

# A Church Built On Purpose - Part 2

## Introduction

- Jesus said ... *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind**. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”* (Matthew 22:36–40, ESV)
- Jesus recalls the requirements of the great commandment to be ALL IN. Too often our minds are engaged, our bodies are engaged, but our hearts are stuck in neutral. If we hope to be effective and on fire for the Lord, we'll never get there until we start with WHY.
- To recap our first lesson, let's talk about one of my favorite subjects: ice cream! How would you feel if you walked into a shop and they said, “We sell ice cream. We do that by making 31 different flavors. Want to buy some?” You might be tempted to buy some based on cravings alone, but do you think you'd become loyal to that shop? Now what would happen if you walked into a shop and heard, “We believe in providing our customers with the best possible experience every time they come to our store. We do that by finding the best quality ingredients and taking time to connect with, and listen to each of our customers. We make ice cream. Want to buy some?” I've been to that kind of store, and I would gladly drive out of my way to return, based on their passion and commitment alone.
- So as we continue in this study, let's understand the goal in growth is to be more and more like Jesus, our amazing King and the Savior of our souls. That journey toward being more like Christ starts in many different places:
  - Stage 1: Foundational Bible Knowledge (think little kids and teens)
  - Stage 2: Early Christian Development (think would-be converts and new believers)
  - Stage 3: Thriving in Christ (think young adults and up)
  - Stage 4: Mature Servant Leaders (think mature adults and our elderly)
- Wherever we are in our journey toward being more like Christ, we can only hope to grow in our faith when we focus on the right purpose. Let's look at each stage and see WHY we should be focussed on growth.

## Stage 1: Foundational Bible Knowledge

*“This is my commandment, that you love one another as **I have loved you**. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but **I have called***

*you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”* (John 15:12–17, ESV)

- **Why?** - Jesus loves you and considers you His friend (John 15:12, 14).
- **How?** - You do the things Jesus tells you and communicate with God regularly.
- **What?** - You are growing to trust in Jesus and in how much He cares for you.

## **Stage 2: Early Christian Development**

*“So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: **“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him.** Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?””* (Acts 8:30–36, ESV)

- **Why?** - Jesus suffered humiliation and injustice as He died for you (Acts 8:32-33).
- **How?** - You change your old ways, having your sins washed away in baptism, and commit yourself completely to His cause.
- **What?** - You are one who honors the King as Lord and willing to share that fact with others.

## **Stage 3: Thriving in Christ**

*“**For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**” (Galatians 5:1, ESV) **“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**” (Galatians 5:13–14, ESV) **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”** (Galatians 5:22–26, ESV)*

- **Why?** - Christ has set you free from slavery to sin (Galatians 5:1, 13).
- **How?** - You practice your faith, with the fruit of the Spirit in your life, and serve others with love.

- **What?** - You are firmly against sin, living with humility, and waiting for heaven with eagerness.

#### Stage 4: Mature Servant Leaders

*"But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ... And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:7-16, ESV)*

- **Why?** - Christ has graciously given you gifts to serve in His church (Ephesians 4:7).
- **How?** - You serve your brothers, uniting them, teaching and guarding them from falling away.
- **What?** - You are a powerful force for growth and stability by knowing the Lord.

#### Conclusion

- Where are you in your spiritual growth? More importantly, where do you want to be and WHY?
- Our goal in personal growth, as well as congregational growth, is to make sure no one is left behind. As Paul said, *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **until we all** attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes."* (Ephesians 4:11-14, ESV)
- Too often we watch as our young ones leave the house and leave the faith. Too often we watch only 20% of our group doing 80% of the work. Too often we see the cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches standing in the way of action. And too often we see those with wisdom and experience stand idly by without getting involved.
- Growth matters! But true and lasting growth will only come when we've first started with the correct purpose.
- **Challenge:** Write down WHY you want to grow, HOW that purpose changes you, and WHAT that growth will look like in practice.