter's staircase of faith enrichment begins with a personal relationship with God and ends where you are finally equipped to make the love of God visible in the world.

In the process, you have received God's divine power and greatest gifts and begun to partake of the heritage of the Divine nature of God.

PRAYER:

Take time to read through the list of qualities in verses 5-7 again.

Talk to Father about your faith.

Ask Him to teach you to grow in your faith and for you to show these qualities in your life.

Ask Father to show you how you can become more and more like Him and live a Godly life.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith...

2 Peter 1:5(a)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

2 Peter 1:5-7 and Galatians 5:22-27

Discussion questions

Discuss the list of qualities of a believer as described in 2 Peter 1:5-7. How would you explain these qualities to someone who does not know the Lord?

In what way do you think these qualities correspond with the fruit of the Spirit as we find it in Galatians 5:22-25?

Can a Christian growing in Godliness, omit any of these qualities of character? Discuss.

Applying the text

Encourage each other to apply the text that we studied in our lives. Share and discuss the following personal questions with each other:

Do you possess all these qualities of a Godly life? Which quality(s) do you think you need to give more attention too?

What are some of the reasons that you fail to display all these qualities in your life?

Close in prayer

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Week 7

The fruit of Growing in Godliness

Memory verse:

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:8

PERSONAL STUDY

Read 2 Peter 1:8-11

OPENING REMARKS:

The real issue is not whether Christians possess the virtues listed in verses 5 to 7, but whether they are continually growing in them. Christians must develop these qualities, then they will know Jesus better. They will be active, and useful for God. They will also become mature Christians.

Please note: A person does not become a Christian because he works hard. A person does not become a Christian just because he behaves in the right way. This is not what Peter taught. First a person must confess that he has sinned. Then he believes and trusts God's Son Jesus as his Saviour. Once a person becomes a Christian, he wants to please God. His good qualities are the evidence that he is a Christian. And therefore, spiritual maturity is not optional for Christians.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

What conditions are needed to bear fruit for the Lord?
(Refer to verse 8 and 10b as well as John 15:2 and Titus 3:14)

What three ways does Peter describe those people that lack these qualities? (Refer to verse 9 as well as 1 John 2:11)

Is it possible for a believer not to stumble? What is needed to grow in Godliness? (Refer to verse 10 and 2 Peter 3:17)

Have you ever stumbled in your faith journey? What happened?

What is the result of those believers who practice these virtues? (Refer to verse 11)

CLOSING REMARKS:

Growing in Faith is a never-ending process, where every aspect of your spiritual growth enables you to know Jesus better and to share more and more in His Divine nature. It offers you a vision of faith and you will look forward to the second coming of Jesus and no longer be afraid to die.

Peter calls you to open your eyes - to see the great potential of faith. You are invited to enter the blessings of the life to come.

For believers, spiritual growth and spiritual maturity is compulsory.

PRAYER:

Take time to evaluate your spiritual growth. Is it an ongoing process, or are you lacking growth?

Talk to Father about your spiritual growth. Ask Him to help you to identify the areas in which you are lacking in faith. Ask Him to help you to grow – closer to Him and closer to fellow believers.

Thank God for His love and mercy, for His patience and for blessing you.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Prayer

Memory verse:

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:8

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

Scripture Reading:

2 Peter 1:8-11

Discussion questions

What two conditions are needed to bear fruit for the Lord?
(Refer to verse 8 as well as John 15:2 and Titus 3:14)

It is possible for a godly believer not to stumble. Discuss what is needed to grow in godliness. (Refer to verse 10 and 2 Peter 3:17)

What is the result of those believers who practice these virtues? (Refer to verse 11)

Applying the text

Encourage each other to apply the text that we studied in our lives. Share and discuss the following personal questions with each other:

Many believers think it is impossible to walk in faith without falling. How would you answer them based on this passage?

How important do you think it is to be diligent about the way you live? How can we help one another?

Close in prayer

MEMORY VERSES

WEEK 1:

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

Matthew 13:19 (NIV)

WEEK 2:

The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Matthew 13:20-21 (NIV)

WEEK 3:

The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Matthew 13:22 (NIV)

WEEK 4:

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:23 (NIV)

WEEK 5:

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

WEEK 6:

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith...

2 Peter 1:5(a) (NIV)

WEEK 7:

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:8 (NIV)

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