

## Discipleship Groups — Level 7

WEEK 6 | Men

### Life Check: My Growth

Blessings to all

We are in the sixth week of level 7 of our small groups of discipleship for men. During the last classes of level 7 we have worked with the theme “examining my life” and we have been evaluating important areas of each of us as men: my spiritual leadership, my self-control, my responsibility, my purity and my service.

**Today we're going to talk about my growth as a disciple of Christ.**

To evaluate my life and know if there is growth, I must ask myself the following: **Do I consider myself a mature, patient, Christlike person?**

As a man I must examine my life to:

1. Lead with character and not with pride,
2. Face temptations with firmness and truth,
3. Love, protect, and build up those whom God entrusted to us, and
4. Grow according to God's heart.

To know whether we have grown to the measure of Christ there must be visible evidence of this growth. The final words of the apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 3:17-18 (NLT) says, *“Dear friends, (I would say dear men)...be on your guard; so as not to lose the firm foundation they have... grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

Two key words: **keep** and **grow**. You have to understand that to grow in something you have to make an effort on your part.

For growth, I am going to use the gym as an example. In a gym, activities are done to improve physical condition and gain muscles. These improvements are only achieved with discipline and training. For me, this is how our spiritual growth works. It's not just wishing to have a well-developed body with muscles. To achieve that requires hours and hours and maybe days and days of continuous practice and exercise. In other words, those muscles or physical strengthening aren't going to show up just because you want them to. You must train.

I was talking to a friend who owns a gym and he told me that many people are filled with emotion, they sign up for the gym and they don't even last two weeks. I asked him why this was, and he told me. “When men understand that it requires effort, disciplines, training and doing it every day, then they abandon the GYM.” My friend told me the muscles of the body grow and strengthen if I train. There is no other way.

So it is with our spiritual life. It will grow and strengthen as I practice the disciplines, prayer, reading and study of the Word, fasting, obedience, self-control, etc.

## **To grow we must discipline ourselves.**

When we talk about discipline it means that we have to do it even if we don't physically feel like doing it. There are days of tiredness, days without motivation, and days when we may not see the results.

This is the same with our spiritual life. Many times we do not feel like praying, reading and studying the Bible, or obeying. Many times, we do not see those muscles that we want so much when we are doing all these exercises. The reality is that these muscles—this growth—does not appear from one day to the next.

These muscles, or this growth, develops in our lives if we do it daily and progressively. It's slow but sure.

The same happens with our character. Our character is going to undergo changes and it is going to be progressively strengthened. God transforms gradually, not instantaneously.

Look at what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT), *"The Lord, who is the Spirit, makes us more and more like him as we are transformed into his glorious image."* Here it says...*As we are transformed.* In other words, our growth is somewhat progressive. As I do more exercises, as I am more disciplined, and as I train, then fruits will be produced, and this is transformation.

The other thing that is required in a GYM to obtain results is **consistency**. They say that perseverance overcomes weakness. A day at the gym does nothing. Three months in a gym, yes. A day of prayer does not change anyone. A life of prayer does transform us.

Spiritual growth is not automatic, and it is achieved with **discipline, training, and consistency**.

Two points I want to elaborate on growth:

### **All growth produces visible changes.**

1. My grandson is already four years old and every day I am amazed at how there are visible changes in his growth. When I review the photos from when he was a baby of months, one year, two years, and now that he is four years old. I say wow how he has grown!

As a disciple of Christ, growing up is not just knowing more about the Bible. To grow is to change in a visible way. When a person is spiritually mature, it shows in their character, decisions, words, and reactions.

It is easy to know if as men we have grown to the stature of Christ. There are visible signs that demonstrate our growth:

#### **For example:**

- I used to react with anger, now I respond with self-control.

- I used to lie, now I speak the truth.
- I used to be irresponsible, now I keep my word.
- I used to live for myself, now I think of others.

In Matthew 13:16-17, the Lord Jesus was teaching His disciples about how to recognize false people, or those who are only superficial. They show themselves as sheep but in reality, they are ferocious wolves. He said, *"You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they behave. Can you gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit."*

The healthy tree produces visible fruit. The man who grows, produces evidence. The Bible says that Zacchaeus, before he met Christ, was a corrupt tax collector, a liar, and an abuser who took advantage of the people.

After meeting Jesus, he changed. This is related in Luke 19:8. Now there were visible changes in the life of Zacchaeus.

- A. He was generous, he said: *"I will give half of my wealth to the poor."*
- B. He was honest, saying, *"If I cheated or robbed someone of their taxes, I'll give them back four times as much."*

When Jesus heard what Zacchaeus said, He said, *this man has shown true faith and real change. It shows me that salvation came to him and his house.*

Zacchaeus's encounter with Christ produced visible changes. When we examine our lives as men, we cannot say that we are growing if everything remains the same. Real growth is not only learned, but also demonstrated.

## 2, **Christ is the measure of my growth**

We don't measure ourselves by comparing ourselves to other men. The measure is not "I am better than before" or "I am better than someone else." The true measure is Christ.

Ephesians 4:13 (NLT), puts it in an extraordinary way, listen to what it says: *"That process, (what process? our growth), will continue until we all attain such unity in our faith and knowledge of the Son of God that we are mature in the Lord, that is, until we come to the full and complete measure of Christ."*

**Christ is our great model!**

**Some questions to reflect on :**

1. If I examine my life today, have I become more like Christ?
2. What visible changes are there in me?
3. In which area of my life do I need to train the most?
4. What spiritual discipline should I strengthen?
5. What excuses am I using not to grow?

**Application for this week.**

Share your testimony with another man.

**To conclude, pray this prayer with me.**

*"Lord Jesus, give me discipline to grow. Train my faith, strengthen my character, and use me for your glory." Amen.*

With this we end our level 7 of the men's discipleship small groups. We hope that all that we have taught will be of great benefit and blessing to your life.

See you at the next level!  
Blessings.