

Unsolved Mysteries

The Mystery of Growth- Session #5

Small Group Notes

Introduction:

Other than your family, who are some of the most important relationships in your life right now? How did you first get connected to that person? How does that person help you to grow?

For this discussion, we are going to see how the mystery of growth relates to our connections that we have in the body of Christ. And our connections speak to how we are motivated to love and serve one another in this world!

Discuss: What is the mystery of growth?

1. Growth is driven by gratitude, not guilt

- Read Ephesians 4:1 and Romans 12:1
- We don't walk worthy so that God will love us, but because He does love us.

Explain: The word therefore is the pivot word for the entire epistle. Paul was saying, "On the basis of everything I have written so far, certain results should follow." The verb walk reminds us that holy living is a daily process. The term worthy shows us that we aim toward a high standard. Therefore, Paul is showing them that he was more than willing to accept where he was in his life and that the people in Ephesus should express the same gratitude.

Ask:

What has been an area of your life recently that you have been motivated to learn more about? What drove the reason to learn? Was it something external or internal?

What is fueling your growth? What are ways that people try to live out the Christian life with a guilt mentality? Why is living for Christ with gratitude different?

2. Growth can't start until you exit the "pride ride"

- Read Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:1-10
- Pride says "I know better!"
- Pride says "I deserve better!"
- Humility says "I am a role player and pride says I'm the star of the show"

Explain: Four attitudes are essential to the Christian's worthy walk—humility, gentleness, patience, and love. Humility is the lowliness of mind that sees other people

as valuable. Gentleness refers to strength under control. Patience means slowness to avenge a wrong or to retaliate when hurt by another. Love is the famous Greek noun *agape*, the John 3:16 kind of sacrificial concern for others that sent Jesus willingly to the cross. Therefore, Paul is encouraging the church to embrace the same attitude of Jesus (Philippians 2).

Ask:

Do you think we would be encouraged to do great things if we grasped the extent of Christ's love? Why?

How does realizing you are loved this way strengthen you? How has it humbled you? Made you gentler? Given you patience? Motivated you to love?

What does exiting the pride ride look like for you?

3. Growth always associates believing with belonging

- Read Ephesians 4:3-6, Revelation 1:10-13
- 9/10 people felt a sense of belonging from serving

Explain: The sevenfold repetition of "one" in these verses is striking. The unity of the body of Christ reflects the unity and oneness that permeates the Godhead—God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Since God is One, that same unity should permeate the Christian community. But when we look at the church, unity isn't always the first thing we notice.

Ask:

What factors or issues hinder unity in the church? Which issues are legitimate barriers to Christian unity, and which are superficial or arbitrary?

Why is unity worth striving for in the church?

Practically speaking, how do we cultivate and nurture community among believers?

Does my belief in Christ match my belonging to the body of Christ?