

A decorative graphic in the top right corner of the page, consisting of several blue, wavy, concentric lines that resemble topographic map contour lines, set against a light gray background.

**BUILD**

# **SMALL GROUP GUIDE**

## INTRODUCTION

To grow spiritually we need to understand what spiritual growth is and how to pursue it. Spiritual growth is the process of growing your faith in God and your love for others. Spiritual growth is movement—it's a journey. Any step forward is growth and every step forward is progress. It's also visible. Growing faith is always expressed in love, specifically in three vital relationships: Intimacy with God, Community with other believers, and Influence with the world.

The problem is that we all get stuck with our spiritual growth at times. During those times it becomes easy to buy into some common myths about spiritual growth. When we believe them, these myths can become huge barriers that prevent us from growing.

Over the next few weeks your group will have some conversations about 4 myths about spiritual growth that we all are tempted to believe from time to time. During these conversations you'll have the opportunity to learn more about yourself and how you uniquely connect with God and others and you'll be challenged to discover and take your next step in your faith journey.

As you build your faith our prayer is that you will learn to discover what your next steps are and commit to being intentional in taking those steps so that you will experience a lifetime of growing spiritually.

## A NOTE TO GROUP LEADERS

This guide is designed for everybody to work through together. Each session includes the following:

Getting Started	Questions to get everybody thinking about the topic for the session as well as questions to follow up from previous sessions
Digging Deeper	Thoughts, verses, activities, and questions to explore how we've personally interacted with and experienced the myth about spiritual growth for each session
Truth	A short thought about the truth that counters each myth
Assessments / Activities	Tools that will help each of us learn how to apply the truth to our lives
Discussion	Questions to create conversations about how we can apply the truth to our lives and intentionally pursue spiritual growth
Your Plan	A tangible and measurable plan for each person to create to apply the truth and intentionally pursue spiritual growth
Prayer	Close each session by praying for and with each other
Tools and Resources	Some sessions include additional tools and resources

As the leader, your role is to facilitate your group's conversation. Your role is not to teach or to have all the answers to all the questions. When there is text to read, ask somebody to read out loud while everybody reads along. When there is scripture, have everybody look it up and ask somebody to read it aloud. When there are activities, have the group go through them together, or break into smaller groups of 2-4 to do them together. When there are assessments, set a timer and have everybody do them together. When there are questions, ask the question out loud and listen as people respond. Share your own response as well. If you run out of time before finishing a session, plan to finish the session the following week. Session 2 is especially long, so you might plan on spending two weeks on it (for part 1 do pages 12-15 & for part 2 review part 1 and then do pages 16-22).

The goal for this study is to understand that we all have a next step to take in our spiritual growth, identify what that step is, and make a plan for taking it.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Session 1	Page 5
Session 2	Page 12
Session 3	Page 23
Session 4	Page 30

# BUILD SESSION 1

## MYTH: Spiritual growth looks the same for everybody

The goal of this session is to discover and leverage the unique ways that we all individually connect with God.

### GETTING STARTED

1. We've all known or have been around people who just seem closer to God than we do. Who is somebody you've thought this about and what was it about that person that made you think they are so close to God?
2. Think about and share a time when you thought or felt one of the following:
  - "Why can't I experience God like that person?"
  - "I just don't feel close to God."

### DIGGING DEEPER

Throughout the Bible people connected with God in different ways. Read the following verses and see if you can identify the different ways each of these people individually and uniquely connected with God. \*Answers on page 11

**John the Baptist**

*Matthew 3:1-6*

---

---

**Mary, the sister of Lazarus**

*Luke 10:38-39*

---

---

**Martha, Mary's sister**

*Luke 10:40*

---

---

**Simon, the zealot**

*Matthew 10:2-4*

---

---

**Luke**

*Luke 1:3-4*

---

---

**David**

*1 Sam. 16:18-23; 2 Sam. 1:17*  
*Many of the Psalms*

---

---

## TRUTH

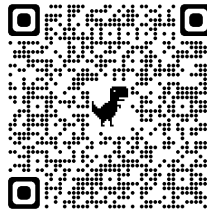
God doesn't create people in cookie-cutter fashion. Each of us is unique. As a result, different kinds of experiences make us feel closer to God.

**YOUR FAITH JOURNEY IS UNIQUELY PERSONAL.**

## SPIRITUAL PATHWAY ASSESSMENT

The Spiritual Pathway Assessment on the following pages will help you discover what your most natural spiritual pathway may be. A spiritual pathway is a way to connect with God. Identifying your unique spiritual pathway can help you better experience God's presence in your everyday life. There are a total of seven pathways. Most people gravitate toward one or two of them.

If you have internet access at the location where you are meeting you can take a similar, online version of the assessment by scanning this code:



## SPIRITUAL PATHWAY ASSESSMENT

Rate each of the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, **1** being the **least true** about you and **5** being the **most true** about you.

