

Spiritual Growth Assessment and Spiritual Growth Planner

Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don't drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups . . . Test it out. If you fail the test, do something about it.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (The Message)

All of us are in process...none of us have arrived...but most of us want to be all that God wants us to be. For our spiritual growth though, we need to regularly assess the five E's that reflect a fully devoted disciple of Jesus:

Personal-life Discipleship Journey	Purpose:	Church Purpose Journey
Loving God: putting Him first	Exalting	Planned to praise and worship God
Sharing that Jesus loves us	Evangelizing	Made to tell others God's good news
Growing through small groups	Encouraging	Formed to be part of God's family
Maturing through serving and giving	Equipping	Shaped to be like Jesus
Loving others through prayer and care	Empowering	Created to give God's love and power

The Spiritual Growth Assessment and Spiritual Growth Planner measure where you are in your journey to become a fully devoted disciple of Jesus. It is not a tool to see how you measure up against other people; nor is it a tool to see how close you are to perfection. We all know we'll never be perfect this side of heaven. Rather, this is a tool that will help you evaluate your spiritual growth, and give you direction for developing a plan to become a fully devoted disciple of Jesus.

How To Use This Handout

This handout is divided into the five E's of Exalting, Evangelism, Encouraging, Equipping, and Empowering. To get the most out of this handout we suggest you do the following:

1. Take the Spiritual Growth Assessment.

This assessment will give you a snapshot of your spiritual health, and identify areas for growth. This will help you identify the E's you would like to work on and those in which you are strong. We also highly recommend that you give the Friend Feedback Assessment in the back of this handout and ask a friend or spouse to fill it out for you. Just as with your physical health, it can often be helpful to get a second opinion.

2. Find Which of the Five E's You Want to Work On.

Find the "E" you would like to work on by transferring your assessment scores to the Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout. We suggest you work on either the E with the lowest score on your Spiritual Growth Assessment, or on an E the Holy Spirit may be nudging you to consider. When you have selected the E, locate the corresponding page in this Spiritual Growth Planner.

3. Choose a Crawl, Walk, or Run Step to Get Started.

In this handout you will find a table for each of the five E's with a beginning step (crawl), an intermediate step (walk), and a more advanced step (run) for each of the questions found in the Spiritual Growth Assessment. Pick the step or steps you want to take for the area you have chosen to work on. You will also find a resource page for each E with recommended books, small group studies, classes, and practical suggestions that will take you further in your growth.

4. Transfer the Steps to Your Spiritual Growth Plan.

Transfer the steps you have chosen to the Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout.

5. Find an Accountability Partner.

Many of us start out with good intentions but lack the discipline to follow through with our plans. Make it a point to pair up with an accountability partner who can help you follow through on the growth steps you have chosen to take. An Accountability Partner is an individual, usually of the same gender, who is committed on an ongoing basis to helping you deal with life and all that it offers. This person should be a good friend who encourages you, helps with accountability when needed, and actively supports you as you take spiritual risks and face challenges unique to your life. One of your fellow small group members is likely to be this kind of friend.

Spiritual Growth Assessment

1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply to me at all	Applies to me sometimes	I am neutral in this area	Applies to me most of the time	Applies to me completely

EXALTING

- ___ How I live my life shows that God is my highest priority
- ___ I am dependent on God for every aspect of my life
- ___ There is nothing in my life that I have not surrendered to (kept back from God)
- ___ I regularly meditate on God's Word and invite Him into my everyday activities
- ___ I have a deep desire to spend time in God's presence
- ___ I am the same person in public that I am in private
- ___ I have an overwhelming sense of God's awesomeness even when I don't feel His presence
- ___ **Exalting Total**

EVANGELIZING

- ___ I feel personal responsibility to share my faith with those who don't know Jesus
- ___ I look for opportunities to build relationships with those who don't know Jesus
- ___ I regularly pray for those who don't know Jesus
- ___ I am confident in my ability to share my faith
- ___ My heart is full of passion to show God's love in a practical way to those who don't know Jesus.
- ___ I find that my relationship with Jesus comes up frequently in my conversations with those who don't know Him
- ___ I am open to going anywhere God calls me, in whatever capacity, to share my faith
- ___ **Evangelizing Total**

ENCOURAGING

- ___ I have a deep and meaningful connection with others in the church
- ___ I gather regularly with a group of Christians for community and accountability
- ___ I am quick to confess anything in my character that does not look like Christ
- ___ I allow God's Word to guide my thoughts and change my actions
- ___ I find I am making better choices to do what is right when I am tempted to do wrong
- ___ I have an easy time receiving advice, encouragement, and correction from others
- ___ I am consistent in pursuing habits that are helping me model my life after Jesus

- ___ **Encouraging Total**

EQUIPPING

- ___ I regularly use my time to serve God
- ___ I am currently serving God with the gifts and passions He has given me
- ___ I regularly reflect on how my life can have an impact on the Kingdom of God
- ___ I often think about ways to use my God-given gifts and abilities to please God
- ___ Those closest to me would say my life is a reflection of giving more than receiving
- ___ A review of how I use my finances shows that I think more about God and others than I do about myself
- ___ I see my painful experiences as opportunities to minister to others

