



Personal Growth Guide

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WHY A PERSONAL GROWTH GUIDE?

Redemption Church exists to make authentic followers of Jesus who live for the glory of God and the good of our world. We believe that following Jesus is a lifelong process of walking faithfully with our God. Whether it's the simple stresses of everyday life, good things that demand our attention, personal hardships, or the overwhelming amount of temptations to sin, choosing to follow Jesus is hard!

When any kind of outside pressure pushes on us, we see what we're made of on the inside. Life is filled with ups and downs and God's Word invites us to build our lives upon him so that we will be like trees planted by streams of water whose leaves do not wither (Psalm 1). At Redemption, we want to help you build this kind of life for your good, God's glory, and so that others will take note and be invited into life with God as well. We believe that, over time, our pursuit of God will move us toward maturity and give us a storehouse of godly wisdom, nourishment, and resilience. This guide is designed to help you develop that kind of life—a deep, meaningful life in Christ. Do you want to be a person who, when pushed on, has a storehouse of godly wisdom and nourishment from which to pull? Because this is the kind of person that makes others take note. They want to know why you're different. They want to know why the hard things that are intersecting your life aren't turning you upside down. Very few people respond to hard times with grace and wisdom and when you see it, it's truly compelling.

GETTING STARTED

Begin this when you have some quiet moments to reflect and think. You'll get the most out of this time when you can be focused and honest. Push on yourself to not just write what you think others would want to hear, but what seems most honest. Remember, the whole point of this is your personal growth in your relationship with God.

The ground zero for using this tool is honesty. It's only when we're honest about who we are, what we believe, and how those are shaping us that we're able to take real steps forward in faith. The moments of our greatest honesty, and often weakness, are when the Spirit is free to move in our hearts, minds, and lives. This journey of letting God cultivate us into men and women of Christ is a journey of discipleship. It's a journey of vibrant faith, unyielding strength, and gracious perseverance that stands in stark contrast to the whims of our world.

We see the answers to three basic questions as our framework from which to work through our self-assessment of the spiritual life: *Who is God? Who am I? and Who are we?* We use these questions to understand fundamental beliefs about who God is, what we truly believe about Him, and how those beliefs shape us. Digging in to these three questions is more *process* than project. These questions lead to life-long learning and development. Our willingness to continually engage these questions will help us move further into deep, meaningful life in Christ.

Know that the questions that follow are based on our church's vision for spiritual health and our high value on always keeping a next step in front of us so that we intentionally pursue Christ.

Before you begin, please remember the heart behind this tool. It isn't a box to check in your Christian life or meant to make you feel good or poorly about your faith. It exists for the same reason we exist as a church: to make authentic disciples of Jesus. So use it prayerfully, use it authentically, use it intentionally, and use it joyfully, as we seek to follow Jesus together!

WHO IS GOD?

Use the space below to write one-word or short phrases that describe what you think God is like (think of how you've experienced God in the past.).

When you look at your list above, which one word or phrase seems most true for you? Keep that word or phrase in your mind and write down why (i.e. an experience, a Scripture you've clung to, a feeling, a belief you've held and experienced, a relationship, etc.).

One of the best ways for us to grow into the kind of authentic disciples whose lives reflect Christ is for us to begin to integrate what we've felt or believed about God with the truth we see in Scripture. There will inevitably be gaps. Because we are sinful and finite we won't often see or experience God truthfully or fully.

Read Isaiah 55:8-9.

Read Proverbs 16:2, 16:25, 14:12, 21:2.

What do these verses show us about God? Ourselves?

God: _____

Ourselves: _____

Our mission at Redemption Church is that each one of us exists to make authentic disciples of Jesus who live for the glory of God and the good of our world.

In order to be a person who desires to fulfill this mission alongside our brothers and sisters in the faith, we have to believe that God's glory and growing as an authentic disciple of Jesus is **worth** pursuing. We give our devotion and worship to those things we find worthy of it.

Consider the following question:

Do you believe that pursuing Jesus and everything that means, both joyful and difficult, is worth your devotion?

If you've found yourself without a resounding 'yes' to this question, spend some time considering who you truly believe God to be and past experiences in your spiritual journey that brought you to this place. It's often said that we're all "being disciplined by something", which invites us to consider the thing, experience, or person that most shapes, guides, and directs our thoughts, feelings, values, and actions. What or who do you want to be disciplined by?

