

## HOW TO GROW THE BODY

Ephesians 4:11-16

9-29-24

### Small Group Mission Statement:

**As a path to spiritual maturity, we equip believers for the work of ministry. We grow in our knowledge of God, increase our faith, and unify ourselves together in Christ.**

### I. A PATH TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

*Ephesians 4:12 - "...building up the body of Christ..."*

*Ephesians 4:13 - "...to mature manhood..."*

*Ephesians 4:14 - "...no longer children..."*

*Ephesians 4:15 - "...grow up in every way..."*

*Romans 6:19 - "...now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to your sanctification."*

*Romans 6:22 - "But now you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life."*

*1 John 3:2-3 - "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."*

*1 Peter 1:14-16 - "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup>since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy."*

*Romans 6:12 - "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions."*

**The book of Hebrews gives us two reasons we should gather together as we pursue spiritual maturity.**

#### 1. To cultivate sensitivity to sin

*Hebrews 3:12-13 - "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."*

#### 2. To encourage loving God and others

*Hebrews 10:24, 25 - "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."*

### II. WHY BE EQUIPPED?

*Ephesians 4:11-12 - "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."*

## Two dimensions of this equipping.

### 1. For the work of ministry

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 - “Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup>Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup>who has made us sufficient to be **ministers** of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit. For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.”

2 Corinthians 4:1 - “Therefore, having this **ministry** by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 - “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the **ministry of reconciliation**; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself...”

### 2. For building up the body of Christ

Ephesians 4:12-13 - “...**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...”

## Three areas we as believers need to grow in:

1. Our knowledge
2. Our faith
3. Our unity

## III. WHAT WE WANT TO AVOID

Ephesians 4:14 - “...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.”

### So we will no longer be children:

#### 1. Tossed around by the waves

James 1:2-6 - “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup> And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.”

#### 2. Carried about by lies

## IV. WHAT WE WANT TO PURSUE

Ephesians 4:15-16 - “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup>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.”

**We are joined**

**We are held together**

**We are equipped**

**We are working properly**

## **COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What did you think about the message this week? What stood out to you or challenged your thinking?
2. How would you currently describe your path to spiritual maturity? Is there growth? Describe.
3. In what areas do you feel like you need to be equipped more?
4. What distracts you more from spiritual growth, trials or culture? Describe.
5. Explain how being part of a C-Group has helped you most.

## **PRAY OVER OUR CHURCH**

- Pray for full participation in small groups.
- Pray for continued growth in all areas, individual and corporate.
- Pray for gospel conversations this week as we go about our business.
- Pray and ask God to equip us to share the gospel and build up the church.