

BAPTIST  
*Community*  
CHURCH  
BURWOOD



# Church Family Camp

Winmalee Christian Conference Centre  
13 - 15 March 2015

Speaker: John Morrison

# Session 1 - Understanding Spiritual Growth

## What is spiritual growth?

Relation to other concepts – spiritual fruit, Christian maturity, Christlikeness, discipleship, sanctification, transformation

Growth in what?

- Gal 5: 22-25 .....
- Eph 4:11-16 .....
- 2 Pet 3:18 .....

## Why pursue spiritual growth?

2 Pet 3:18 .....

John 17:1-5 .....

*In different ways we have all lived for our own glory, not God’s. The Bible says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:23 NIV) None of us have given God the full glory he deserves from our lives. This is the worst sin and the biggest mistake we can make. On the other hand, living for God’s glory is the greatest achievement we can accomplish with our lives. God says, “They are my own people, and I created them to bring me glory,” (Is 43:7 TEV) so it ought to be the supreme goal of our lives.*

Rick Warren, The Purpose-Driven Life, 2002, p.55

## How does spiritual growth happen?

Natural? God? Me?

2 Cor 3:17-18 .....

2 Pet 1:5-8 .....

*We do not need to be hung on the horns of the dilemma of either human works or idleness. God has given us the Disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us.*

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline – the Path to Spiritual Growth, 1984, p6

Richard Foster covers the following spiritual disciplines.

Inward disciplines:	meditation, prayer, fasting, study
Outward disciplines:	simplicity, solitude, submission, service
Corporate disciplines	confession, worship, guidance, celebration

## **Spiritual Pathways**

John Ortberg and Ruth Haley Barton, An Ordinary Day with Jesus: Participant's Guide, (Willow Creek Association, 2001)

Spiritual pathways = how we connect with God

- Relational pathway. These people connect best with God when they pray with others, read God's Word with others, serve with others, worship with others.
- Intellectual pathway. People like this must have their minds fully engaged before they make significant spiritual progress. They love research and study.
- Serving pathway. They feel closest to God when serving someone in need or in some Kingdom activity.
- Contemplative Pathway. Love solitude, have a rich inner world, great capacity for private worship and prayer, love to journal.
- Activist pathway. High energy people who feel close to God when they are in a highly challenging environment. It can look like they are biting off more than they can chew but activists love to give their all.
- Creation pathway. These people feel closest to God in nature and often draw spiritual lessons from nature.
- Worship pathway. Praise and worship music provides a powerful connection for these people.

What is your preferred pathway? .....

Quote from CS Lewis, Mere Christianity (Fontana Books, 1971) p.170.

*God's Chisel* by The Skit Guys.

Picture that relates to your spiritual growth e.g. where you want to be; how you are feeling about it now; a way to grow.

## Session 2 – Prayer and Meditation

### Prayer

**Bible reading:** Mat 6:5-14

This Lent, Common Grace and the Bible Society partnered to provide materials to help people to reflect on and pray The Lord’s Prayer each day.

*Teach us to Pray* - video clip from Common Grace’s National Director Jarrod McKenna.

In the introduction to his 2014 book *Prayer*, Timothy Keller points to two different views on prayer.

- (a) .....-centred prayer: a means to experience God’s love and to know oneness with him, rest and peace. It’s conversation, intimacy, reality of His presence.
- (b) .....-centred prayer: calling on God to bring in His kingdom. It’s encounter, awe, struggle.

### Types of Prayers

A.....	.....	upward
C.....	.....	inward
T.....	.....	upward
S.....	.....	outward
for O.....		
for Y.....		

ALPHA’s conversion prayer – *sorry, thanks, please.* (Trinitarian)

Anne Lamott, *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*, 2012.