Your Score Here



1.		I feel close to God when I participate in uninterrupted study time, reading God's Word or Christian books.
2.		People around me know how passionate I feel about the causes I'm involved in.
3.		Helping others comes naturally for me, even when I'm having problems.
4.		I experience a deep inner joy when I am in a quiet place, free from distractions.
5.		When faced with a difficult decision, I am drawn to spending intentional time outdoors somewhere.
6.		When I am alone too much, I tend to lose energy or get a little depressed.
7.		People seek me out when they need answers to biblical questions.
8.		Even when I'm tired, I look forward to going to a church service.
9.		I love being able to serve behind the scenes, out of the spotlight.
10.		I experience God most tangibly in fellowship with a few others.
11.		I am happiest when I am singing with others about God.
12.		Things in nature often teach me valuable things about God.
13.		People who know me would describe me as enthusiastic during worship times.
14.		Sometimes I spend too much time learning about an issue rather than dealing with it.
15.		I get tremendous satisfaction from seeing people work together to achieve a goal.
16.		When I face difficulty, being alone feels most helpful.
17.		Even when I'm tired, I find I have the energy and desire to care for people's problems.
18.		God is so real when I'm in a beautiful, natural setting.
19.		When I'm tired, there's nothing better than going out with friends to refresh me.
20.		I worship best in response to theological truth clearly explained.
21.		All the world's problems, including mine, don't seem as overwhelming when I'm worshipping at church.
22.		I get frustrated with people's apathy in the face of injustice.
23.		I sometimes feel a little guilty for enjoying silence and solitude so much.

24.		No matter how tired I get, I usually come alive when a challenge is placed before me.
25.		I am happiest when I find someone who really needs help and I step in and offer it.
26.		People around me describe me as a people person.
27.		I often read lots of books or articles to help me work through a problem.
28.		When I get overwhelmed, there's nothing like a good worship service to get me back on track.
29.		I should probably take more time to slow down, but I really love what I do, especially in ministry.
30.		Sometimes I spend a little too much time mulling over negative things people say about me.
31.		When I see natural beauty, something wonderful stirs in me that is difficult to describe.
32.		Spiritual reality sometimes feels more real to me than the physical world.
33.		I get distracted in meetings or services if I notice details in the surroundings that haven't been attended to.
34.		A beautiful sunset can give me a spiritual high that temporarily blocks out everything bothering me.
35.		When I have a problem, I'd rather pray with people than pray alone.



# SPIRITUAL PATHWAY ASSESSMENT

## SCORING

Transfer your scores to the chart below, writing the score from the designated statement number in the corresponding box. Then add up the scores from each column and put that number on the line under each column.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
2.	4.	5.	1.	6.	3.	8.
15.	16.	12.	7.	10.	9.	11.
22.	23.	18.	14.	19.	17.	13.
24.	30.	31.	20.	26.	25.	21.
29.	32.	34.	27.	35.	33.	28.

\_\_\_\_\_

## RESULTS

After adding up your responses, write the total of each column in the corresponding blanks below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Activism: taking action to right a wrong or initiate change
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Contemplation: enjoying solitude, prayer, and meditation
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Nature: enjoying the natural world
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Intellect: pursuing knowledge
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Relationships: connecting with others
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Service: completing meaningful tasks on behalf of others
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Worship: participating in musical or artistic expression

# SPIRITUAL PATHWAY ASSESSMENT

## Examples

	Notable Example:	Things you might enjoy:
Activism	Martin Luther King, Jr.	Promoting important causes, fighting for others' rights
Contemplation	St. Augustine	Meditation, prayer, secret acts of devotion
Nature	St. Francis of Assisi	Watching sunsets, taking walks
Intellect	C.S. Lewis	Apologetics, systematic theology
Relationships	Joseph (OT)	Small groups, classes, talking with others about your faith
Service	Mother Teresa	Serving the less fortunate, mentoring a child
Worship	David	Music, art, writing

## DISCUSSION

1. Before this assessment, how aware were you of spiritual pathways?
2. Which of the pathways help you feel most connected to God?
3. How accurate do you think your assessment results were? Explain.
4. To what extent are you currently connecting with God through your spiritual pathways?
5. What activity do you need more of to ensure you are meaningfully connecting with God?

## YOUR PLAN

What will you do this week to pour fuel on the fire of how you best connect with God?

- What I'm going to do: \_\_\_\_\_
- When I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Where I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Obstacles that might keep me from doing it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will hold me accountable: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will celebrate with me when I take this step: \_\_\_\_\_

## PRAY

As you finish up your group time, share your plans with each other and pray for each other to have the discipline and commitment to stick to your plans.

