

Things to consider: Is time in God's word a daily priority for me? Is God revealing himself to me through his word? Do I feel confident to study the Bible? Am I living in light of what I learn from Scripture? Is the Bible the first place I go for answers?



A follower of Jesus is a Sent One involved in One Mission.



To be like Jesus is to be sent like Jesus. As Christ told the first disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21) Just as someone was involved in bringing God's message to you, so now God is sending you to represent

Jesus Christ in all of the circles in which you live: family, work, neighborhood, school, etc. This 'sending' springs from the reality of Christ's one mission: "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Whether one goes to a foreign land or just down the street, the church's disciple-making mission is the same. Jesus says to his followers, "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16). Paul teaches us to be "wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." (Colossians 4:5, 6) As we live our life for Christ, we look for ways to make him known: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15) So as individuals and a local church family, we are all called "to advance the gospel" (Philippians 1:12) by proclaiming God's love through Jesus Christ in both "good news" and "good deeds".

Things to do: 1) Pray for those in your life who have not yet trusted Jesus and the work of the gospel, 2) be prepared to speak about Jesus whenever you have the opportunity, and 3) look for ways to demonstrate God's love to those around you.

Things to consider: Who has God placed in my life that needs Jesus Christ? Am I prepared to share the "good news" about Jesus? Has God given me opportunities to demonstrate his love to those outside the church? Am I praying for those who do not believe? How can I assist the church in advancing the gospel to make disciples?

Servant, Sibling, Student, Sent One Do these aspects of discipleship describe your relationship with Jesus? **One Lord, One Body, One Truth, One Mission.** Are these essentials guiding you in your growth as a Christian? This is the life that God desires for all who trust him through Jesus.

It's critical to remember how Paul encouraged others to this same end of being like Christ: "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12, 13) We can "make every effort to add to [our] faith" (1 Peter 1:5) resting in the reality that it is God "who makes things grow" (1 Corinthians 3:7). While it should be "our goal to please him" (1 Corinthians 5:9), we do not follow in order to be accepted by God. We follow because we have already been accepted by God through Jesus Christ (Romans 15:7). God has made it possible to follow.

It is our prayer that this pamphlet will help you "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:17) by giving you a biblical blueprint of what it looks like to follow his call.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20, 21)



P.O. Box 1671
Buckeye, Arizona 85326
www.wayofgracechurch.com

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Following His Call
growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus

Growth. Growth is a defining characteristic of life. Plants. Animals. People. But growth requires action. The growth of a seed requires cultivation. The growth of a community requires construction. But what about when the life in question is the new life that God gives through Jesus Christ?

Being a follower or disciple of Jesus always involves growth. That's why Jesus used things like seeds and plants and trees to describe life under God's reign (for example, see Matthew 13:23, 24, 31). The Apostle Peter encouraged his Christian readers to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:17)

But what does it mean to grow in this "grace and knowledge"? If you have placed your trust in Jesus Christ by believing in what the New Testament calls the "gospel" or "good news", then you have laid the foundation for a life-long relationship with God. Paul, a leader in the early church, confirmed that "no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

But just as building on a foundation requires blueprints, growing in faith also requires a goal. Paul tells us God's goal is that we "be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Romans 8:29). As Christians, it should be our desire to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13) The goal of any disciple is to become like his or her teacher.

Is it your desire to become more and more like Jesus Christ?

If it is, then we need to turn to the Scriptures to learn more about what it means to be a follower of Jesus. The New Testament speaks to us about growing in faith to Jesus. These aspects are in turn connected to four essential realities that should guide us in our growth. Let's take a look at these and consider how we should respond to each one if we want to grow in God's grace.



A follower of Jesus is a Servant of One Lord.



Being a follower of Jesus Christ means looking and listening to him in all things. It means living a "Christ-centered" life. The writers of the New Testament often introduced themselves in their letters as servants

of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1, James 1:1, 1 Peter 1:1, Jude 1). A servant is someone who wants to "find out what pleases" (Ephesians 5:10) the one they serve and make that their "goal" (1 Corinthians 5:9). Living as a servant of Jesus is directly related to the identity of Jesus. Jesus is our "one lord" (1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5). Living deliberately for Christ means that we will always be looking back to his cross. Paul confirms this when he writes, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; the life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) Can you say along with Paul, "I want to know Christ" (Philippians 3:10)? A disciple of Jesus joyfully trusts and submits to Jesus in all things.

Things to do: 1) Pray each day and ask God to help you know him and love him more fully through Jesus Christ, 2) grow in your knowledge of what Jesus said and did, and 3) follow Jesus' commands in every area of your life.

Things to consider: Do I desire to know Jesus better? Am I allowing him to lead in every part of my life? Is it my desire to be like him in all I say and do? What else or who else is competing for my love and devotion?



A follower of Jesus is a Sibling in One Body.



When we become followers of Jesus Christ, we become part of his family as well. When we believe in the gospel, Paul declares that God's spirit "testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16); we become "members of God's household" (Ephesians 2:19).

In the New Testament, this community of brothers and sisters is called the "church", which means, "those who are called out". Similarly, like a human body, "in Christ who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (Romans 12:5) God designed the church this way so that "there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other." (1 Corinthians 12:25) The local church is the setting in which we can obey Jesus' new command: "As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34) God's word encourages us to "not give up meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25) because as we speak "the truth in love" to one another, "we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

(Ephesians 4:15) So through the church we grow to become more like Jesus Christ as walk together in his grace.

Things to do: 1) Be committed to meeting weekly with a local church family, 2) look for ways to serve others in the church in love, and 3) give of your time, skills, and finances to God's work through the church.

Things to consider: Am I committed to the local church? Am I looking to God's people for encouragement and guidance? How am I obeying Jesus' command to "love one another"? Am I forming healthy relationships with others in this body? Am I giving of my time, talent, and treasure?



A follower of Jesus is a Student of One Truth.



Looking and listening to Jesus requires that we know what he has done and said. Speaking "the truth in love" to one another requires that we know the truth. This is why a disciple of Jesus Christ should be a student of God's word. There is nothing else that

compares to the Bible because all "Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (1 Timothy 3:16, 17) Paul encouraged Timothy to do "your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (1 Timothy 2:15) This "word of truth" includes not only the New Testament, but also the Old Testament, which Paul had in mind when he wrote, "everything that was written in the past was written to teach us" (Romans 15:4). We can confess with King David, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105) But we also must hear James' warning: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22) A follower of Jesus Christ is a student of God's truth, not in order to simply know, but in order to know God and love him more.

Things to do: 1) Prayerfully learn about and be led by God every day by reading his word, 2) place yourself under God's word as it is declared each Sunday, and 3) take advantage of classes and resources that will help you grow in God's word.