

# Growing Together as a Gospel-Centered Community

## Christ Fellowship Church – Jan 21, 2024

### Introductory Thoughts

We're talking about community – and how to grow well. Here's a great purpose statement for community from the Word:

*Eph 4:1-3, 11-13 (ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*

### Resources I'm Using

- The Word of God (ESV)
- *The Compelling Community* by Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop (Crossway)
- Side by Side – by Ed Welch (Crossway )
- Personal illustrations from experience

### What are Marks of a Growing Gospel-Centered Community (weekly topics)

#### 1. Growing in being rooted in Christ through Truth (His Word), while growing in reliance upon the Holy Spirit (guidance, comfort, and power), so that we can both know AND experience life in Christ

*1 John 1:1-4 “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete”*

- a. Anchored in objective truth
- b. Having a personal experience with Christ, without diminishing the anchor.

**2. Cultivating a culture of biblical forgiveness, which makes it progressively safe and normal to confess and repent of sin.**

*1 John 1:5-7 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

**3. Growing in the gospel as a Resilient/Persevering Community**

- The Community sees its specific, personal obstacles to becoming a gospel-centered community and deals with them in humility and patience, (see Revelation 2-3)
- It grieves its losses well and suffers well with those who are suffering, bearing one another's' burdens. (Rom. 12:15, Gal 6:2)

**4. It's strongly intentional while being increasingly God-reliant**

**5. It Exercises wisdom in ministering to others over relationship issues (Marriage, Singleness, Friendships)**

- How Do I help others and myself with the challenges of marriage and family life (e.g. parenting), living unmarried (divorced or single), meaningful friendships?
- What are ways I can effectively address some of the common challenges affecting marriages (e.g. habitual conflict, challenges of physical intimacy, parenting challenges) or other relationship challenges?
- What are initial things I can do with more complex issues?

**6. Exercises wisdom and compassion in ministering to others in specific life challenges (Depression, Anxiety, Trauma, etc.)**