

Pastor David's notes for 7/17-18/2010

Reaching for God Together

Growing in Truth, Love & Power

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

Matthew 13:31-32

"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

1 Peter 2:1-3

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow."

Isaiah 55:10-13a

Page 2 "Growing in Truth, Love & Power"

God's goal of growth, change, and increasing maturity in our lives is served by:

1. healthy spiritual diets
2. healthy spiritual exercises
3. healthy spiritual environments

Like a body with many parts and a family with many members, we were designed to inter-dependently grow together. The church is an expression and experience of Christ's body/family that supports personal growth with mutual investments of:

1. intentional time
2. environmental support
3. committed gifts

next week: "Reaching for God Together" - giving ourselves



# CONNECTION QUESTIONS

for personal study & individual reflection,  
and small group discussion & comment

“Growing in Truth, Love and Power”: Matthew 13:1-32;  
1 Peter 2:1-3; Isaiah 55:1-13; 1 Corinthians 3:1-7;  
Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Thessalonians 1:3

1. When you think about growing better and stronger as a person, what do you think you need? What gets in your way? Can you do it alone?

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2. If you want to grow physical muscle you have to feed your body good stuff, exercise and get enough rest, and persevere through the process of time it takes to build strength or recover from injury. If you want to grow spiritual muscle, enough to walk and run, lift and carry, what kind of diet do you need? What feeds spiritual growth in our lives?

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3. Is it possible to consume plenty of good things spiritually, but not grow? How would you characterize someone who was spiritually well fed but wasn't getting enough exercise? What exercises you spiritually? What kind of things take real effort to do, but feel good when we are finished, and result in growing strength and health?

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4. Jesus taught that our lives in the kingdom of heaven are like small seeds that are growing into large trees (Mt 13:31-32). In Christ we are meant to grow from small beginnings into significant and sizeable lives of impact and meaning. Do you believe that for yourself? What small seeds, small beginnings, are important to your growth right now? Are there things you have gotten away from and stopped doing that were an important part of your growth in the past?

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5. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 that we plant and water for growth but it is God who makes it happen. How does knowing this keep us from putting our faith in techniques, practices or formulas rather than the living Christ who forgives, redeems and transforms? Why does God want us to be part of the process that results in growth and change for us and others? For whom other than yourself are you planting and watering for spiritual growth?

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6. In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, Paul thanks God for the growing faith and increasing love he sees in the church there. How would you recognize “growing faith and increasing love”? Do you see those things in your own life, in the lives of others around you, and at the Desert Vineyard? What do you pray you would have “more and more” in your life?

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