- ___ **Equipping Total**

EMPOWERING

- ___ I turn to God in spontaneous prayer throughout the day
- ___ I have found that prayer has changed how I view and interact with the world
- ___ I regularly practice the habit of praying for others
- ___ When faced with a difficult situation, my first response is to turn to God in prayer
- ___ I regularly use my time and resources to care for the needs of others
- ___ When an acquaintance shares a concern or need, I am comfortable praying “on the spot” with that person
- ___ I regularly seek God’s direction for my choices in life

___ **Empowering Total**

Transfer your scores to the Spiritual Growth Plan at the end of this handout.

Spiritual Growth Planner

Now that you have completed the Spiritual Growth Assessment and transferred your scores to the Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout, you are ready to take the next step toward becoming a fully devoted disciple of Jesus.

Choose one “E” from the Spiritual Growth Plan that you want to focus on. In the following pages you will find a table for each “E” with a beginning step (crawl), an intermediate step (walk), and a more advanced step (run) for each of the questions found in the Spiritual Growth Assessment. Pick the step or steps you want to take for the area you have chosen to work on. You will also find a resource page for each of the five “E’s” with recommended books, small group studies, classes, and practical suggestions that will take you further in your growth.

While you may need to challenge yourself to step up to the task, you also need to be realistic in your expectations, otherwise you might become discouraged and give up. So consider starting off with a crawl step—a target you can easily hit in the next thirty days. Then you can move on to a walk step—a tangible goal that will stretch you over the next sixty to ninety days. Finally, choose a run step—something that will require a leap of faith, but through the power of the Holy Spirit will bring you to a whole new level of spiritual maturity.

When you have selected the “E” you want to work on and the steps you want to take, we encourage you to share your decisions with a trusted friend who can help you stay the course by praying for you and holding you accountable. Don’t try to do this alone. Isolation can lead to procrastination. But a loving friend can encourage you if you’re feeling discouraged and help you up if you fall down.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, NIV

Exalting

Using the chart below, choose a step you would like to take and transfer it to your Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout.

Question	Crawl	Walk	Run
How I live my life shows that God is my highest priority	Ask a friend or spouse to help you identify your top priorities. What changes do you need to make?	Spend time reading through the life stories of some of the people in the Old Testament. Journal about the characteristics in their lives that demonstrated that God was a priority. What principles could you implement in your own life ?	Make it a daily habit to reflect on your activities for that day. Journal or spend time in prayer over how you saw God in your daily activities. How are your priorities shaped by a recognition of God's presence?
I am dependent on God for every aspect of my life	Wake up with a prayer of thanks to God every morning.	Read through the Psalms. Note all the times the writer of the Psalms talks about his dependency on God. How do those words describe your own dependence on God?	Fast from food or some object on which you normally depend. Focus on God as you fast, and remind yourself how dependent you are on God for your life. Do this on a regular basis.
There is nothing in my life that I have not surrendered to (kept back from God)	Take an inventory of your life and note everything you have not surrendered to God. Share your results with a friend. How can you work on these things to surrender them to God?	Set up a plan for giving up one thing you have held back from God. You may need to ask a friend or spouse to hold you accountable to do this.	Regularly fast from the things you have trouble surrendering to God. The "Suggestions" section on the next page lists several helpful tips for fasting.
I regularly meditate on God's Word and invite Him into my everyday activities	Meditate on a verse of Scripture on a daily basis. You may want to take some notes on what you have learned about God.	Set aside time to study God's Word on a daily basis. Pray and ask God for insight into his Word and how it can apply to your daily life.	Memorize Scripture. Choose some scriptures from your daily reading to memorize. Make it a priority to hide God's Word in your heart.
I have a deep desire to spend time in God's presence	Give God a one minute prayer or sing Him a simple song of thanks every day. (An easy time to do this is on your commute to and from work.)	Set aside some time to go on a spiritual retreat to be alone with God.	Identify a place you can go to focus on God and worship him. Make it a habit to spend time in this place on a regular basis.
I am the same person in public that I am in private	Have a friend or spouse complete the Friend Feedback Assessment found later in this packet.	Have a friend or spouse complete the Friend Feedback Assessment found later in this packet.	Set up a regular appointment with a friend, spouse, or mentor to discuss how well you are living a life that is transparent. Allow this person to speak the truth to you, and to hold you accountable.
I have an overwhelming sense of God's awesomeness even when I don't feel His presence	Study the names of God using the Psalms. You may want to keep a journal to remind yourself what you have learned about God.	Prepare yourself for a worship time using the method outlined in the "Suggestions" section on the next page.	Practice the presence of God in your everyday life. Use the methods in the "Suggestions" section on the next page.

Exalting Resources

Classes

Vineyard School of Music Classes (Guitar, Bass, Vocal, etc.)

