

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you worshipping with us 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}

BREAKING OUT

What will strengthen my journey when stalled?

Mark 4:15-20

- Our Spiritual Life Survey reported 13% of us are stalled, and it occurs in all segments along the spiritual growth map.

Mark 4:15-20 "Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

Top five reasons you gave for getting stalled in your spiritual life

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| 5. Emotional issues | 34% |
| 4. Relational struggles | 35% |
| 3. Lack of accountability/encouragement | 36% |
| 2. Letting other activities take precedence | 48% |
| 1. Lack of discipline in spiritual exercises | 64% |

Most are spin-offs of "*the desire for other things*".

HOW TO BREAK OUT OF A "STALL"

- We became believers only because **God's Spirit** enticed us to cross the line of faith and trust in Christ for our salvation.

John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him"

- **A tip:** You will increase your effectiveness in introducing people to Christ by first identifying those in whom God's Spirit is already working.

Psalms 51:12 (NLT) "Restore to me the **joy** of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you."

- When you consider breaking out, focus on the **pleasure** of His presence waiting for you, not His rebuke.

- By turning around and re-engaging in those spiritual exercises in order to connect with God, you again begin to enjoy the pleasure of His presence.

Four spiritual exercises that have proven to be very helpful in breaking out of a spiritual stall

- 1. Accepting God's Word as being truth regarding how you can find the most pleasure and fruitfulness with God**
- 2. Confession of what you know to be sin**
 - The most liberating specific confession of sin is unforgiveness.

Proverbs 23:18 NLT "People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy."

 - Unforgiveness, and its consequential anger, depression, etc., was among the top five causes for going into a spiritual stall.
- 3. Reflecting on Scripture to learn more about God and His ways**
 - Using a simple tool like a Life Coaching guide that will help you break out. It involves practicing seven spiritual disciplines all at the same time.
- 4. Regular church attendance**
 - Nurturing your desire to corporately worship God and serve to strengthen others in their spiritual journey can help you break out of a spiritual stall.

So What Must You Do?

- Keep pressing on beyond your frustrations when you become stalled.
- Allow your spirit to connect with God again.
- Continue to take responsibility for where you want to go, and take the initiative to press beyond your feelings or thoughts.

Your spiritual life is based on YOUR passion for God, not someone else's. No one else but God can give you the authentic pleasure and satisfaction of experiencing His presence. You alone must want that pleasure enough to press beyond whatever hindrance may be in front of you.

Digging Deeper

For personal or small group study

Week of February 1, 2009

SPIRITUAL GROWTH SEGMENTS

Exploring Christ – experiencing first steps in spiritual growth; have a basic belief in God, but unsure about Christ, Biblical truths and the role they play in their lives.

Growing in Christ – discovering faith through church experiences and starting to incorporate spiritual practices. [prayer, Bible reflection, etc.]

Close to Christ – experiencing higher levels of personal spiritual practices and is more involved in serving. Still holds back from full commitment.

Christ-Centered – living a fully surrendered life demonstrated by much higher levels of spiritual practices and involvement in mentoring. Sees Christ as most important relationship.

GROUP DISCUSSION or PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Can you think of a time when you were stalled or stuck somewhere? Describe the feelings you experienced. Did you quit, or did you find a way to get back up and press on?
2. We are all on a spiritual journey, and somewhere along the line, we can become stalled. Who are some people in the Bible you believe got stalled? How did they handle being "stuck" and how [or did] they recover? [Mark 14:29-31, 70-72; John 21:15-22; Acts 15:37-40, 2 Timothy 4:10-11; Revelation 2:1-7]
3. Read Mark 4:15-20. What does being stalled in our spiritual lives look like? What are some causes of these stalled situations according to scripture?

Discuss the top five reasons for being stalled that our New Life survey revealed. [See page 1 of the sermon notes.]
4. Take a piece of paper and answer the following questions. If you feel comfortable, discuss your answers with your group.
 - What stage do I see myself in presently on the spiritual growth map?
 - Am I moving forward or am I stalled?
 - [Depending on above answers] What am I doing to continue to move forward in becoming more passionate towards God and closer to His heart? What am I focusing on that will get me out of the stalled mode I am in and back to moving forward in my journey with Christ?
5. "*Reflection on Scripture*" is found to be the most powerful catalyst for spiritual growth regardless of which growth stage you find yourself in. Nothing matters more in your spiritual development than time spent in the Bible. Take some time this week to reflect on God's Word to learn more about His ways.