



2026 Focus: Rooted, Ready, Resilient

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Rev. Dr. Christopher Moore, Sr. - Assistant Pastor

Intentional Faith Development

Acts 2:42, 11:26, Ephesians 4:12-13, Luke 6:46-49

"When everyday disciples take their own spiritual growth seriously and immerse themselves in the study of Scripture, in prayer, and in fellowship, they understand the purpose of the church and the point of ministry differently" (page 91).

Intentional Faith Development from the Believer's Viewpoint:

The practice of taking ownership of your spiritual growth by deliberately immersing yourself in the study of Scripture, the practice of prayer, and the fellowship of believers, all within the local church.

Intentional Faith Development from the Leader's Viewpoint:

"The practice of congregations that view the ministries of Christian education, small-group work, faith-forming relationships, and Bible study as absolutely critical to their mission, and so they consistently offer opportunities for people of all ages, interests, and faith experiences to learn in community" (p. 84).

Goal:

To help believers experience spiritual maturity and stability in an unstable world.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 describes a believer who is rooted in trust, ready for heat, and resilient in drought.

Intentional faith development is how God forms us into a body of believers who trust Him and desire God, regardless of outcomes.

The Next Natural Step

Radical Hospitality and Passionate Worship both lead people to engage in Intentional Faith Development. Notice what comes before God adding to the church in **Acts 2:47**. The people praised God and had favor with all the people. The people passionately worshipped God and were radically hospitable. The growth and addition came next.

When God added to the church in the New Testament (**John 6:44, Acts 2:47, and 1 Corinthians 3:6, 12:3, 18**), they did not join a club or agree to just attend services; they were committing their lives to following and learning about Jesus. "The litmus test of

being a follower of Jesus is following Jesus" (quote from Pastor Jeff Porte, NMA Meeting).

"Christ's gracious invitation through Radical Hospitality embraces us and nudges us to open ourselves to forming relationships, and God's transforming presence in Passionate Worship opens our hearts to Christ's pardon, love, and grace, creating in us a desire to follow. . . . Growing in Christ requires more than weekly worship" (p. 77). Once a person submits their body to God, their mind follows (**Romans 12:1-2**). True passionate worship leads to intentional faith

I. Rooted

"To be ROOTED means to be **deeply anchored in the Word of God**, not surface-level faith, emotions, or circumstances. **Colossians 2:6-7**. Roots are **hidden**, but they determine everything visible" (Pastor Addis Moore, 2026 Readiness Workshop).

A.) Faith Roots Spread In the Diverse Community of the Local Church (Acts 2:42, 11:26**).** See page 78, first three paragraphs. When many of us think about intentional faith development, we immediately default to private disciplines such as quiet time, devotional time, and individual prayer. However, the Bible emphasizes and teaches the development of faith within a community (the local church). What the local church does guides what you do in private. Private devotion does not overflow into public participation. Public participation overflows into private devotion. The faith community includes study groups and ministry participation (see page 81, starting with "We give and receive.").

B.) Faith Roots Spreads Over a Lifetime (Ephesians 4:12-13**).** We do not 'test out of' or graduate out of faith development. Until we are just like Jesus, we will keep growing (**Philippians 3:12-15**). Spiritual growth is not a destination; it's a journey.

Rooted Intentional Faith Development Does Several Things:

1. Cleans Up Your Life (**Psalm 119:1-3, 9-11**)
2. Renews Your Mind (**Romans 12:2**)
3. Shapes Your Decisions (**Psalm 119:105**)
4. Equips You for Every Situation (**2 Timothy 2:15**)

Tangible Actions

1. Consistently attend Fulfillment Hour, Bible Study, and Prayer (**Acts 2:42**)

2. Take notes in church so you can examine the Scriptures for yourself ([Acts 17:10-12](#))
3. Fully participate while learning and in ministry ([Ephesians 4:16](#))
4. Welcome new people into our local church groups ([Ephesians 4:16](#))
5. Leaders: pray for every student before they arrive in your class or show up to serve ([Colossians 1:9-10](#))

Tangible Results

1. You'll recognize God's voice in everyday life
2. You'll experience God's peace
3. You'll have a stronger trust in God
4. You'll experience less drifting away from God

II. Ready. [Luke 6:46-49](#).

"To be READY means being spiritually prepared for seasons of change before they arrive. God never promised the absence of heat. He promised preparation for it" (Pastor Addis Moore, 2026 Readiness Workshop).