Vineyard Worship Leader Classes

Books

The Way of a Worshiper by Buddy Owens

The Unquenchable Worshipper: Coming Back to the Heart of Worship by Matt Redman

The Air I Breathe: Worship As a Way of Life by Louie Giglio

The Worship Journey by Andy Park

Experiencing God by Henry Blackaby

Desiring God by John Piper

Practicing the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence

The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer

The Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God by A.W. Tozer

DVDs (*available on vineyardresources.com*)

Worship by John Wimber [5 DVD Box Set]

Equip - what is worship? [DVD]

Suggestions

Practicing the Presence of God: Practicing the presence of God involves looking for God in every detail of life. To do this you may want to think of God as everpresent in every situation, and remember you are never alone. Look at everything you do not as something you do by yourself, but something you do together with God. Spend time speaking with Jesus as if he were right there with you. Take some time to think about him every hour of the day. Read *Practicing the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence.

Fasting: The purpose of a traditional fast is to abstain from food in order to focus clearly on your relationship with God. You can also fast from television, entertainment, reading, or anything that distracts you from God. Those who are diabetic, pregnant, or who suffer from severe physical disorders when fasting from food should fast from other things that are not physically damaging. Remember, the goal is to develop a focus on God. In order to fast you may want to consider the following:

- What is the purpose of this fast?
- Begin with something small like one meal or one time slot.
- During the fast, commit the time you would have spent eating to prayer, bible study, worship, etc. Use it as a time to focus on God.
- Read the chapter on fasting in *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster.

Journaling: Sometimes it is helpful to journal in order to see God's work in our lives. You may want to start a journal that allows you to record some of the victories and struggles you are having. Record your thoughts and feelings as you go through a process of self-examination. Make it a point to review your journal annually to see how God has worked in your life over the past year.

Worship: Find a place where you can worship God privately. It may be a spot outdoors, in the privacy of your bedroom, or even in your car while commuting to work with a good worship CD. Wherever it is, make a habit of visiting this place regularly and worshipping God there.

Meditate on God: Take some time to meditate on who God is and to get a sense of his greatness. You may want to use the Psalms as a guide. Read through a Psalm and note what the psalmist says about God's character and about his experiences with God. Take some time to praise God for who he is and for what he has done in your life.

Worship as a Lifestyle: Make it a point to see every action as a worship sacrifice to God. When you wake, thank him for the day. As you go to work or school, sing praise music or adore him for who he is. Throughout the day, try to commit every word, thought, and action to him as a way of thanking him and worshipping him, realizing every breath is his gift to us. At home, bring God into every activity. Talk with others about the things God has done in your life.

Preparation for Corporate Worship: Spend some time preparing yourself for church worship service. As you approach the building, take a moment to stop and thank God for your church. Before the service begins, say a prayer of thanks to God. Tell him you are looking forward to meeting him in worship. Pray that God would prepare your heart to worship him. Spend some time praying for the pastors and everyone involved in worship that day. Look around at those entering the church and pray for as many as you can specifically that God would touch their hearts and souls during the service. During worship, try to picture Christ seated on the throne (read Isaiah 6:1–8) and thank him for his sacrifice.

Internalize your Songs & Prayers: As you sing songs of worship or read scripture, place yourself in the text. Instead of just singing the lyrics or reading the text, make it your personal song or prayer to the Lord. Example: When reading something like Isaiah 40:31, instead of just reciting the text: "But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint." Pray: "Lord, help me trust in You that I might find new strength. That I might soar high on wings like eagles. That I might run and not grow weary. That I might walk and not faint. Help me do that Lord." Or when we sing that scripture in the song, *Everlasting God*, sing it in first person. It will give life and fresh meaning to your songs and prayers, and God will receive them as worship from your heart.

Evangelizing

Using the chart below, choose a step you would like to take and transfer it to your Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout.

Question	Crawl	Walk	Run
I feel personal responsibility to share my faith with those who don't know Jesus.	Take the class, Sharing Christ, offered at the church.	Facilitate a small group using an evangelism study.	Start a common-interest group, intentionally building relationships with those who don't follow Jesus.
I look for opportunities to build relationships with people who don't know Jesus.	Find an opportunity to spend time and build a relationship with someone who doesn't follow Jesus.	Host a "Matthew Party" with your small group where you invite unchurched neighbors or friends over for dinner or a social event.	Start a common-interest group, intentionally building relationships with those who don't follow Jesus.
I regularly pray for those who don't know Christ.	Identify names of people who don't follow Christ and pray regularly for their salvation.	Pray in your small group for those who may not follow Christ and find ways to serve them.	Do a prayer walk through your neighborhood, where you walk the block praying for each neighbor and any specific needs they may have.
I am confident in my ability to share my faith.	Write out your testimony and share it with a friend.	Facilitate a small group using an evangelism study.	Volunteer for a local cross-cultural mission project.
My heart is full of passion to show God's love in a practical way to those who don't know Jesus.	Participate in a Kindness to Go or one of our seasonal outreaches (e.g. backpacks, shoeboxes, meals, etc.)	Serve at one of our large outreaches (Food Pantry, Harvesters, Convoy of Hope)	Start a new servant evangelism ministry or outreach through Vineyard Church.
I find that my relationship with Jesus comes up frequently in my conversations with those who don't know him	Write out your testimony and share it with a friend.	Facilitate a small group using an evangelism study.	Facilitate a small group in your workplace or neighborhood
I am open to going anywhere God calls me, in whatever capacity, to share my faith.	Pray for a particular people group that doesn't know Jesus.	Volunteer for a local cross-cultural mission project.	Explore serving on a short-term mission trip.

