

OPEN IN PRAYER

BEGIN WITH THIS IDEA:

God wants you to grow up! Your heavenly Father's goal is for you to mature and develop the characteristics of Jesus Christ. Sadly, many Christians *grow older* but never *grow up*. They are stuck in perpetual spiritual infancy. The reason is that they never intend to grow. Spiritual growth is not automatic. It takes an intentional commitment. You must *want* to grow, *decide* to grow, *make an effort* to grow, and *persist* in growing! (taken from "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren)

READ EPHESIANS 4:14-16 from your Bible. Also read the passage from "The Message": *No prolonged infancies among us, please. We'll not tolerate babes in the woods, small children who are an easy mark for impostors. God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love.*

STUDY Ephesians 4:14

- What do you think the passage means by "we must no longer be children or infants"?
- Where do you maybe need to "grow-up" in Christ?

STUDY Ephesians 4:15

- *What do you think this passage means by "we must grow up in every way into him who is the head"?*

The process of becoming Christ-like entails a decision. Jesus said, "Come by my disciple...Come follow me." When the first disciples chose to follow Jesus, they didn't understand all the implications of their decision. They simply responded to Jesus' invitation.

- *What specific choices or ways did Pastor John highlight in regards to becoming more Christ-like? (Here's a hint! Studying, meditating, and applying God's Word)*
- *How can spiritual disciplines help "train" or equip us to grow in Christ-likeness?*

STUDY Ephesians 4:16

- *What do you think the phrase "as each part is working properly" means?*

You are a work in progress! Spiritual maturity is neither instant nor automatic; it is a gradual, progressive development that will take the rest of your life. God is far more interested in WHO you are than in what you do! Jesus did not die on the cross just so we could live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: **He wants to make us like himself** before he takes us to heaven. This is our greatest privilege, our immediate responsibility, and our ultimate destiny.

- *How are you "doing your part" to grow spiritually?*
- *How can you become more persistent in growing spiritually?*
- *How is your group doing its part to help one another grow spiritually?*

CLOSE IN PRAYER