A.) Readiness occurs when we intentionally practice what we learn. The Word of God instructs us, not just informs us ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). While walking the path of obedience, God equips you for every good work. Whenever we hear the Word of God preached or taught, we are hearing from heaven ([Hebrews 12:25, NLT](#)). When the pastor or his representative gives us the Word, we must not just see/hear a good sermon or lesson; we are hearing God. Take it seriously ([Ezekiel 33:30-33](#)). The practice of the Word prepares us for any season.

B.) Readiness occurs when we learn in community. We have people around us who will stir us up ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)). "We learn in community because others keep us faithful to the task of growth in Christ. . . . The practices of faith are too demanding without support from others." (page 83).

C.) Readiness changes the course of your life. You discover why God created you ([Ephesians 2:10](#)). Now you experience true fulfillment in Christ. Read "Bible Study Messes with Your Life" on page 80.

Ready Intentional Faith Development Does Several Things:

1. Makes obeying God more than just about you; it makes it about the body of Christ ([Hebrews 12:14-15](#))

2. Conditions you to be a doer of the Word (**James 1:22-25**)
3. Removes the "burden" from obedience (**1 John 5:3**)

Tangible Actions

1. Identify a specific action from every sermon or lesson that you will practice that week. It will be obvious (**Luke 6:47-48**)
2. Eliminate distractions while learning (**Hebrews 2:1**)
3. Share what God is teaching you with someone else in the church (**Colossians 3:16**)
4. Get outside your comfort zone and get to know someone outside your circle. Don't overlook new people (**Acts 2:44**)
5. Leaders: inspect what you expect students to do from the Scriptures (**Hebrews 13:17**)

Tangible Results

1. You'll see Scripture as relevant to your life
2. You'll experience real happiness (joy)
3. You'll have a stronger awareness of God in everyday life
4. You'll have stronger relationships with others
5. You'll experience a church feeling like a family
6. You'll discover & start walking in your purpose/calling/gifting

III. Resilient.

"To be RESILIENT means having the spiritual capacity to endure pressure, drought, and adversity without losing faith or fruitfulness" (Pastor Addis Moore, 2026 Readiness Workshop).

A.) Heat confirms true Resilient Faith. Tests come to reveal the genuineness of your faith (**1 Peter 1:7**). This faith isn't something that you developed in the moment, but before the heat and drought came in your life.

B.) Resilience means you remain fruitful during the drought, not just after it. **Jeremiah 17:8.** The tree does not stop producing because conditions are hard. It shall not cease from yielding fruit. The resilient believer still serves, still worships, still gives, still shows up, still encourages others, even when their own season is difficult. Fruitfulness in drought is the distinguishing mark of a believer whose faith has been intentionally developed. The world expects you to shut down. God designed you to produce. Remember, **"you matter!"**

Resilient Intentional Faith Development Does Several Things:

1. Is disciplined in obeying the Word, even when it seems tough or doesn't make sense (**Habakkuk 2:4**).
2. Keeps you anchored when others fall away (**Psalm 1:3-4**). The resilient believer is like the tree planted by rivers of water. The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Same storm. Different outcomes. The difference is the root system.
3. Gives you a testimony that strengthens others (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**). God comforts you in your tribulation so that you can comfort others going through the same thing. Your drought becomes someone else's encouragement. Your resilience becomes evidence for others that God is faithful.
4. Leaders: Be transparent about your own seasons of difficulty (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**)

Tangible Actions

1. Be present & consistent when you experience a difficult season (**Hebrews 10:25**)
2. Serve others when you experience trials (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**)
3. Share your testimony
4. Pray with someone

Tangible Results

1. A deeper sense of belonging
2. Your confidence in God will grow
3. You'll see God working hardships out for your good
4. You'll personally experience the faithfulness of God
5. You'll be a source of strength for others

Intentional faith development is not optional for the believer. It is the path the Holy Spirit uses to form us into the image of Jesus Christ and to produce His fruit in and through our lives. **Jeremiah 17:7-8** does not describe a believer who avoids difficulty. It describes a believer who has been so deeply rooted in trust, so thoroughly prepared through obedience, and so consistently developed in community that, when the heat comes, and the drought arrives, they do not panic, do not wither, and do not stop producing fruit.

This is the goal. Spiritual maturity and stability in an unstable world.