Small Group Guide

It's First About Worship
Growing as a Disciple (Part 1)
October 25, 2026

Overview

This guide is based on a sermon exploring what it means to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The sermon emphasizes that crossing the line of faith is not a graduation but an initiation, and that the rightful starting point for all Christian growth is worship rooted in deep gratitude for what God has done.

Key Takeaways

- Becoming a disciple is not an arrival point but a starting line. The New Testament consistently calls believers to ongoing growth, not spiritual stagnation.
- The motivation for Christian growth matters enormously. Growth driven by guilt or fear will eventually falter. Only genuine gratitude for what God has done can sustain a lifelong growth journey.
- The gospel reframes our condition entirely. We are not bad people trying to become good. We are spiritually dead people who have been made alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1, 4-5). This distinction changes everything about how we approach discipleship.
- Worship is not just a Sunday activity. Romans 12:1-2 calls believers to offer their entire everyday lives -- working, eating, parenting, commuting -- as an act of worship and praise to God.
- A confession of Christ that produces no growth in Christ raises serious questions about the authenticity of that confession. Real transformation produces evidence over time.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Choose One)

1. Think of a time in your life when you made a serious commitment to something -- a sport, a career, a relationship, a health goal. What did crossing that line of commitment feel like, and what did it require of you?

2. When you think about your own faith journey, would you describe it more as a graduation or an initiation? Why?

Digging Into the Sermon

3. The sermon opened with four passages -- Ephesians 1:17, Colossians 1:9-12, 2 Corinthians 3:18, and Romans 8:12-13 -- and identified a common thread: an expectation of growth. Which of these four passages resonates most with you right now, and why?

4. The pastor drew a sharp distinction between two ways of understanding our need for God. One says, "I am bad and need to become good." The other says, "I am dead and need to be resurrected." How does that distinction change the way you think about your motivation to follow Christ?

5. The pastor quoted C.S. Lewis from "The Screwtape Letters," where the demon Screwtape tells his apprentice not to despair over a new convert because "all the habits of the patient, both mental and bodily, are still in our favor." What does that observation reveal about the difference between a verbal confession and a genuine transformation?

6. Romans 11:33-36 erupts into worship after eleven chapters of theological teaching about sin and redemption. Why do you think Paul responds to doctrine with doxology? What does that tell us about the relationship between what we believe and how we worship?

7. The pastor said, "A confession of Christ without growth in Christ is no confession at all." Do you agree with that statement? What tensions or questions does it raise for you?

8. Romans 12:1-2 describes offering your "everyday, ordinary life" as an act of worship. What does that look like practically in your specific daily routine? Where does it feel natural, and where does it feel difficult?

Personal Reflection

9. The pastor asked whether the people closest to you -- your family, your coworkers, your neighbors -- can see evidence of a heart oriented toward worship. How would you honestly answer that question about your own life?

10. He also asked whether your worship in heaven will feel like a natural continuation of how you worship now, or whether it will require a jarring shift. What does your honest answer reveal about where you are in your growth journey?

11. The sermon referenced the church at Ephesus, which was commended for many things but had lost its first love. In what areas of your faith life do you sense you may have drifted from that first-love posture toward God?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice individually or as a group before your next meeting.

Daily Worship Anchor Each morning this week, before checking your phone or beginning your routine, pause and say one specific thing you are grateful to God for. Let that gratitude be the first thing that orients your day.

Audit Your Motivations Spend some time this week honestly reflecting on what motivates your Christian practices -- church attendance, Bible reading, serving others, giving. Are those motivations rooted primarily in guilt, habit, expectation, or genuine gratitude? Journal what you find.

Bring Worship Into the Ordinary Identify one routine, ordinary task in your week -- commuting, doing dishes, folding laundry, exercising -- and intentionally use that time to pray, reflect on what God has done, or listen to worship music. Practice treating that ordinary moment as an offering.

Revisit Romans 11-12 Read Romans 11:33-36 followed immediately by Romans 12:1-2. Notice the movement from doxology to dedication. Write down one way the worship in chapter 11 should change the way you live in chapter 12.

Have an Honest Conversation Ask someone who knows you well -- a spouse, a close friend, a family member -- whether they see evidence of a worshipful, grateful spirit in your everyday life. Be prepared to listen without defensiveness.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together, using these themes as a guide:

- Gratitude for being raised from spiritual death to life in Christ
- Honest acknowledgment of where worship has grown cold or routine
- A renewed commitment to making worship the center and starting point of daily life
- Prayer for anyone in the group or in your lives who has not yet crossed the line of faith

Looking Ahead

This sermon is the first in a series on growing as a disciple. In coming weeks, the group will explore additional dimensions of what discipleship looks like in practice. As you go into the week, carry this question with you:

If worship is the hub of the wheel of Christian growth, what does it look like for worship to drive everything else in my life -- not just on Sunday morning, but in every ordinary moment of every day?