Evangelism Resources

Class

Sharing Christ taught by Pastor Kevin Townsend

Books

The Art of Neighboring by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon

Conspiracy of Kindness by Steve Sjogren

Jesus in the Mirror by Tri Robinson & Jason Chatraw

Hope Lives by Amber Van Schooneveld

Speaking Of Jesus by Carl Medearis

A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures by Patty Lane

Becoming a Contagious Christian by Mark Mittelberg and Lee Strobel

Evangelism Outside the Box: New Ways to Help People Experience the Good News by Rick Richardson

The Complete Evangelism Guidebook: Expert Advice on Reaching Others for Christ, edited by Scott Dawson

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert E. Coleman

God's Relentless Pursuit by Phil Strout

Too Small to Ignore by Wess Stafford

Cross Cultural Servanthood by Duane Elmer

Operation World by Jason Mandryk

DVDs

Engage [6 DVD Set] by Carl Medearis & Jay Pathak

Understanding Islam & Loving Muslims [DVD] by Carl Medearis

Suggestions

Be Ready to Care: Be ready to care for the hungry or needy wherever you go. Carry gift certificates from your local grocery and department stores like Target or Wal-Mart to give on the spot to those who have need, without worrying about cash. Carry the numbers for local shelters and food services with you so you can help the homeless. Buy an extra hamburger or bagel and share it with someone who needs it.

Community Compassion: Look for opportunities to care for the needs of your community. There are many community programs that help share the love of Jesus through meeting the needs of others. Look for ways to take your faith outside the walls of your church. Talk with our evangelism pastor about opportunities to serve.

Deliver Food: Set aside some time to volunteer at the food pantry or Harvester give-away with your family or small group. Make it a special day or evening out. Allow everyone to participate in the food delivery process. Go out for a meal or dessert afterwards and talk about how it felt to serve others. How was Jesus seen through your actions?

What's Your Style: You may feel pressure when it comes to sharing Christ because you think you have to "sell" someone on Jesus. Sharing Christ can happen in many different ways. Take some time to explore your style. You could read one of the books listed above or attend the Sharing Christ class at church. You may be more comfortable speaking directly to people about Jesus; or maybe it is easier for you to let it come up naturally in a conversation as you find ways to show them the love of Christ. Find your style and begin to share your faith with others.

Short-Term Mission: Choose to go on a short-term mission trip. Through these missions trips you get a better understanding of other people's need for Jesus, and a better understanding of the heart of God. Talk with our missions pastor about upcoming mission trips.

Count Conversations: Often we can put too much pressure on ourselves to "convert" someone or have all the right answers. It is the Holy Spirit who converts, not us. All you have to do is talk about the Gospel (see Matthew 28:19, 20). Instead of counting the number of people you have led to Christ, start counting the number of conversations you have with others about Jesus. You may be shocked to find how easy it is to talk naturally about Jesus when you don't pressure yourself to convert them.

Pray for Your Friends: Make it a point to pray specifically for people you know who don't know Jesus. You may want to write their names on a bookmark in your Bible, or in a prayer journal. Set aside a regular time in your day to pray for them.

Encouraging

Using the chart below, choose a step you would like to take and transfer it to your Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout.

Question	Crawl	Walk	Run
I have a deep and meaningful connection with others in the church.	Attend a worship service and small group on a regular basis.	Take Vineyard 101 & 201 at church.	Consider serving in an area of ministry in which you are passionate and/or gifted.
I gather regularly with a group of Christians for fellowship and accountability.	Attend a small group weekly.	Invite others to your small group.	Facilitate a small group one semester.
I am quick to confess anything in my character that does not look like Christ.	Evaluate your character.	Have a friend take the Friend Feedback Assessment found later in this packet and get feedback on the results.	Find an accountability partner and establish a relationship of accountability.
I allow God's Word to guide my thoughts and change my actions.	Start by spending 7 minutes a day reading the Bible. You might purchase a devotional or subscribe to one online.	Read the Bible straight through like a story or novel. See the "Suggestions" list on the next page for more information on how to do this.	Make a regular habit of studying the Bible in depth. Consider taking the Disciple I class at church, a 34 week class through the whole Bible.
I find I am making better choices to do what is right when I am tempted to do wrong.	Examine the areas of your life where you struggle with temptation. What are those areas of struggle and what should you start doing to avoid them?	Develop a plan for handling specific temptation in your life. Find an accountability partner to help you.	Make confession and repentance a regular part of your time with God. Name the things you have done and commit yourself to making the right choices in the future.
I have an easy time receiving advice, encouragement, and correction from others.	Establish a friendship and share something of your life with that person.	Find an accountability partner and meet with him or her about a specific issue in which you would like to grow. Also consider finding mentors who can help you grow in various areas of your life.	Be an accountability partner to someone else. Mentor someone else.
I am consistent in pursuing spiritual habits that are helping me model my life after Jesus.	Develop the spiritual habit of praying. After waking up, take a moment to offer a prayer to God.	Take the Spiritual Disciplines class at church.	Commit to practicing regular spiritual habits on a daily basis such as quiet time, prayer, etc. Have an accountability partner help you evaluate which habits you need to implement.

