

## Are You Still Growing?

One of the early explorers of the North Pole charted his journey nearly every hour, wanting to make sure he was still on course through the endless wasteland of white and snow. At one point, something very strange occurred. As he checked his position, his tracking instruments indicated that even though he had been moving north, he was actually farther south than he had been just an hour before. No matter how fast he journeyed toward the North Pole, he continued to get farther from it. Finally, he discovered that he had somehow gotten himself onto an enormous iceberg that was drifting in the opposite direction, as he was walking in the other.

The reality is that there is a huge difference between activity and progress. Not just on a voyage to the North Pole, but in all of life. Sometimes we work and work and work, but are really going nowhere (or backwards). The Christian journey is about growth and renewal. Are you really growing?

Sometimes it's good to check in. You know, to see where you're at on the journey. It's often difficult to recognize spiritual growth over a week's time, or even a month. Trying to determine the progress of the soul is like looking at the growth of an oak - you can't see it growing at the moment, but you can sure see it growing over time. As you assess your own growth, reflect over the last 6 months or year or more.

*Here are 5 questions for you (and your team) to reflect on as you consider "Are You Still Growing?"*

### 1. Are you more hungry for God than ever before?

Psalm 107 says that God "satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things" (see vs. 8-10). Jesus said that part of growing in righteousness is hungering and thirsting for more (Matthew 5.6). Do you long for more of God these days? Do you find yourself talking with him more? Are you experiencing his companionship more? Why is it we think that growing more means having to have it all together? While there should be signs of healing, breakthroughs, and victory, the real mark of growth for a Christ-follower is a deepening hunger for more of God.

### 2. Are you coming to know God in new ways?

John 17.3 teaches us that eternal life is growing in the knowledge of God. 2 Peter 3.18 commands, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..." Are you relating to God in more ways than before. His character is immense and his attributes are too many to count! Is God more to you than he was a year ago? As provider, healer, leader, warrior, father, savior, shepherd, and so on... To know God in more ways, find a book on the names/attributes of God and ask him to show you more of himself.

### 3. Are you more connected to the Scriptures than you were before?

Psalm 1 directly ties growing in life to being saturated in God's word. Psalm 119.32 connects growing in freedom to running in the path of God's commands. Are you meeting with God in the Scriptures these days? The goal isn't necessarily to *know* more or even to *read* more, but to have the words of God be more on your mind, more a part of who you are. Let us not live on bread alone, but on the very words of God.

### 4. Are your relationships more significant and lasting longer?

2 Thessalonians 1.2-4 connects a faith that's growing with an increased love for others. 1 Thessalonians 3.12 reads, "May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you." Are your friendships more healthy these days? Is your love and concern for others growing? How are others experiencing you these days?

### 5. Do you have more relationships with people who don't know Jesus than you did before?

In Acts 4 (see esp. vs. 19-20), John and Peter "[could not] help speaking about what [they had] seen and heard." Jesus was continually being accused of spending lots of time with "sinners" (i.e., the outcast; see Matthew 9.10-13, for example). God's plan for mankind is that as we connect with him, his grace and mercy would flow through our lives to others. How could you reach out more? How could you more naturally connect with and love people who don't know Jesus?

## Don't be legalistic, but be intentional.

These questions are not for you to beat yourself up with. They are intended as a guide. A check-in with your soul. Be honest... with yourself, and with God. Find healing grace at the cross. Ask God to overwhelm you with his mercy. How would you love for God to work in you in the days ahead? Ask him. The love of Christ is closer than you think.

*May we grow in the likeness of Christ,  
more now than ever before.*