

WEEK TWENTY-THREE: **“How We Grow”**
DAY ONE: **“God Wants You to Grow Up”**

Read: Matthew 9:9-12 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1088)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 179 to top of 180

Reflect: What does it mean to be a disciple of someone?

Dig: According to this passage, what was Matthew doing when he was called and what exactly did Jesus say to him?

How does Jesus' call to Matthew differ from most calls you may hear to the Christian faith?

What is Matthew's first lesson in following Jesus?

What two groups of people did the Pharisees object to Jesus' spending dinner time with?

Look up the passage from Hosea 6:6 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 985) and read the context (verses 4-6). What was God upset with the people about?

How does this Hosea passage help you understand what following Jesus is all about?

Apply: Pray this prayer back to God as you begin your day today: “Lord, make me a follower of Jesus today. Help me to obey right away when he calls me to do something and not take half measures. I especially need help in _____.”

WEEK TWENTY-THREE: **“How We Grow”**
DAY TWO: **“God’s Part and Your Part”**

Read: Philippians 2:12-13 (p. 1367 *Freedom in Christ Bible*)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 180 to top of 181

Reflect: How have you experienced spiritual growth recently?

What changes have you seen (or are you looking forward to)?

Dig: According to this passage in Philippians, what is our effort to follow Jesus based on? See verses 5-11.

How are we supposed to “work out” our salvation, that is, what attitude are we supposed to have? See verse 12.

What two examples are used in the *Purpose-Driven Life* to help you understand what God’s role and what your role ought to be?

Apply: Ask God to give you a deep sense (fear and trembling) of the call to work out the gracious salvation that he has given to you. Identify in writing right now some habits of life that you want to ask the Holy Spirit to help you with.

WEEK TWENTY-THREE: **“How We Grow”**
DAY THREE: **“Changing Your Auto-pilot”**

Read: Proverbs 4:23-27 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 696)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, middle of p. 181 to top of p. 182

Reflect: What do you allow into your heart (through your five senses) that pollutes your heart?

Dig: What does Jesus’ teaching in Mark 7:14-23 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1133) add to your understanding of these verses in Proverbs?

How do the verses following verse 23 of Proverbs 4 help you to understand *how* to guard your heart?

What does the idea of “wellspring” communicate to you?

Apply: Guarding your heart is serious business. What should you not consume (listen to or see) so that your heart has good nutrients to feed on? Ask God to help you guard your heart today.

WEEK TWENTY-THREE: **“How We Grow”**
DAY FOUR: **“Thinking Like Christ”**

Read: Romans 15:1-4 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1298)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, middle of p. 182 to close of chapter

Reflect: If the core of the Christian lifestyle is thinking of others, like Christ did, how are you doing living that lifestyle?

Who do you think of in terms of serving them?

Dig: Who are the “strong” in this context? See Romans 14:1-3.

What are we to do, according to verse 2?

According to verse 4, what are the stories from the past (in the Bible) supposed to do for us; that is, how do they build us up?

Apply: Since thinking of others is counter-cultural and rare, ask God for a spirit of self-forgetfulness and selflessness in regard to others.

WEEK TWENTY-THREE: **“How We Grow”**

DAY FIVE: **“It is Never Too Late to Start Growing”**

Using the “Lectio Divina” method of Bible study (see page 3 of this booklet), meditate on this scripture:

“Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of mind. Then you will be able to know the will of god—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.” Romans 12:2b (TEV)

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness; after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life; write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer - thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.