Encouraging Resources

Books on Community

Community Life 101: Getting the Most Out of Your Small Group Experience by Randall G. Neighbour

The Spirit-filled Small Group: Leading Your Group to Experience Spiritual Gifts by Joel Comiskey

How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting... So People Want to Come Back by Joel Comiskey

Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Books on Discipleship

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Alpha: Questions of Life: An Opportunity to explore the Meaning of Life by Nicky Gumbel

How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth by Gordon Fee

What the Bible is All About: Bible Handbook by Henrietta C. Mears

Rick Warren's Bible Study Methods by Rick Warren

Knowing God by J.I. Packer

The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis

Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster

Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home by Richard Foster

The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg

What's So Amazing About Grace? by Phillip Yancey

The Jesus I Never Knew by Philip Yancey

The Complete C.S. Lewis Signature Classics by C. S. Lewis

The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds

Breakthrough: Discovering the Kingdom by Derek Morpew

Too Busy Not to Pray: Slowing Down to Be With God by Bill Hybels

Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God by George Eldon Ladd

The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is by N. T. Wright

The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Transforming Discipleship by Greg Ogden

Church History in Plain Language by Bruce L. Shelley

Divine Conspiracy by Dallas Willard

The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence

Classes

Vineyard 201

200-Series Classes:

Alpha

Spiritual Disciplines (using Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline)

Disciple Bible Study

Financial Peace University

Oaks of Righteousness

Empowering Workshop

Suggestions

Book Study: Choose a book of the Bible and commit to studying it in depth. Read through the entire book a few times. While doing this, get a basic understanding of how the book is structured, what the author's message is, who he is speaking to, what the book's purpose is, etc. Then start with a section of one chapter and read this through a few times asking the same questions as above. To help you in your study, you may want to pick up a commentary that helps explain things verse by verse.

The ACTS Model: The ACTS model of prayer involves breaking our prayers up into different phases or focuses. The A stands for adoration. The first portion of our prayers should focus on adoring God for who he is and giving him honor and glory. The C stands for confession. A very basic part of prayer is self-examination and coming clean before God about our sin, confessing it, and then turning from it. The T stands for thanksgiving. Thanksgiving involves thanking God for who he is and what he has done. The S stands for supplication, which involves bringing our requests before God. This model helps us stay balanced in our prayers and attuned to the will of God.

Fasting: The purpose of a traditional fast is to abstain from food in order to focus clearly on your relationship with God. You can also fast from television, entertainment, reading, or anything that distracts you from God. Those who are diabetic, pregnant, or who suffer from severe physical disorders when fasting from food should fast from other things that are not physically damaging. Remember, the goal is to develop a focus on God. In order to fast you may want to consider the following:

- What is the purpose of this fast?
- Begin with something small like one meal or one time slot.
- During the fast, commit the time you would have spent eating to prayer, Bible study, worship, etc. Use it as a time to focus on God.

Journaling: Sometimes it is helpful to journal in order to see God's work in our lives. You may want to start a journal that allows you to record some of the victories and struggles you are having. Record your thoughts and feelings as you go through a process of self-examination. Make it a point to review your journal annually to see how God has worked in your life over the past year.

S.O.A.P. Method of Bible Reading and Journaling:

S. FOR SCRIPTURE

Open your Bible to your reading for the day. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

O. FOR OBSERVATION

What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you.

A. FOR APPLICATION

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today.

P. FOR PRAYER

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or even a prayer for a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out.

The Lord's Prayer: When asked by his disciples to teach them to pray, Jesus gave them what has come to be known as the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is a model of prayer that can be broken up into six R's. The first three R's deal with prayers directed toward God. They are: Remember the Lord is near ("Our Father in heaven"—Matthew 6:9), Reflect on who God is ("hallowed be your name"— Matthew 6:9), and Refocus our lives toward his Kingdom and his will ("your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—Matthew 6:10). The second three R's deal with prayers for our needs. They are: Request the needs you have for today ("Give us today our daily bread"— Matthew 6:11), Repent of the sins you have committed ("Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors"—Matthew 6:12), and Rest in God's deliverance and presence in times of temptation ("And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"—Matthew 6:13).

