

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. We sincerely hope you will be especially aware of God's presence as we worship. If this is your first time to worship with us, here is what you can expect:

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship, you are free to connect with God in whatever biblical way that expresses your heart's adoration. Some may remain seated, others stand, kneel, clap or lift their hands.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

April 27, 2008

OUR CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS

"Moving from dependency to interdependency"

Hebrews 6:1

FOCUS FOR THE DAY..."to press on to full spiritual maturity"

- Focus of the 2008 New Year's sermon – God calling each of us to take initiative to move to our next spiritual level.
- Stunning results of a very in-depth research from Willow Creek Church
 - Hard evidence that exposed the historical myth that church activities were the primary catalyst to a person's spiritual growth.
 - Without forward spiritual movement, there will be serious consequences.

"Measuring Our Forward Progress"

1. RELATIONAL **CHANGES** A CHILD EXPERIENCES

- An infant begins, totally dependent upon its parents -- that relationship continues to change.
- The spiritual growth process is remarkably similar to that of natural life.

2. FIVE STAGES OF **SPIRITUAL** LIFE

- The Bible names five stages in a person's spiritual life.
 - unbeliever/pre-Christian
 - babe
 - little child
 - **young man**
 - spiritual father
- Years **attending church** has no direct correlation with spiritual maturity.
- As you mature spiritually, the relationship between you and the church changes from dependency to interdependency, just as in the natural.

Willow Creek's researchers were stunned when they discovered 16% of people's growth stalled when they hit the young man stage. And another 10% became dissatisfied with the church at the father stage.

1 Corinthians 3:1 - "I ... could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ." NKJV

Hebrews 6:1 - "... let us ... go on to **maturity**."

• **How can this happen?** [False expectations] The research found the leading cause is - people expect the church to provide for them what it is incapable of providing.

3. **THE SECRET TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS MAINTAINING A PASSION FOR GOD**

• It's like God-given instinct in birds that motivates and directs them to seasonally fly south or north year after year. Age and gender doesn't affect it.

• God has planted in each **heart** a longing for Him, a dream that only He can satisfy.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 "He has planted **eternity** in the human heart ..." NLT

That flicker of passion for God within you proves you can break out and become recharged with God's invigorating life!

HOW CAN I BEST PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE?

Ask yourself ... *"What is the condition of my spiritual passion today?"*

If it isn't as hot as you want it to be, you **must** make plans to seriously address the anemic hunger and thirst for God within you. This can't be accomplished through a class, person or religious activity. Activities without spiritual passion are futile. **It must be an internal decision. It will begin with humble repentance and asking God to restore what you have lost.**

Once you progress to the *young man* and *father* stage, **you will not be content ... UNLESS** you have come to such a relationship with God that you find your daily bread in your **daily study and prayer time** and through being a **spiritual life coach** to others.

There are some false expectations that the church will provide ALL your spiritual needs. The most important thing you can do this week is reconnect with your passion for God – not the church, not ministry, not even worship music – but with God Himself. **BEGIN TODAY!**

"DIGGING DEEPER"

For personal or small group study

Week of April 27, 2008

QUICK REVIEW: Which point or scripture passage most challenged, confused, or caught your attention in this week's message? Why?

TODAY'S FOCUS

1. How could a healthy 30-year old who is dissatisfied sitting at their parents' table, expecting them to feed and care for them, find release and new life? [Multiple choice - explain your answer.]
 - a) By simply waking up and recognizing they've been fighting against nature itself.
 - b) By owning their problem instead of blaming their parents.
 - c) By beginning to take initiative to feed and care for themselves so they can have a family of their own to care and provide for.
 - d) All of the above.
2. How is this situation true as you look into your own spiritual life? How could you find release and new life?

GETTING THE POINT

1. First, discuss what spiritual maturity is. [Now read Hebrews 6:1-3 and then discuss again.] What is this telling us about what we may have wrongly assumed spiritual maturity to be?
2. What are some things it takes to become mature as a Christian? What are you using to measure your own spiritual growth? [James 1:2- 8; Philippians 2:13-16; Colossians 3:1-8, 12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:6-8]
3. Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and answer the question: "What is the difference between a worldly Christian and a spiritual Christian?" [1 John 2:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:22-24; Romans 8:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:11-14; Galatians 2:20]

How does the church today try to experience God's blessing while refusing to separate itself from the world's evil ways? Personalize it ... and put "how do I" in place of "how does the church."

A LOOK INSIDE

What is God saying to you about your own spiritual growth? How are you moving from dependency to interdependency?