\*Answers to Digging Deeper chart from page 5

John the Baptist - Connected with God through humility and by proclaiming a bold and unusual message of repentance

Mary, the sister of Lazarus - Connected with God through emotion and relational connection (she loved to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to him)

Martha, Mary's sister - Connected with God through serving

Simon, the zealot - Connected with God by passionately advocating for the good of others

Luke - Connected with God intellectually

David - Connected with God through the arts, specifically through music

## BUILD SESSION 2

### MYTH: Spiritual growth will simply happen

The goal of this session is to learn how to build some healthy spiritual habits into each of your lives, and discover your spiritual gifts and begin to think about how you can use your gifts, experiences, and passions to serve others.

#### GETTING STARTED

1. Who had the opportunity to connect with God using the spiritual pathway you discovered in our previous meeting? How did it go?
2. It's easy to think that if we have accepted Jesus and we keep going to church on Sunday, that growth will just sort of happen. But what can happen is that we get discouraged when we think, "I go to church...but I don't feel like I'm growing spiritually." And one of several things can happen:
  - We start to doubt our faith...Was it real when I made that decision to trust Jesus or did I miss something?
  - We start to doubt God...He must have forgotten about me.
  - We start to doubt the church...I'm not growing here. I'm not getting fed. I'm going to find another church that will feed me better.
  - We start to doubt ourself...There must be something wrong with me.

Think about and share a time when you experienced one or more of the above.

## DIGGING DEEPER

There are two components at work in our lives that cause spiritual growth to happen:

- **God, through the Holy Spirit.** All spiritual growth is empowered by the Holy Spirit

*"...And the Lord—who is Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."*  
-2 Corinthians 3:18

- **You.** You have a personal responsibility for your growth.

*"Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."*  
-Philippians 2:12-13

1. Read Philippians 2:12-13 again. According to the verse, what's your role in your spiritual growth?
2. According to the verse, what is God doing in your life to help you grow spiritually?

## TRUTH

We *can't* transform ourselves into people that are marked by our love for God and others. We need to *be* transformed by God into people of love.

But we *can*, and must, pursue our role in our spiritual growth. We can take a day to rest (sabbath). We can begin our morning in prayer. We can read Scripture. We can live in community with other believers. We can practice generosity and hospitality. We can use the gifts, abilities, and resources God has given us to serve others.

**"WITHOUT GOD, WE CANNOT.  
WITHOUT US, GOD WILL NOT"**  
-SAINT AUGUSTINE

There are a lot of things you can do to intentionally pursue spiritual growth. During this session we're going to highlight 2 major things every believer should pursue that will be catalysts for growth.

1. **Building spiritual habits (or disciplines) into your life**
2. **Discovering and using the gifts God has given you to serve others**

## HABITS

**“SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO CONSISTENTLY WHAT OTHER PEOPLE DO OCCASIONALLY.”**  
-CRAIG GROESCHEL

A discipline is any activity I *can* do by direct effort that will eventually enable me to do that which I *cannot* do by direct effort. For example, if I want to run a full marathon, I wouldn't be able to start by running 26.2 miles on day 1. I *cannot* do that. But I *can* run around the block, then eventually run a mile, then run 5 miles, and so on. I have to develop the discipline of doing what I *can* do today in order to be able to do in the future what I *cannot* do today.

1. What disciplines, or habits, of any kind have you built into your life?
2. Why do you incorporate that discipline? What are you trying to be able to do, or do better, as a result of that discipline?
3. How does it help?
4. What would be different if you didn't have that discipline or habit?

*“Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadow boxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.”*

-1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Spiritual disciplines are habits based on the lifestyle of Jesus that create time and space for us to access the presence and power of our Heavenly Father, and in doing so, be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Some common spiritual disciplines include:

Prayer  
Sabbath  
Study

Fasting  
Community  
Generosity

Scripture  
Worship  
Hospitality

Solitude  
Meditation  
Simplicity

## DISCUSSION

1. What spiritual habits (or disciplines) have been especially helpful for you?
2. Describe what practicing this habit looks like in your life.
3. How have you grown through this habit?
4. What's been most challenging about this habit?
5. What other habit could you begin to practice?

## YOUR PLAN

What spiritual habit will you begin to develop as a regular part of your life?