Flash Prayers: Frank Laubach talked about "flashing" prayers at anyone you meet. He explained how he would pray silently for those he came into contact with and ask for God's joy and presence in their lives. He would "flash" these prayers at anyone he saw, people on the bus, the street, in a plane, etc. Take some time to experiment with this approach to prayer. At church you may want to flash prayers at those you pass by or see in the sanctuary. In every instance ask for God's joy and presence in the person's life. Then look for the response. Do you notice a difference in them?

The Bible as Story: For many people Scripture can become dry because it is read like an encyclopedia. Take some time to read the Bible like a novel. Start at the beginning and read it

straight through. Instead of looking for something to apply that day, look for overall themes and indications of what God is like and how he interacts with people.

Money Management: Take some time to look over how you manage your money. If you don't have a budget you may want to establish one. Spend some time praying over what God wants you to do with the money he has given you. This will then help you budget with God's priorities in mind. Definitely take the Financial Peace University class.

Equipping

Using the chart below, choose a step you would like to take and transfer it to your Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout.

Question	Crawl	Walk	Run
I regularly use my time to serve God	See your family and/or job as a ministry.	Give 90 minutes a month to serve at Vineyard Church.	Commit to serve in ministries at Vineyard Church that may require more time.
I am currently serving God with the gifts and passions He has given me	Volunteer at church.	Commit to serve in some kind of ministry.	Lead a ministry.
I regularly reflect on how my life can have an impact on the Kingdom of God	List five ways your life can impact the Kingdom. Seek a pastor if you need help.	Take Vineyard 201 and discover your SHAPE for ministry.	Commit to serve within a ministry that best expresses your SHAPE for one year.
I often think about ways to use my God-given gifts and abilities to please God	Take Vineyard 201 and discover your SHAPE for ministry.	Meet with a pastor to discover where your spiritual gifts and abilities can best be utilized in your church.	Serve in or start a new ministry in or through the church to serve others based on the gifts and abilities God has given you.
Those closest to me would say my life is a reflection of giving more than receiving	Serve at church during the weekday helping out the staff.	Take on a volunteer project	Take on a leadership role within a ministry that best expresses your SHAPE.
A review of how I use my finances shows that I think more about God and others than I do about myself	Give something to the church or someone in need. Do a random act of kindness.	Give the first 10% of your gross income to the church on a regular basis (tithing).	Give from your abundance above the first 10%.
I see my painful experiences as opportunities to minister to others	Write out how Christ has healed or used a painful experience in your life for God's glory.	Share with a friend or your small group how Christ has healed or used this painful experience for God's glory.	Share this painful experience with your pastor to see if you can use it to help others in your church.

Equipping Resources

Books

Unlocking Your Giftedness by J. Robert Clinton and Richard Clinton

The Call by Os Guinness

Improving Your Serve by Chuck Swindoll

The Volunteer Revolution: Unleashing the Power of Everybody by Bill Hybels

The Equipping Church by Sue Mallory

Halftime: Moving from Success to Significance by Bob P. Buford

Class

Vineyard 201

Suggestions

Join a Ministry: Join a ministry at church that best fits your spiritual gifts, interests, passions, talents, abilities, personality type, and experiences.

Jump in Anywhere: You discover your gifts by getting involved in ministry. If you don't know your gifts and abilities yet, then just find something that sounds interesting and get involved. You'll never know what you're good at until you get started. If it doesn't work out, call it an "experiment" and try something else. "If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done" Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT).

Start a New Ministry: You may have an idea for a ministry that does not currently exist at church. Spend some time in prayer to determine if this ministry idea is something you would like to pursue. If it is, then contact a pastor about your idea.

Empowering

Using the chart below, choose a step you would like to take and transfer it to your Spiritual Growth Plan on the last page of this handout.

