

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you as our guest today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and "at home."

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God.
- 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 Roger Wendt

August 24, 2008

Ready! Set! GROW!

"Stalled? It is time to move forward!"

Ephesians 4:13b-16

FOCUS FOR THE DAY..."moving forward in our relationship with Jesus"

Statistics show that at least 20% of Christians are stalled in their spiritual growth.

- God wants to give you new hope to help you begin moving forward and continue growing in your spiritual journey.
- **Recent** research reveals that most church members want their church to ... *"Challenge me to grow and to take the next steps in my spiritual life."*
- God designed us to grow into maturity ~ to be like Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

- Remember growing isn't the end result -- it is the process. It requires forward movement.

Ephesians 4:13 "We must become like a **mature** person, **growing** until we become like Christ."

Where am I now?

It is imperative that we know where we are in our relationship with God in order to take the next step to draw closer to Him.

Where do I want to be?

It is essential that we have a target or a goal.

EVIDENCES OF FORWARD MOVEMENT

1. Applying God's Word

- A mind and a heart saturated with the water of God's Word is the prerequisite for growth and life-change.
- It's just not reading the Bible that spurs spiritual growth; it is **reflecting on the meaning of scripture** in a way that changes how a person thinks and lives.
- Scripture tells us this...

Ephesians 4:14 “Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed about like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who are trying to fool us. They make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong path.”

“When I see a person whose Bible is falling a part I know that person usually isn’t.” - Rick Warren

2. Developing Authentic Relationships

“All of us are designed as relational social creatures who yearn to belong. It’s the way God made us – in His image.” - from “One Month to Live”

• **We’ve got to have** some people in our lives that we are real with if we are to grow.

Ephesians 4:15 “Speaking the truth with love, we will **grow up** in every way into Christ, who is the head.”

3. Growing in Love

Ephesians 4:16 “The whole body depends on Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body **grow** and be strong with love.”

• If we are to grow in love, we must be on the team and fully participating. We are called to serve.

• We **ALL** have the responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission and go and make disciples - followers of Jesus.

How passionate am I in my relationship with God?

• If we are to be **serious** about our spiritual growth and make it a priority, we must position ourselves where growth and life-change can happen.

Hebrews 10:24 “Let us consider how **to stimulate** [spur on] one another to love and good deeds.”

WHAT IS YOUR NEXT STEP?

One of the greatest tools God has given us to keep us moving forward and growing spiritually is healthy small groups.

- This fall semester we have over 40 small groups. Why not make the choice to join one of these groups? You won’t be disappointed!
- Be part of the “**One Month to Live**” Challenge beginning September 7.

Today is a day to start fresh and get serious about growing and moving forward in your relationship with God.

“DIGGING DEEPER”

For personal or small group study

Week of August 24, 2008

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

TODAY’S FOCUS

1. Describe a time in your life when you had a situation where you were physically stuck or stalled -- perhaps in a car or otherwise. Describe your feelings!

What does being stalled or stuck in our spiritual lives look like? What are some causes of these stalled situations? How do you see it affecting you?

2. **Living the Christian life is a process.** If we keep listening to God, we will be changing all the time. As you look back over the past year, what process of change do you see for the better in your thoughts, attitudes and actions? **Describe these forward movements.**

GETTING THE POINT

1. **Read Ephesians 4:1-3, 13-16.** What value does this scripture put on growing into maturity in Christ? How does a person know if he or she is spiritually mature? What does this look like in everyday life?
2. We must take the next steps to grow closer to God. Where does true spiritual growth and life-change come from? ... the church? ... the pastor? ... the small group? ... friends? ... God? **What is our responsibility in this process?** [Deuteronomy 6:5; Joshua 24:11-15; Philippians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:3; Luke 9:23]

A LOOK INSIDE

1. What are you doing **to position yourself** to move forward in your spiritual journey – in your personal relationship with Jesus? **How are you currently positioned to build into the lives of others?** [Hebrews 10:24-25; James 4: 2-4, 7-8, 10]
2. How would you answer these questions when considering your own spiritual growth process?

Where am I now? ... Where do I want to be? ... What’s my next step?