- What I'm going to do: \_\_\_\_\_
- When I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Where I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Obstacles that might keep me from doing it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will hold me accountable: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will celebrate with me when I take this step: \_\_\_\_\_

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Tools to help with spiritual habits:

- A Bible–If you're not sure what kind of Bible to start with, check out the Life Application Study Bible.
- A time and place (consistency is key...see Daniel 6:10)
- A journal–One great journal option is the Daily Kairos 13-Week Journal
- Other helpful tools
  - Brazos Fellowship weekly Bible reading plan
  - BF Talks: The Bible video series
  - practicingtheway.org
  - The Bible Project
  - The Bible Recap
  - YouVersion App
  - Feel free to share in your group any other tools you personally find helpful

A few great books for further study on spiritual habits and disciplines:

- [The Life You've Always Wanted](#) by John Ortberg
- [Celebration of Discipline](#) by Richard Foster
- [The Spirit of the Disciplines](#) by Dallas Willard

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them to serve one another."*

-1 Peter 4:10

God made each of us with a unique set of talents, experiences and passions and He gives all followers of Jesus a spiritual gift or gifts. He wants us to use those gifts to benefit others because when we do so we reflect his love to the people around us.

The Spiritual Gift Assessment on the following pages will help you discover what your spiritual gifts may be.



## SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

Determine how accurately each of the following statements describes you on a scale of 1 to 5, **1** being the **least true** about you and **5** being the **most true** about you.

In order to get the most accurate assessment of your spiritual gifts the number you select should reflect who you are, not who you wish you were. Think about what has been your actual experience, what's your typical tendency, and what do other people tell you. Answer as honestly as you possibly can.

Your Score Here



1.		I enjoy reaching out to new people in my church and community.
2.		I have the ability and desire to teach.
3.		I am able to relate God's truths to specific situations.
4.		I love helping others grow in their faith.
5.		I can clearly communicate the truth of salvation.
6.		I am good at making critical decisions.
7.		I am willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching.
8.		I am sensitive to people who seem to be hurting.
9.		I have a natural tendency to encourage others.
10.		I can delegate and assign meaningful work.
11.		I take action to meet physical and practical needs.
12.		I can lead people who are at different levels of maturity.
13.		I love meeting needs through sharing my possessions.
14.		I can organize ideas, people, time, and resources effectively.
15.		I am usually able to analyze a situation correctly.
16.		I take the initiative to help other Christians grow in their faith.
17.		I have an awareness of the emotions of other people, such as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger.
18.		I am a cheerful giver.
19.		I am able to communicate vision in such a way that others commit to making the vision a reality.
20.		It makes me happy to do things for people in need.

21.		I am able to make strangers feel at ease.
22.		I can easily identify people who need encouragement.
23.		I have trained Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.
24.		I am willing to do whatever it takes to see others come to Christ.
25.		I am generous when it comes to giving.
26.		I enjoy entertaining guests in my home.
27.		I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.
28.		Fellow Christians often consult me when they are struggling to make difficult decisions.
29.		I think about how I can comfort and encourage others in my spheres of influence.
30.		I am able to give spiritual direction to others.
31.		I am able to present the gospel to those outside the faith in such a way that they come to trust Christ.
32.		I have a capacity to understand the feelings of those in distress.
33.		I have an acute awareness of the physical needs of others.
34.		I am skilled in setting forth positive and precise steps of action.
35.		I explain Scripture in such a way that others understand it.
36.		I can usually see spiritual solutions to problems.
37.		I welcome opportunities to help people who need comfort, encouragement, and counseling.
38.		I feel at ease in sharing Christ with nonbelievers.
39.		I can influence others to perform to their highest God-given potential.
40.		I recognize signs of stress and distress in others.
41.		I give generously to worthwhile projects and ministries.
42.		I enjoy doing little things that help people.
43.		I can give a clear, uncomplicated presentation.
44.		I make strangers comfortable in my home.

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

## SCORING

Transfer your scores to the chart below, writing the score from the designated statement number in the corresponding box. Then add up the scores from each column and put that number on the line under each column.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
10.	5.	9.	13.	1.	6.	8.	4.	11.	2.	3.
14.	24.	22.	18.	21.	12.	17.	16.	20.	7.	15.
27.	31.	29.	25.	26.	19.	32.	23.	33.	35.	28.
34.	38.	37.	41.	44.	39.	40.	30.	42.	43.	36.

\_\_\_\_\_

## RESULTS

After adding up your responses, write the total of each column in the corresponding blanks below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Administration
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelism
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Exhortation
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Giving
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Hospitality
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Mercy
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Pastoring
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Serving
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Wisdom

## SPIRITUAL GIFT DEFINITIONS

Here are general definitions of some of the gifts mentioned in the Bible, but there are varied opinions on these definitions.