Question	Crawl	Walk	Run
I turn to God in spontaneous prayer throughout the day	Read passages in the Bible that address the need for and benefit of prayer. Make it your goal to pray at least four times a day.	Increase your daily prayer times to eight or nine times a day. Start keeping a journal of your prayers.	Keep a daily prayer journal, recording what you prayed throughout the day, add a section of your journal to write about answered prayers.
I have found that prayer has changed how I view and interact with the world	List out your current world view, discuss how you currently see the major areas of your life: work, family, your faith, etc.	Take 30 days and pray for God's direction in these areas, pray that God allows you to view these areas as He views them.	After the 30 days, write out your view as they are now. Journal these new findings and how they have changed through prayer. Make it a discipline to use this process in all of the areas of our life, big and small.
I regularly practice the habit of praying for others	Start a prayer journal by making a list of all those in your life who need prayer. List out their prayer needs.	Pray for those people for 30 days straight.	Record the impact that your prayers have had in the form of answered prayers. Continue to use this journal to record your prayers and record when they are answered.
When faced with a difficult situation, my first response is to turn to God in prayer	Make a list of the most difficult situations that you've faced since becoming a Christian. For each situation, record what your first response was to the situation. Review for patterns of behavior and pattern of results of these decisions.	Make a list of the most difficult things that you're dealing with in your life right now. Spend time praying over each situation. Ask for God's guidance and wisdom in these situations. Record your reflections.	Journal about the results of your new God-led decisions, look for a pattern of results. Make this a continual process in your life. Continue to pray that God be your first place of refuge and counsel.
I regularly use my time and resources to care for the needs of others	Make a list breaking down how much time you spend, on average caring for the needs of others during a given week. Review list and ask God to reveal to you if He is leading you to do more.	Pray and ask God to provide you with a strong leading into the areas where He would have you serve. Start working in these areas.	As you start to work in these areas on a regular basis, start journaling your experiences in helping others, specifically write about how God is growing you through helping.
When an acquaintance shares a concern or need, I am comfortable praying "on the spot" with that person	Determine if you are indeed comfortable with praying with people on the spot. Make a list of the people that you have recently prayed with "on the spot" in the last two months.	Study passages of scripture that focus on the power of prayer. Study specific passages where individual participated in this kind of prayer.	Volunteer for a ministry that meets at least weekly where praying "on the spot" is common. Journal about the experiences you have in doing this kind of prayer. What is God teaching you?
I regularly seek God's direction for my choices in life	List out all of the major choices that you've had to make in the last six months. Reflect on what role God played in these decisions. How did they turn out?	Read passages in the Bible that describe how a mature Christian goes about making Godly decisions. Make a list of decisions that you have coming up in the near future. Start to pray for God's guidance in each of these decisions. Start keeping a journal of these decisions.	Make it a part of your daily rhythm to journal out what God is telling you about the major decisions that you have to make. Record what decision that you make and the outcome.

Empowering Resources

Books

“Celebration of Discipline” by Richard Foster

“How to Read the Bible for all it’s worth” by Gordon Fee

“When Helping Hurts” by Steve Corbett, Brian Fikkert

“Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home” by Richard Foster

“What’s So Amazing about Grace?” by Philip Yancy

“The Caring Congregation” by Karen Lampe

“Listening for Heaven’s Sake” by Gary Sweeten, David Ping and Anne Clippard

“Living in the Freedom of the Spirit” by Tom Marshall

Classes

Oaks of Righteousness

Empowering

Spiritual Disciplines

Suggestions

Volunteer for prayer ministry at a homeless shelter or at a prison. Jesus is very specific about his call to us to minister to the homeless and the prisoner. When we serve these people, we are serving Jesus.

Volunteer to visit those who are hospitalized, visit them and pray with them. Those who are hospitalized and fighting for their health feel very unsafe and insecure. It is in this situation where God’s love and comfort can have the greatest impact.

Journaling – in order to see where we are, where we are going and where we’ve been, we need to analyze ourselves and our circumstances. One powerful way to do this is through journaling. With journaling, we are forced to articulate random thoughts and feelings into specific points. With journaling, we are able to gain perspective on our lives and our spiritual walks.

Prayer – prayer needs to be a part of our daily rhythm. We are called to pray about everything. We need to be disciplined and deliberate when we pray.

Memorize Scripture – Determine the best method for you to memorize and make a daily habit of memorizing Scripture.

Spiritual Growth Assessment and Spiritual Growth Planner

Friend Feedback Assessment Instructions

You have a rare privilege! You have been given this Friend Feedback Assessment by someone who trusts you. By asking you to fill it out on their behalf, they are telling you that your opinion matters to them. Most likely, you are a close friend, a spiritual partner, or a spouse who knows this person well, and they know you will respond honestly and prayerfully to this assessment.

Why are they taking the Spiritual Growth Assessment? All of us are in process...none of us have arrived...but most of us want to be all that God wants us to be. For our spiritual growth though, we need to regularly assess the five E's that reflect a fully devoted disciple of Jesus:

- **Exalting** (worship as a lifestyle)
- **Evangelizing** (sharing and showing Christ's love)
- **Encouraging** (growing and becoming like Christ through community)
- **Equipping** (discovering and embracing God's call for ministry)
- **Empowering** (getting equipped to pray and care for others)

Your friend has already completed a self-assessment of their spiritual growth. But just as with our physical health, it can often be helpful to get a second opinion. That's where you come in. Your role is really quite simple and should only take a few minutes of your time . . . but it could have a life-long impact on your friend. So here's what we are asking you to do.

Pray. Ask God to sharpen your mind and speak to your heart as you fill out the assessment.

Read each statement carefully, and respond to the best of your ability. If you can't answer a particular question because you don't know the person well enough, just give them a "3" for that question. You may want to mark those questions so your friend can identify them when you return the assessment.

Return the assessment to your friend and offer to answer any questions they might have.

Keep in mind that the Spiritual Growth Assessment and Spiritual Growth Planner measure where you are in your journey to become a fully devoted disciple of Jesus. It is not a tool to see how you measure up against other people; nor is it a tool to see how close you are to perfection. We all know we'll never be perfect this side of heaven. Rather, this is a tool that will help you evaluate your spiritual growth, and give you direction for developing a plan to become a fully devoted disciple of Jesus.

