

Together We Grow

Calvary seeks to be a church family that is better together,

BEING CHANGED BY THE GOSPEL

to love like Jesus across all cultures and generations.

We need to be continually changed by the gospel in order to grow.

What is the gospel? | Corinthians 15:1-11

The gospel is the saving truth of God revealed in the person of His Son, the words of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the good news that Jesus is God who became man, lived the perfect life we could never live, died on a cross bearing the sins of humanity, and rose from the dead so that we might become children of God through faith. It is the love and grace of God - not the goodness of our works - that brings forgiveness of sin, newness of life and hope for what's to come.

Gospel living is never past tense, but always current and active for Christians. It is never old news, but always good news—from salvation to sanctification, in the restoration of individuals and in the renewal of all things. It is a Bible-based, Spirit-empowered, life-long journey of becoming like Christ as citizens of His kingdom now and forever.

1. We are like a plant.

"...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18

• **As followers of Jesus we must keep growing throughout all of our life.**

When growth stops, decay begins. Change should occur in things that are alive. We are called to be like branches, abiding in the Vine to bear fruit.

- John 15:1-11
- Galatians 5:22-26
- Philippians 1:9-11
- Colossians 1:10

• **We have a role in this growth but we are not changing ourselves.**

We have to recognize the source of our salvation and our sanctification. We are being changed by the gospel as we cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit, not out of moralism or self-effort.

- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- Galatians 3:3
- Ephesians 3:14-21
- Philippians 3:7-14

2. We are like a fishing net.

“...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12

- **A root of the word “equipping” in Ephesians 4:12 is to mend and is at times a word used for fixing fishing nets.** Fishing nets are created to be used. When they are used they get broken. When they are broken they need to be mended again. Then we use the net again. Then it gets broken. Then we mend it again.
- **We must continually be changed by the gospel to be effective for the gospel.**
Together We Grow so that Together We Go.
- **Is the news of Jesus still good news for you today? How are you inspired and moved by the gospel to live differently?**

3. We are like a fitness enthusiast.

“...discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” 1 Timothy 4:7

- **Healthy practices bring spiritual fitness and positive growth.**
- **Fitness freaks are also health nuts.** Hebrews 5:12-14

Next Steps

1. **Receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior:** Admit you have sinned against God and need His forgiveness once and for all. Believe that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, died for you as payment for your sin and rose from the dead to give you eternal life. You may receive God’s forgiveness and enter into His family by turning from your old life and trusting in Jesus alone as your only means of being cleansed from sin. Now, walk in newness of life with the Spirit as you follow Jesus, making Him the King of your life, from this day forward. Let us know if you made this decision so we can walk alongside you on the journey ahead. Learn more about the life-giving, good news of Jesus at calvarylife.org/jesus
2. **Be baptized as a believer:** After having placed your trust in Christ for salvation, follow the example Jesus set in Scripture and gave to His followers of publicly confessing your faith through the act of water baptism. Find out about upcoming baptism classes and opportunities to be baptized at calvarylife.org/baptism
3. **Find ways at Calvary to help you grow as a follower of Jesus:** Calvary offers many ways for you to grow in your faith. Learn about Discipleship/Mentoring, Spiritual Direction, LifeGroups, Equipping Classes, Care Ministries and more by visiting Connection Point in the Lobby or going to our website at calvarylife.org/grow
4. **Take the Spiritual Self-Assessment:** Consider areas you can focus on for your growth. Pray that the grace of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit will grow you in those areas.
5. **Commit to pray:** Pray for the continued growth of yourself and of Calvary Church as a whole. Prayer must be core to seeing this vision accomplished.

SPIRITUAL SELF ASSESSMENT

Pastor Dave has written 17 implications for a healthy church of healthy people based on Ephesians 4:11-16. These represent God's design for our growth. You can use these implications as a self-assessment of how well you are growing and contributing to a church that is growing and healthy.

Section A: The People of a healthy growing church. Ephesians 4:11-12

- 1. Implication:** We work best with multiple leaders that are empowered to serve our church and community. We are not dependent on one "super star" for growth. We seek to raise up more leaders to serve in their gifts and passions.
Do I consider myself a leader at Calvary Church? What steps can I take to become more of a servant leader in this community?
- 2. Implication:** The church is full of messy, imperfect people who are being changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ through other messy, imperfect people helping equip and building up each other.
Am I active in equipping someone else for the work of service to God? Who am I doing that for? How can I grow in this area?