1. **Administration:** advancing the work of God by planning, organizing, executing procedures, and supervising others
2. **Evangelism:** delivering the gospel to others in a way that consistently helps them trust Christ
3. **Exhortation:** ministering to others through encouraging, comforting, and using wise counsel to help them become more like Jesus
4. **Giving:** generously and cheerfully sharing money and resources without expecting anything in return
5. **Hospitality:** making other people—even strangers—feel welcome and cared for in your home or church
6. **Leadership:** helping shape the direction of a group in a way that motivates others to get involved and move in the same direction
7. **Mercy:** being sensitive to those who are suffering; feeling genuine sympathy and empathy, then caring for them with loving words and actions
8. **Pastoring:** spiritually caring for, protecting, and guiding a group of believers toward spiritual maturity
9. **Serving:** taking joy from performing any act of service motivated by genuine love for God and others
10. **Teaching:** being able to understand biblical truths and then instructing others in a way that inspires learning, application, and growth
11. **Wisdom:** applying spiritual truths practically in decision-making and daily life.
12. **\*Discerning Spirits:** discerning with complete accuracy what is true and what is false.
13. **\*Faith:** living boldly and sometimes taking radical action as a result of deep trust in God (this is distinct from the trust in God and Christ that is true of all believers)
14. **\*Healing:** supernaturally restoring a physical body back to health
15. **\*Interpreting Tongues:** understanding a foreign language with no training, then communicating the message to others
16. **\*Miracles:** performing an act that includes God's intervention into laws of nature
17. **\*Prophecy:** receiving direct revelation from God and then communicating the message to others
18. **\*Speaking in Tongues:** being able to speak in a foreign or unknown language with no training

\*Some Christians believe these gifts were temporary, meaning they were only necessary to authenticate Jesus' work during and immediately after his earthly ministry. For the sake of unity, this assessment only focuses on gifts the majority of believers would agree are active today.

## DISCUSSION

1. Before this assessment, how aware were you of spiritual gifts?
2. What did you learn about your spiritual gifts from taking the assessment?
3. How accurate do you think your assessment results were? Explain.
4. To what extent are you currently using your spiritual gifts to serve others?
5. What is one thing you can do to better utilize your spiritual gifts? How can this group help?

Additional verses about Spiritual Gifts:

Romans 12:6-8

Ephesians 4:11-13

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

1 Peter 4:10-11

In Addition to your spiritual gifts, you have passions and experiences as well.

**PASSION: A CONVICTION THAT BECOMES  
CONTAGIOUS BECAUSE IT IS WORTH THE COST.**

1. What are some particularly powerful convictions that you have?
2. What or who are some people or causes that you want to serve—that you've sacrificed for and would be willing to again?
3. As you think about your own story, what are some of the experiences you've had that God can use to help you serve somebody else?

## YOUR PLAN

How will you use the gifts, passions, experiences, and talents God has given you to serve others?

- What I'm going to do: \_\_\_\_\_
- When I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Where I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Obstacles that might keep me from doing it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will hold me accountable: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will celebrate with me when I take this step: \_\_\_\_\_

## PRAY

As you finish up your group time, share your plans with each other and pray for each other to have the discipline and commitment to stick to your plans.

Volunteering at church is a great way to use your spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says, "A spiritual gift is given to us so we can help each other." Paul was writing this to the church. Here are some of the serving teams at Brazos Fellowship where you can help each other, and some of the spiritual gifts that might make these teams a good fit:

Welcome Teams	Encouraging, Exhortation, Hospitality, Mercy, Pastoring, Serving
Production	Administration, Evangelism, Serving
Kids / Youth	Evangelism, Mercy, Leadership, Teaching, Faith, Wisdom
Small Groups	Administration, Hospitality, Leadership, Pastoring, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation

## BUILD SESSION 3

### MYTH: Spiritual growth happens by myself...it's a solo activity

The goal of this session is to discover your unique temperament and how you can use your words to build others up based on your temperament (and their temperament) and to have a conversation about the significance of community with others when it comes to spiritual growth.

### GETTING STARTED

1. Who had the opportunity to connect with God using the spiritual pathway you discovered in the first session of Build? How did it go?
2. Who has taken a step towards developing a new spiritual habit? How is that going?
3. Has anybody been challenged to serve somebody based on your gifts, passions, and experiences over the past week? How did it go?
4. Who would you say God put in your life for a specific reason? How did that person help you take key steps in your life or faith?

### DIGGING DEEPER

**FAITH IS UNIQUELY PERSONAL, BUT IT WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BE PRIVATE.**

God designed us to be relational. God is a relational being and He designed and created us in His image to be relational beings.

Read the following verses and talk about what they teach about the importance of relationships.

- Genesis 2:18
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12

Not only did God create us to be relational beings, but Jesus shows us what this looks like. He prioritized relationships in his life. He chose a small group of 12 to pour into and train, and of those 12, He was even closer with 3—Peter, James, John.

But we all face relational challenges that tempt us to settle for spiritual isolation. Three significant relational challenges are relational isolation, relational hurt, and relational drift.

**Relational Isolation:** Culturally, we live more and more disconnected without really thinking about it. Things that have become a normal part of our culture and life cause us to be more isolated—online shopping, curbside pick up, social media, texting, Zoom meetings, etc. The key challenge we face as a result is: How do I actually find good friends today?

