

Don't Settle For Where You Are

Growth is natural, but not automatic. Growth in our relationship with our Heavenly Father and with other believers, much like planting a garden, takes time and intentionality. The goal of our faith is to put off our old nature and to put on our new nature, which is growing to become more like Jesus deep within. Such spiritual growth is not meant to be only an individual endeavor but a process within the context of other believers. The church is a vital tool that God gives us to help us grow.

GETTING STARTED

Have you ever planted flowers or a garden before? How much of a *green thumb* or natural ability to plant and nurture do you have? What is the secret to your success, or the possible reason for your lack of natural horticultural abilities? In what other areas, apart from gardening, have you discovered that growth is natural but not automatic?

GO DEEPER

1. In Colossians 1:27-29, what are the riches that have been made known among the Gentiles, and how do we grow in these riches? What does it mean for Christ to be *in you* as the hope of glory?
2. From Colossians 3:9-13, what does it look like to put *off* the old self? In contrast, how do we put *on* the new self?
3. In Colossians 3:15, what does it mean to have the peace of Christ rule in your heart? How do we choose or focus on peace amid difficult circumstances?
4. According to Colossians 3:16, growth happens in the context of community (the church) as we teach and admonish one another. Why do we tend to individualize our spiritual growth and minimize the significance of the church in our maturation process?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What intentional steps are you taking right now to grow spiritually? How much of that intentionality involves the church and a community of believers?
2. What distracts you the most from *focusing* on Jesus and His Kingdom?
3. The church is an imperfect tool God provides to help us grow. What is your attitude or perspective towards the church (specifically or generally) in this season, and what needs to change in you so that you can maximize this tool in your growth journey?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Take some time as a group to thank God for the spiritual growth you have experienced in this season. Then ask Him to help you continue to grow both individually and as a community. Ask God to show you what your next step is to become more like Him, and ask Him to reveal to you more of what it means for Christ to be in you as the hope of glory.