Section B: The Priorities of a healthy growing church. Ephesians 4:13

- 3. Implication:** We need a vital authentic worship experience where we unite to glorify God and enter into His presence but we may express our worship in different styles of music, preaching and evangelism. Unity of faith even without uniformity in deeds.
Am I fully engaged in worship during Sunday morning services? Am I giving God my all in these moments? Am I engaged in worship outside of church services? How can I be more authentic and passionate in my worship of God in all the areas of my life?
- 4. Implication:** Our foundational conviction is to know Jesus and His gospel. Knowledge centered on the person of Jesus Christ and His gospel.
Am I able to articulate the gospel of Jesus Christ clearly right now? Take steps to be able to do that today.
- 5. Implication:** We love to learn from the Bible that grows us to be like Jesus.
How much time do I spend in the Bible weekly? Monthly? Do I have an intentional plan for devotional reading and study of God's Word?
- 6. Implication:** We must be flexible and relevant to people's lives to help them mature even as we maintain the timeless truth of God.
Am I able to have a gracious conversation with someone with whom I disagree? How do I do with balancing truth and grace?
- 7. Implication:** A stewardship of gracious generosity is one of the greatest signs of maturity.
Am I regularly giving to the Lord through tithes and offerings? How am I generous in other ways outside of church?
- 8. Implication:** Resolving relationship conflicts in an attitude of love, grace and forgiveness is another sign of real maturity.
When thinking about conflicts or disagreements I have had in the last year, do I know that I had a spirit of love and grace? Do I sense that I am quick to anger and quick to speak? Or am I slow to anger and slow to speak?

9. **Implication:** Real maturity is reflected in a constant desire to grow and conform to the character of Christ.
What do I feel when someone says that I should constantly be growing? Do I have a sense of being finished growing or am I willing to learn new things? Being uncomfortable with change could be a clue to an unwillingness to grow.

Section C: The Practices of a healthy growing church. Ephesians 4:14-16

10. **Implication:** We encourage open loving admission and acknowledgement of our pain and struggles.
How honest am I with those close to me? Consider an area of pain in your life. Who have you trusted with this information in the last year?
11. **Implication:** We are willing to confess our failures and sins to another.
How honest am I about my sin? Consider an area of sin that you have struggled with in the past year? Who have you trusted with that information?
12. **Implication:** We offer nonjudgmental forgiveness for sin even as we avoid compromising on our convictions about sin.
Is it difficult for you to forgive people who have wronged you? Is it difficult or seemingly impossible for you to forgive people that commit certain sins you deem worse than other sins?
13. **Implication:** The practices of being disciplined and discipling others (including prayer, Bible study and living life together) is present as a regular part of our process of growing up into Christ.
Are you currently discipling (Christian mentoring) someone and being disciplined by someone else?
14. **Implication:** A community that welcomes all people to find their “fit” in the church is the first step to know Jesus. Everyone is created differently and we seek to love and accept you as we point you to the gospel of Christ.
Do you have any prejudices (not about sin issues) that cause you to think someone is unfit for ministry? Are some people too old or too young? Gender related biases? Ethnicity related biases?
15. **Implication:** Every believer should find a specific place of service to build up one another in love.
Are you currently serving within the church in some way? If not, what is at least one thing you can be doing to contribute to the growth of the church?
16. **Implication:** Loving and reaching anyone in our community and world with the gospel of Jesus is an essential quality for a healthy growing church.
Who is the last person with whom you have shared the gospel of Jesus? When was that? In the last month? In the last year? Are you currently serving in the community in some way to be salt and light?
17. **Implication:** The fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 is evident in the life of a healthy, growing person and in the community of a healthy, growing church.
Read through Galatians 5:22-23 and prayerfully examine if this fruit is evident in your life.

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. Which implication is most important to you? Why?
2. Which implication would you like to learn more about? Why?
3. How is it hard for you, at your current life-stage, to be continually growing? What steps can you take to overcome those difficulties?
4. Write a Growth Plan detailing steps you will take to grow in the implications that are not currently present in your life.