**Relational Hurt:** We've all experienced being hurt by another person. It can make it hard to move forward, to trust again, or even to have the energy to try. The key challenge is: How do I move forward in the face of significant relational hurts and challenges?

**Relational Drift:** We all experience this, but we probably don't recognize it. It manifests itself in that we settle for surface level relationships. The key challenge is: How do I take my relationships to the next level?

1. How have you personally experienced relational isolation, hurt, and/or drift?
2. Which of these three challenges feels the strongest to you right now?

## TRUTH

Jesus teaches that if we want to grow spiritually, we cannot separate that from interacting and loving other people.

*"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"  
Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

*-Matthew 22:36-40*

Jesus frames love as a choice. We can choose to love God, but that means choosing to love others because learning to love God more means learning to love others better. For the remainder of this session we'll focus on two choices that are critical in helping people grow in their love for others.

- 1. Choose to build others up in the relationships you already have**
- 2. Choose to prioritize community**



## CHOOSE TO BUILD OTHERS UP

We all have relationships that are already a part of our circles. We have family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, etc. Name some of the relationships you already have in your circles.

Home	Work	Friends	Neighbors
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Read Ephesians 4:29

*Don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs.*  
-Ephesians 4:29

One of the easiest ways to build others up is with our words. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:29 that all of our words should build others up.

## TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

God created and wired everybody with a unique temperament. Temperament is not the same as personality. Your temperament is your innate wiring from God—what you're predisposed to. It's unchangeable. Your personality is how you display your thoughts and feelings. It's influenced by things like birth order, education, and experiences and it can, and does, evolve over time.

There are four temperaments, each predisposed to speak and hear certain words in certain ways. It may be helpful to think of your temperament as your first (or native) language. It's what comes naturally to you. When someone engages you in conversation, responding in this language is automatic for you.

You have an opportunity every day, with every person you encounter, to use your words to build others up or to tear them down. Knowing your temperament and having an awareness of your natural strengths and weaknesses will help you have the tools you need to intentionally build others up.

## TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

Circle the word or phrase in each row that best describes you. More than one word or phrase may describe you, but pick the one that stands out most.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
Takes Chances	Likes to Lead	Loyal	Has High Ideals
Fun-Loving	Daring	Balanced	Rational
Imaginative	Single-Minded	Non-Demanding	Deep/Thoughtful
Likes Variety	Productive	Understanding	Detailed
Motivator	Authoritative	Unflustered	Reserved
Enjoys New Things	Decision-Maker	Mediator	Logical
Energetic	Opinionated	Avoids Conflict	Predictable
Expressive	Leader	Nurturing	Conscientious
Forgiving	Adventurous	Patient	Practical
Loves People	Goal-Driven	Quiet But Witty	Faithful
Promoter	Competitive	Dislikes Change	Tidy
Playful	Independent	Tolerant	Persistent
Talkative	Enjoys Challenges	Deep Relationships	Sensitive
Positive	Brave	Good Listener	Creative
Enthusiastic	Impulsive	Accepting	Evaluates
Open/Friendly	Doer	Easy-Going	Likes Order
Energetic	Achiever	Steady	Cautious
Animated	Visionary	Willing	Perfectionist
_____	_____	_____	_____

# TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

## SCORING & RESULTS

Add up the total number of words or phrases you circled in each column and write that number in the blank at the bottom of each column.

- Column 1 Total: \_\_\_\_\_ **PLAYFUL YELLOW**  
 Column 2 Total: \_\_\_\_\_ **POWERFUL RED**  
 Column 3 Total: \_\_\_\_\_ **PEACEFUL GREEN**  
 Column 4 Total: \_\_\_\_\_ **PROPER BLUE**