Name of friend you are assessing: _____

Your name: _____ Date: _____

Friend Feedback Assessment

Read through the list of statements in each area of our values. Using the chart below, assign a numerical value of 1-5 to the comment that best represent what is true for you. To clarify your results, mark yourself low when you come to a statement that you do not understand. Assess your own personal Christian experience on a scale from:

1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply to this person at all	Applies to this person sometimes	This person is neutral in this area	Applies to this person most of the time	Applies to this person completely

At the end of each area, assess how you are doing by adding up the total of the numbers you circled in each spiritual discipline. Identify those statements where you are strong and where you are weak by plotting your answers under the section "What's Next For You?" Record those at the end of each area.

EXALTING

- It is apparent by the way this person lives his/her life that God is his/her highest priority
 This person is dependent on God for every aspect of his/her life
 There is nothing in this person's life that he/she has not surrendered to (kept back from) God
 This person regularly meditates on God's Word and invite Him into my his/her everyday activities
 This person has a deep desire to spend time in God's presence
 This person is the same person in public that he/she is in private
 This person has an overwhelming sense of God's awesomeness even when he/she doesn't feel His presence

 Exalting Total

EVANGELIZING

- This person feels personal responsibility to share his/her faith with those who don't know Jesus
 This person looks for opportunities to build relationships with those who don't know Jesus
 This person prays for those who don't know Jesus
 This person is confident in his/her ability to share his/her faith
 This person's heart is full of passion to show God's love in a practical way to those who don't know Jesus.
 This person finds that their relationship with Jesus comes up frequently in their conversations with those who don't know Him
 This person is open to going anywhere God calls them, in whatever capacity, to share his/her faith

 Evangelizing Total

ENCOURAGING

- _____ This person has a deep and meaningful connection with others in the church
- _____ This person gathers regularly with a group of Christians for community and accountability
- _____ This person is quick to confess anything in their character that does not look like Christ
- _____ This person allows God's Word to guide his/her thoughts and change his/her actions
- _____ This person finds they are making better choices to do what is right when they are tempted to do wrong
- _____ This person has an easy time receiving advice, encouragement, and correction from others
- _____ This person is consistent in pursuing habits that are helping them model their life after Jesus

- _____ Encouraging Total

EQUIPPING

- _____ This person regularly uses their time to serve God
- _____ This person is currently serving God with the gifts and passions He has given them
- _____ This person regularly reflects on how their life can have an impact on the Kingdom of God
- _____ This person often thinks about ways to use their God-given gifts and abilities to please God
- _____ Those closest to this person would say his/her life is a reflection of giving more than receiving
- _____ A review of how this person uses their finances shows that they think more about God and others than they do about themselves
- _____ This person sees their painful experiences as opportunities to minister to others

- _____ Equipping Total

EMPOWERING

- _____ This person turns to God in spontaneous prayer throughout the day
- _____ This person has found that prayer has changed how they view and interact with the world
- _____ This person regularly practices the habit of praying for others
- _____ When faced with a difficult situation, this person's first response is to turn to God in prayer
- _____ This person regularly use his/her time and resources to care for the needs of others
- _____ When an acquaintance shares a concern or need, this person is comfortable praying "on the spot" with that person
- _____ This person regularly seeks God's direction for their choices in life

- _____ Empowering Total

Transfer these scores to the Spiritual Growth Plan at the end of this handout.

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Spiritual Growth Plan

Now it is time for you to identify and focus in on the areas in which you would like to grow. From the previous pages where you assessed yourself (and your friend assessed you), identify at least two areas in which you would like to grow spiritually. Write out these goals and identify two specific measurable steps you can take to accomplish each goal. Ask someone to meet with you and encourage you as you seek to accomplish the measurable steps and your goal. Ideally, you will be doing the same for them.

Exalting	How I scored myself: ____	How my friend scored me: ____
Evangelizing	How I scored myself: ____	How my friend scored me: ____
Encouraging	How I scored myself: ____	How my friend scored me: ____
Equipping	How I scored myself: ____	How my friend scored me: ____
Empowering	How I scored myself: ____	How my friend scored me: ____

Goal #1: Over the next 12 months, I desire to grow in this “E” area (circle below):

Exalting Evangelizing Encouraging Equipping Empowering

The specific measurable steps I will take to accomplish this goal are:

1. _____

2. _____

Goal #2: Over the next 12 months, I desire to grow in this “E” area (circle below):

Exalting Evangelizing Encouraging Equipping Empowering

The specific measurable steps I will take to accomplish this goal are:

1. _____

2. _____

Note: The Christian life is more than just doing some things listed on a piece of paper. Don't let this be just a “check-list” for you. This tool is designed to be used by God to help you identify where you have grown spiritually and where you need to be growing in the coming year. As you prayerfully consider your Spiritual Growth Plan for the coming year, trust that God will use these things to continue to transform you into His image. Keep these goals before you and pray each day for God to work in your life in these areas. Meet with your accountability partner and small group leader/ministry leader to go over these goals several times in the next 12 months.

Notes: