Small Group Guide

Character: Losing and Gaining
Growing as a Disciple (Part 3)
November 8, 2026

Overview

This session explores what it means to grow in Christian character by intentionally removing destructive patterns from our lives and replacing them with Christ-honoring virtues. Drawing from Colossians 3, Romans 8, Romans 12, and Philippians 3, we examine how genuine spiritual progress involves worship, grief, and growth.

Key Takeaways

- Spiritual growth is not a one-time event at conversion. It is an ongoing, lifelong process of putting off old patterns and putting on new ones.
- God is more concerned with the growth of your character than your comfort in the moment. He desires slow-cooked, lasting transformation over quick relief.
- Letting go of sinful habits often involves genuine grief because we have come to rely on those habits, even when we know they are harmful.
- We are not meant to pursue this growth alone. Accountability and community are essential to lasting change.
- Before presenting the list of virtues to put on, Paul reminds believers of who they are: chosen, holy, and dearly loved. Identity precedes transformation.
- In Philippians 3, Paul describes treating worldly gains as loss in order to gain what is of surpassing worth in Christ.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. The pastor opened by asking how the previous week went in terms of prayer and sensing God's presence. How would you honestly answer that question? What helped or hindered your spiritual engagement this past week?

2. When you hear the phrase "losing and gaining" in the context of faith, what comes to mind? Does that framing feel encouraging or challenging to you, and why?

Going Deeper

3. The pastor said, "God is more concerned about the growth of your character than your comfort in the moment." Do you agree with that statement? Can you think of a time in your own life when that proved to be true?

4. The sermon described how letting go of a sinful habit can involve grief because we love it, not hate it. Does that resonate with your experience? Why do you think we hold on to things we know are harmful?

5. The pastor asked two pointed questions: "Am I yielding my will or am I wielding my will?" What is the difference between those two postures, and which one do you find yourself defaulting to most often?

6. Colossians 3 presents a list of things to put off, including anger, slander, lust, greed, and dishonesty. Without feeling pressure to share anything too personal, is there one item on that list that the Spirit has been nudging you about? What makes it difficult to address?

7. Before listing the virtues to put on, Paul calls believers "chosen, holy, and dearly loved." Why do you think that reminder comes before the list of character qualities? How does your sense of identity in Christ affect your motivation to change?

8. The virtues listed in Colossians 3:12-14 include compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. Which of these do you find most natural to practice? Which feels most out of reach right now?

9. The pastor referenced 2 Peter 1:3-4, which teaches that God's divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life. How does that promise change the way you approach areas of personal struggle?

10. The sermon mentioned the importance of not going through growth alone, specifically calling out the tendency of men to isolate. How has community or accountability played a role in your own spiritual growth? Where might you need more of it?

Reflection

11. The pastor described staring down a coyote as an image of standing firm against what needs to go in our lives. What would it look like for you to take a step toward something you have been backing away from spiritually?

12. At the close of the sermon, the pastor noted that the devil is invested in keeping you exactly where you are, while the Spirit is invested in seeing you move. Where do you sense the Spirit calling you to move right now?

Practical Applications

This week, work through the following on your own or with a trusted friend:

- **Name it.** Identify one specific habit, attitude, or pattern you need to put off. Write it down. Be as honest and specific as possible.
- **Grieve it honestly**. Acknowledge to God why this thing has had a hold on you. What need has it been meeting? Bring that honestly before him in prayer.
- **Name what replaces it.** Choose one virtue from Colossians 3:12-14 that you will intentionally practice this week. Decide in advance what that will look like in a specific situation you are likely to face.
- **Tell someone.** Share your "put off" and "put on" with at least one other person who can check in with you and pray for you. Do not try to do this alone.
- **Anchor yourself in your identity.** Write out this phrase and put it somewhere visible this week: "I am chosen, holy, and dearly loved." Let that truth be the foundation from which you pursue change.

Closing Prayer Focus

Spend time as a group praying for one another in the following areas:

- Courage to honestly identify what needs to go

- Grace to grieve what is being surrendered
- Strength from the Holy Spirit to put on new character
- Gratitude for the identity we have in Christ as his chosen and dearly loved people