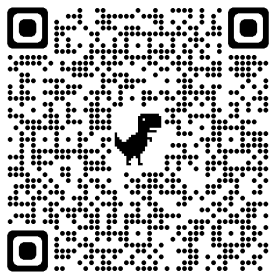
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLAYFUL YELLOW</b></p> <p><b>Basic Desire:</b> Have Fun</p> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> Fun-Loving, Outgoing, Optimistic, Life of the Party</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> People person, Humor, Creative and Colorful, Great Storyteller</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Disorganized, Talks too much, Easily distracted, Often late</p> <p><b>Needs:</b> Approval, Acceptance, Attention, Affection</p> <p><b>Loves to Hear:</b> "Come! It's always better when you're here!"</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POWERFUL RED</b></p> <p><b>Basic Desire:</b> Have Control</p> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> Born Leader, "Get things done" person, Visionary, Decision-maker</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Decisive, Works well under pressure, Production-oriented, Great Leader</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Too opinionated, Workaholic, Overly intense, Insensitive</p> <p><b>Needs:</b> Loyalty, Appreciation, Credit for work, Sense of control</p> <p><b>Loves to Hear:</b> "Wow! You put a lot of time and effort into this!"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PEACEFUL GREEN</b></p> <p><b>Basic Desire:</b> Have Peace</p> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> Relaxed, Likable, Peaceable, Low-Stress</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Kind, Good Listener, Adaptable, Good Under Pressure</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Too Quiet, Procrastinator, Stubborn, Avoids Conflict,</p> <p><b>Needs:</b> Peace and Quiet, Feeling of Worth, Lack of Stress, Respect, Harmony</p> <p><b>Loves to Hear:</b> "You always have a great perspective. I'd love to hear your thoughts."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROPER BLUE</b></p> <p><b>Basic Desire:</b> Have Perfection</p> <p><b>Characteristics:</b> Organized, Detail-Oriented, Accurate, Deep Thinker</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Attention to Detail, Good With Numbers, Great at Processes and Systems, Self-Starter</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Lacks Spontaneity, Struggles Under Pressure, Hard to Please, Can't Function Without Structure</p> <p><b>Needs:</b> Support, Sensitivity, Space, Silence</p> <p><b>Loves to Hear:</b> "You have a lot on your plate right now, so I took care of this for you."</p>

## DISCUSSION

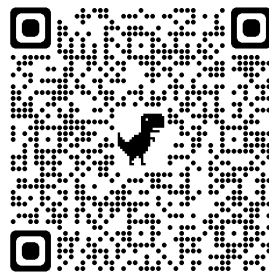
1. Do you agree with your results? Why or why not?
2. What aspects of your temperament did the assessment confirm? Were you surprised?
3. Which strengths and weaknesses from your profile results accurately describe you?
4. In what ways do your results line up with how you communicate and resolve conflict?
5. What is one thing you can do to adjust the way you communicate in order to build others up?
6. What do you think is the temperament of the people closest to you? How can you be more intentional in building them up with your words according to their needs?

For a more comprehensive list of strengths and weaknesses scan the appropriate QR code:

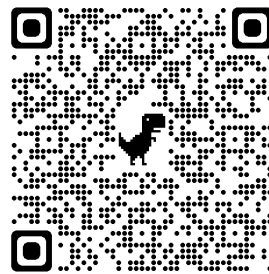
**YELLOW**



**RED**



**GREEN**



**BLUE**



## CHOOSE TO PRIORITIZE COMMUNITY

*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.*

-Acts 2:46

- Notice the choices they made in Acts 2:46
  - They prioritized meeting together in large groups (temple courts)
  - They prioritized meeting together in small groups (their homes)

## DISCUSSION

1. What has been your favorite part of this group so far?
2. What has surprised you about this group?
3. Pastor Will challenged us to do three things during our first group meeting: show up, join in, and be real. What's one step you can take towards prioritizing authentic community in our group with one of these three things?

## YOUR PLAN

How will you choose to build others up with your words or to prioritize community?

- What I'm going to do: \_\_\_\_\_
- When I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Where I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Obstacles that might keep me from doing it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will hold me accountable: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will celebrate with me when I take this step: \_\_\_\_\_

## PRAY

As you finish up your group time, share your plans with each other and pray for each other to have the discipline and commitment to stick to your plans.

For a deeper study on the temperaments check out [I Said This, You Heard That](http://www.isaidyouheard.study) (6 sessions) by Kathleen Edelman at [www.isaidyouheard.study](http://www.isaidyouheard.study)

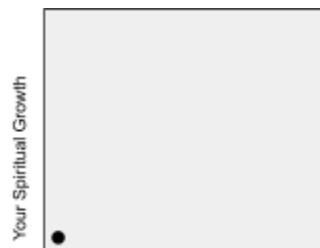
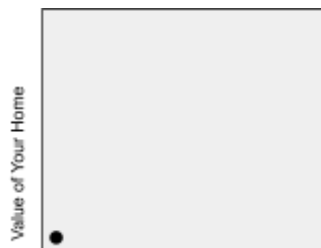
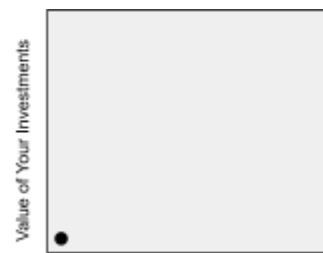
## SESSION 4

### MYTH: Spiritual growth is linear

The goal of this session is for each of you to focus on and take your best next step for your spiritual growth.