If you answered with a resounding 'yes' to the question above, what are some examples of ways you've devoted your life to be an authentic disciple of Jesus?

WHO AM I?

Our vision at Redemption Church is for a church where everyday people wake up to deep, meaningful life in Christ.

One of our goals for our church is to help you grow into an experience of deep, meaningful life in Christ. In order to grow, we need to take time to pause, reflect, and examine what is going on in our personal lives. Once we've examined who God is and begun a path to pursuing authentic discipleship, we build upon this belief by examining ourselves. We've discovered that many in our city have never really been taught from God's work how to grow and deepen their faith, so they do not see how the things they read about in the Bible apply to their personal experience.

So, once we've examined *Who God is?* and begun a path to pursuing authentic discipleship, we build upon this belief by examining ourselves and applying God's truth personally.

Often we see that many in our context either have some culturally applied version of faith they sort of just accepted over time or they have had some kind of spiritual experiences and outright reject anything to do with Christianity.

We see the local church as a means of God's grace and goodness for every person. It's a place where we are equipped, given the tools we need, for a flourishing life that is to be lived out before others. Once we've examined who God is and begun a path to pursuing authentic discipleship, we build upon this belief by examining ourselves.

You might find it self-centered or lacking in humility to spend time looking inward at yourself, but we're actually leaning on both the Scriptures and our rich Christian history when we do so.

Read 1 Corinthians 13.11-12.

Paul is telling us in this passage that we can grow in understanding, but we will always have a distorted understanding until we're face to face with God. But God doesn't have a distorted view. He knows himself and each of us with perfect understanding. God sees inside you and he knows you completely. He knows you better than you know yourself. Because God is all-wise, all-good, and all-knowing, he is a dependable mirror for each of us. Though we will never look like exactly like God, we can hold ourselves up to the mirror of Christ we see in the Scriptures and see the gaps.

One of the most foundational things to understand as we look for these gaps in ourselves is that this is a look inside. It is largely hidden from those around us. While the evidence of such a look inside makes its way out through our love, service, and action, it is fundamentally rooted within us. We want to move past our *performance* (what others see) to God's *process* (what only God sees) within. This kind of self-reflection takes humility and time and most of all, the grace and truth wrought by the Spirit of God in us. It's much less about *doing* and much more about *being*.

Take a few moments to pray the following prayer. Feel free to come back to it regularly.

*Father, you are Good and Wise and True.
You are worthy to be God in every part of who I am.
May your goodness show where I lack.
May your wisdom overturn the wisdom of the world in me.
May your truth shine its light over every corner of my mind and heart.
Show me the places where I need your rule and reign.
Show me and let your truth and grace come into those places.*

Read Romans 12.1-8.

The Bible often speaks of the heart, soul, or mind of a person as the place where our desires and deepest held beliefs live. What places within your heart and/or mind need to be transformed? What lies have you believed or sins are you clinging to?

What truth do you need to exchange for the untruth you've believed in the areas you list above?

(i.e. if a place I see that needs to be transformed is fear that my kids might behave badly, I need to apply the truth that God knows the hearts and minds of my children more than I do, they belong to Him more than me, and I want the Spirit to move in their hearts more than my ability to shape their behavior).

If you were going to rate your spiritual health based just on your inner life, what would you rate it at this time? (1 = no spiritual life and 10 = flourishing spiritual life)

What are some practices you currently keep which contribute to your spiritual health?

What are some distractions or decisions in your life that diminish your spiritual health?

What changes do you desire to make in order to better develop a flourishing spiritual life?

Now that we've taken a look at who God is and who we are, we've seen that our hearts and minds are where God is most fundamentally at work. Understanding this truth is the formative beginnings of a deep, meaningful life in Christ. When we're each pursuing this kind of formation, we're free to give away to others out of our own storehouse of spiritual abundance.

While we want to look within at the places we need God to show us his better way, we don't want to stop there. It's clear when we look at places in the New Testament like Ephesians 4, Romans 12, or 1 Corinthians 12 that the Spirit's work within compels us to actually do something, to live in a new way—a way we see lived out before others as authentic disciples of Christ.