The Lord’s Prayer (The Disciples’ Prayer)

*The Skinny on Prayer* by The Skit Guys

## Meditation

**Bible reading:** Ps 1:1-6. Also Ps 143:5 & 145:5.

Christian meditation is very different from Eastern meditation. Its goal is not detachment but attachment to God. It is sometimes called reflection or contemplation. Strictly speaking, it is not prayer but naturally leads to prayer and complements it. Examples are:

- meditating on God's nature or attributes
- meditating on nature or the cosmos as God's creation
- meditating on the events of our time (with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other)
- meditation (perhaps guided) where you imagine meeting God or Jesus in a specific situation
- meditation on something observed around you
- meditation on God's revelation in dreams
- and, of course, meditation on Scripture – one verse all day; emphasise different words in the verse(s); write in own words; read a paraphrase; imagine yourself in the scene exercising your 5 senses and perhaps hearing/meeting Jesus/God.

### Exercise

Meditate on a phrase of The Lord's Prayer or Mk 6:30-44 or something around you. Then write below a key insight or a brief prayer.

## Session 3 – A Plan for a Quiet Time

Rick Warren (*Next Step to Spiritual Growth*)

1. Wait on God (Relax)
2. Pray a brief opening prayer (Request)
3. Read a section of Scripture (Read)
4. Meditate and memorise (Reflect and remember)
5. Write down what God has shown you (Record)
6. Have your time of prayer (Request)

Martin Luther (in *A Simple Way to Pray*, a letter to Peter Beskendorf)

1. Preparation for prayer by reciting/contemplating a part of Scripture.
  - 1.1. What God's instruction/demand is (school text)
  - 1.2. Thanksgiving (song book)
  - 1.3. Confession (penitential book)
  - 1.4. Prayer (prayer book)
2. Pray through each petition of the Lord's Prayer, personalising it.
3. Prayer
4. If the Spirit begins to preach in your heart, drop the routine.

*Quiet Time: A Practical Guide for Daily Devotions.* From UK and Australian evangelical leaders in 1930s & 40s. First published in US in 1945 by IVP.

1. Bible study and meditation using George Muller's questions - is there an example to follow; a command to obey; an error to avoid; a sin to forsake; a promise to claim; a new thought about God? Journal it.
2. Prayer – confession; thanks and praise; intercession for others & self.

Timothy Keller (*Prayer*)

Thinks QT was too rationalistic – more Bible study than experiential prayer

1. Evocation (approaching God). Can use Bible verses or written prayer
2. Meditation. On Scripture chosen to a plan; application questions.
3. Word prayer. Praying the text (a la Luther). ACTS
4. Free prayer. For needs and pressing concerns.
5. Contemplation. Enjoy God & His presence with final thanks & praise.

How often? 1 Thess 5:17

**Exercise:** Have a short Quiet Time using Psalm 92:1-15.

## Session 4 – Growing Together

### African (or Lambeth) Bible Study Method

This Bible Study method was introduced by the African Delegation to the Lambeth Conference in 1998. It is a variation of the ancient method of praying the Scriptures, known as Lectio Divina or “Sacred Reading” (lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio).

#### Opening Prayer

O Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen

1. One individual reads passage slowly.
2. Each person identifies the word or phrase that catches their attention (1 min).
3. Each shares the word or phrase around group (3-5 min, no discussion).
4. Another person reads the passage slowly (from different translation).
5. Each person identifies where passage touches their life today (1 min).
6. Each shares (3-5 minutes, no discussion).
7. Passage is read a third time (another reader and translation if possible).
8. Each person names or writes: *From what I've heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be? Is God inviting me to change in any way?* (5 minutes).
9. Each shares their answer (5-10 minutes, no discussion).
10. Each prays for the person on their right, naming what was shared in other steps (5 minutes).

Close with the Lord's Prayer and silence.

**Exercise:** Mk 8:27-38. In groups of 3, do opening, 4-6, 10, close. (10 min)

**Communion:** *Jesus falls for the first time and Jesus dies on the cross*  
from *Prayers of Life* by Michel Quoist  
Isaiah 53:1-12

**Sharing:** about camp.