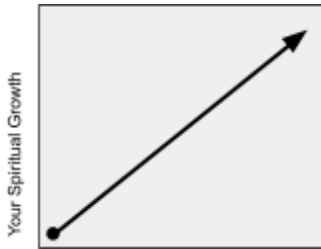
#### GETTING STARTED

1. Did you notice any of your strengths or weaknesses based on your temperament rise to the surface in any conversations or interactions over the past week?
2. Who had the opportunity to connect with God using the spiritual pathway you discovered in the first session of Build? How did it go?
3. Who has taken a step towards developing a new spiritual habit? How is that going?
4. Has anybody been challenged to serve somebody based on your gifts, passions, and experiences over the past week? How did it go?
5. In the graphs below start with the black dot and draw the ideal line plot for the corresponding topics:



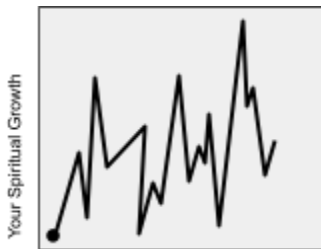
## DIGGING DEEPER

It's easy to think that spiritual growth should look like this...



...Always up and to the right. And it's easy to get discouraged when we're not tracking like this.

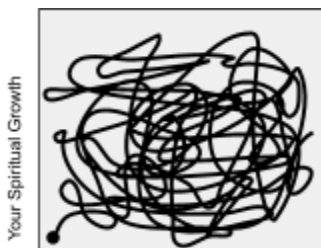
But the reality is that often it looks like this...



Or this...



Or maybe even this...



Growth sometimes looks like one big step forward followed by two steps back. Often we make progress in some aspects of faith and some parts of life, while at the same time struggling in others.

Describe a time when your spiritual growth hasn't exactly been linear. Maybe it felt up and down, maybe all over the place, or maybe you just felt like a big mess.

## TRUTH

More often than not we see a messy faith in the people we read about in the Bible. Throughout David's life, he experienced times of great faith and times of extremely weak faith. His growth wasn't linear, yet God called him a "man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). If we were to track David's spiritual growth journey we would find the following:

### David's Spiritual Growth Journey

1 Samuel 17:45-47	Defeats Goliath in the name of the Lord
2 Samuel 11:2-17	Commits adultery with Bathsheba, lies to Uriah, her husband, and has Uriah killed
Psalms 51:1-12	Confesses and repents of his sin
2 Samuel 13:1-19	Poor handling of family conflict leads to civil war
1 Chronicles 13:1-4	David listens to God and wise counsel and decides to bring the Ark of the Covenant back
1 Chronicles 13:9-13	Becomes both angry and afraid of God and abandons the mission to bring the Ark back
1 Chronicles 21:1-2	Disobeys God which leads to three days of pestilence in Israel and the deaths of 70,000 people
1 Chronicles 21:17-19	Confesses, repents, and obeys

Read the verses and work together to track the ups and downs of Abraham's and Peter's spiritual growth journeys.

### Abraham's Spiritual Growth Journey

Genesis 12:1-4	_____
Genesis 12:11-13	_____
Genesis 15:5-6	_____
Genesis 16:1-2	_____
Genesis 17:1-6, 15-17	_____
Genesis 20:2	_____
Genesis 22:1-5	_____

### Peter's Spiritual Growth Journey

Matthew 14:28-29	_____
Matthew 14:30-32	_____
Matthew 16:15-18	_____
Matthew 16:21-23	_____
Matthew 26:35	_____
Matthew 26:69-74	_____
Acts 2:14ff., 41	_____
Galatians 2:11-13	_____
2 Peter 1:1	_____



Spend a few minutes now tracking the ups and downs of your own spiritual growth journey.

**Your Spiritual Growth Journey**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## DISCUSSION

1. As you think about your own spiritual growth journey, what patterns or trends do you see...
  - ...When it comes to your level of trust, or lack of trust, in God?
  - ...When it comes to your involvement with the church?
  - ...When it comes to your personal spiritual habits and disciplines?
  - ...When it comes to your relationships with other Christians?
  - ...When it comes to difficult circumstances or major transitions in your life?
2. How would you describe where you are on your spiritual growth journey right now when it comes to the following area:
  - Your personal spiritual habits/disciplines?
  - Trusting God in all areas of life (finances, health, family, job, etc.)?
  - Your knowledge of the Gospel?
  - Your community with other believers?
  - Your influence with people who are not believers?
  - Any other specific areas or circumstances?
3. What do you think is your best next step in your spiritual growth journey right now?

Remember, any step forwards, towards Jesus, is growth.  
Every step forward is progress.  
So...the important thing is not getting it all together.  
The most important thing is taking a step.

## **YOUR PLAN**

What's your best next step for your spiritual growth and how are you going to take that step?

- What I'm going to do: \_\_\_\_\_
- When I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Where I'm going to do it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Obstacles that might keep me from doing it: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will hold me accountable: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who will celebrate with me when I take this step: \_\_\_\_\_

## **PRAY**

As you finish up your group time, share your plans with each other and pray for each other to have the discipline and commitment to stick to your plans.