WHO ARE WE?

Professor Dr. Howard Hendricks said, “If you find the perfect church, don’t go there. You’ll ruin it.” It’s true that no church is perfect because they’re full of fallen, sinful humans. We can each point to experiences where we feel this most acutely, and yet we are all called to be a vital part of the Body of Christ. The church is that entity which is to be so enduring and strong that Jesus said “not even the gates of hell can overpower it” (Matt. 16.18).

One of the most consistent and proven practices the church pursues is regular gathering together for praise, prayer, building one another up in faith, and instruction through preaching and teaching of God’s Word. This is a consistent practice for every Christian to pursue because it’s where we:

- remind one another we have the same Lord
- align our hearts in adoration of our God
- are unified around the same Gospel
- remind one another of God’s character through singing and praying
- see and know one another’s burdens and joys
- experience the conviction of God’s truth together

As you think about how you approach our weekly Worship Gathering, what are ways you can intentionally posture your heart to experience the things listed above?

In what ways has living in community with other believers helped you grow as a disciple of Jesus?

What are some obstacles to living in community with other Christians?

How has God's Word and God's Church specifically played a part in your spiritual life?

When you examine how you're living out your faith in community with others, consider the areas of growth below. What are places where you experience abiding joy and where do you see areas for growth?

Spiritual Relationships

Who are people that know my sin struggles?

Who can I share my joys and lessons learned with?

Who am I pursuing or being pursued by in a deeper spiritual relationship?

Serving

What gifts, skills, experiences, and wisdom has God given me that I can give away to others?

Where is God calling me to use my gifts, passion, and energy for the good of his people?

Commitment to Local Church

Am I involved in a group beyond the corporate worship setting that knows me well and who I'm getting to know? How is that going (or not)?

Am I giving financially towards the mission of my church? How is that going?

Have I joined my local church as a member? If so, am I fulfilling the commitments I made? If not, why not?

Equipped for Life and Ministry

How will I become better equipped (see Ephesians 4:11-16)?

How can I invest in developing my understanding and skill for life and ministry?

How can I engage my mind to learn more about God and myself? (i.e. read a book, take a class, etc.)

At the end of this guide, there is a link to find out more about how you can take a next step in these areas at Redemption.

Engaging the Lost

We desire to live as authentic disciples of Jesus who live for the glory of God and the good of our world.

We've walked through our fundamental beliefs about God and how that shapes us, which in turn works itself out in our faith community at Redemption. But we weren't called to be holy huddles that gather and build one another up in isolation. We are called to take the abundant spiritual life the Spirit pours into us both individually and collectively and give it away to a lost world.

God reflects himself to his followers.
His followers reflect God to each other.
God's followers reflect him to non-followers.

Is it easy for you to talk to non-Christians regarding spiritual things?
Why or why not?

What are some common missteps you see Christians make in how they engage an unbelieving world? Why is it important that we do not allow these to prevent us from faithfully sharing our lives and faith with those around us?

Who are some people in your life who need God's salvation? What small step can you take with them in the coming year to deepen your friendship with them and show them how significant faith in Jesus is to you?

OUR HOPE FOR YOU

At Redemption Church we highly value intentional spiritual growth. We want to create avenues for robust spiritual lives which are given away in the community of faith and to the lost world. In this guide, we've tried to create some building blocks for spiritual growth, and the order is important to a healthy growth process. First, we must take a look at who we really believe God to be based on our experiences and sift those beliefs through the truth of Scripture. Because we believe God is the perfect mirror for which we can look with clarity on ourselves, we next want to look within and ask his Spirit to show us the places where we need him to work. Last, when we've invited the Spirit's grace and truth to fill our gaps, we seek to give away to fellow believers and a lost world out of an abundant spiritual life.

We created this guide because we believe that, with God's help, it's possible for you to truly live a deep, meaningful life in Christ. And we are here to help! Together, we are invited into this life-long journey of discovering more and more of God's inexhaustible goodness and grace, and there is no joy on earth more satisfying than God.

LOOKING TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN YOUR GROWTH?

If you'd like to take a next step by joining a Redemption Group or Serve Team, taking an Equipping class, exploring membership, or more, please scan the QR code below:



