

- “I am willing to risk surrendering all that is important in my life to Jesus Christ.”

2. Christ is the **first** priority in my life

- Whatever I do, I turn it into an opportunity to give away my life in such a way that Christ is always my first and foremost priority.

Philippians 1:21 NLT “For to me, **living** means living for Christ, and dying is even better.”

3. Discovering my **identity** or worth in Christ

- Not until you know Christ well enough to discover your identity [worth] in Him will you find the confidence, security, vision, satisfaction and joy that you have been searching for.

4. Believing the Bible is the final authority

- The Bible is the only stable, dependable source of truth that will both comfort and direct a person’s life.

Psalms 119:98-99 NLT “Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are my constant guide. Yes, I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws.”

5. More frequent **reflection** on Scripture

- This is learning the context and reading “in-between the lines” to discover who God is -- His values and His ways.
- Surveys of over 200,000 people have shown that it is the people in this segment whose spiritual life grows the fastest.
- You must understand that the most fundamental driving force of spiritual maturity is not the church and what it does or doesn’t do, but rather **your love for God**.

**Our mission is to
“strengthen your journey with Christ”**

NOW WHAT?

- What will you purpose to do this week to nurture that flame -- that passion God has planted in you?
- Will you make a commitment to God today to press forward on whatever transition level you are on?

Digging Deeper

For personal or small group study

Week of January 25, 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. Think of a season of your life when you felt that you were really growing spiritually. What were some of the ingredients that helped you grow?
2. *“Spiritual growth is not about increasing activities; it is about growing an increasingly intimate relationship with Christ.”* Do you agree or disagree with this quote? Why? What does this mean in your practical day to day spiritual growth journey?
3. Surveys show that the top five catalysts for moving from “Closer to Christ” to “Christ-centered” are as follows: Giving away my life, Christ is first, identity in Christ, authority of the Bible, and reflection on Scripture. How do you see these catalysts triggering spiritual life-change in your [or someone else’s] life? Matthew 10:45; Philippians 1:21; Romans 8:1; Galatians 2:20; 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:96-99
4. Read John 12:24-25 and 2 Corinthians 4:7-10. How valuable or necessary is brokenness and the breaking process in becoming a Christ-centered person? What part do the trials of life play in becoming spiritually mature?
5. Reflection on Scripture has been found to be the most powerful catalyst for spiritual growth regardless of which growth segment you are in. Nothing matters more in your spiritual development than time spent in the Bible. Take some time practicing how to reflect on God’s Word.

Read and then reflect on Hebrews 12:1-3 using the following guide:

- What does it say and mean? [observation]
- What touches my life today? [reflection]
- Be quiet a moment and listen and experience God’s presence.
- What is God inviting me to do? [application – response]
- Write out a short two or three sentence prayer in response to what you have heard God saying to you.

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}

Pastor Bob Wine

January 25, 2009

WHAT WILL STRENGTHEN MY JOURNEY? - Part 3

"Moving from Close to Christ to Christ-centered"

Philippians 1:21

Philippians 1:21 NLT "For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better."

DISCOVERING HOW TO BE A CHRIST-CENTERED PERSON

☛ IT'S ABOUT WHO I AM, NOT WHAT I DO

- Being a Christ-centered person is not just in what you are able to do or dream about doing -- It is in who you are on the inside.

- A Christ-centered person has a **core faith** in God.

- No one enters this maturation level without going through a "white funeral."

Romans 6:4 NASB "buried with Him ... so we too might walk in **newness** of life."

John 8:28 NLT "I do nothing on my own but say **only** what the Father taught me"

Acts 20:24 NLT "... my life is worth **nothing** to me **unless** I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God."

- The natural result of being in this segment is ... you really will become most like Jesus.

- The **heart** for this precedes the ability to live this attitude out.

☛ FIVE TOP CHANGE AGENTS

- Every person's spiritual growth is all about increased relational closeness to Christ; therefore, it is stroked internally, not externally.

- The top four catalysts are not behaviors -- but beliefs or attitudes.

1. **Giving Away My Life for Christ**

Mark 10:45 NLT "[Jesus] came not to be served but to **serve others** and to give his life as a ransom for many."