**EXTRA! Ideas for Adults – Being an Authentic Church – Session 3**

**Date: April 28, 2024**

**Growing in Christ**

**The Point: We should encourage and help one another grow in Christ.**

**Get Into the Study**

*After reading and discussing “The Bible Meets Life,” share the following.*

American Christians say they are interested in discipleship. But for many, interest does not translate into being discipled or helping others grow in their faith, according to research from the Barna Group. Nearly half of U.S. believers (45%) say their relationship with Jesus brings deep joy and satisfaction, a Barna survey found. Nearly as many (41%) say their relationship with Jesus impacts the way they live daily. Yet despite the professed enthusiasm for growing in Christ, 39 percent of believers are neither being discipled nor helping to disciple anyone else. Just 28 percent are both being discipled and discipling others.

What’s holding Christians back from maturing in their faith? It isn’t lack of time. Just 7 percent who are not in a discipleship relationship says the problem is lack of time. Interestingly, those most likely to say they struggle with time for discipleship are those already doing it. Fifty-four percent of those discipling others and being discipled say they struggle to find time for community with other believers amid life’s busyness. Only 40 percent of those not engaged in discipleship say the same. The Barna Group concludes, “The decisive factor is not who has the hours in the day, but who is willing to creatively commit from the hours they do have to growing in their faith and becoming qualified or equipped to help others grow, too.”

This reality should encourage us to help one another grow in Christ.

[Are Christians Too Busy for Discipleship Community? – Barna Group](https://www.barna.com/research/christians-too-busy/)

**Study the Bible**

**As you discuss question 5 (point 3 on p. 97 of the Daily Discipleship Guide), share the following.**

Sarah has adopted a simple method for discipling cultural Christians in Poland: read the Bible with them. When she arrived in Poland as a journeyman missionary with the International Mission Board, she found many people who claimed to be Christians. They went to church occasionally, esteemed Jesus, and even wore cross jewelry. But they were stumped when Sarah asked, “Why did Jesus die?”

“I didn’t really know what to do,” Sarah said. She didn’t want to alienate them, but she wanted them to know Christ. Finally, she decided to try a tactic she had utilized back home in Kentucky when she was a college student. “To say you’re a Christian, that means you believe what’s in the Bible. So let’s see what’s in the Bible,” Sarah told her friends. Some of them agreed to try it. Currently, Sarah reads the Bible with several young adults in Poland, helping them understand the context and not skipping any verses or chapters. She also helps them understand how to apply the Bible to their lives. It takes a lot of time, but it’s worth it. Reading Scripture with Sarah has been lifechanging for a Pol named Wiktoria. “Each time I meet up with Sarah, I have such a strong fire for God,” Wiktoria said.

We don’t have to be pastors or theologians to help others mature in Christ. It can be done by any believer with a loving heart and an open Bible.

<https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/journeyman-asks-friends-to-read-bible-sees-lives-transformed/>

*The week’s writer for Extra is David Roach. David is pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Saraland, Alabama. He and his wife Erin have three children.*

**Additional Questions**

**Icebreaker**

* Why do we need other believers in order for us to mature in Christ?
* What is the best surprise gift you ever received?
* When has someone encouraged you in a way that was especially meaningful?
* What felt like a safe place when you were young?
* What is something you own but never use?

**Colossians 1:9-14**

* Who has helped you the most to grow in godly character?
* Who in your life has taught you the most about following Jesus?
* In what ways is our church doing a good job of helping new believers grow?
* How can we help one another grow in our knowledge and understanding of God?
* What are some key aspects of godly character?
* What does a fruitful Christian life look like?
* How has someone helped you grow in your walk with Christ?
* What does a life pleasing to God look like?
* Who are sources of spiritual encouragement and strength in your life?
* What are some practices that have helped you grow in your knowledge of God?

**Colossians 1:21-23**

* What characteristics help us remain grounded and steadfast in the Lord?
* How can we encourage someone tempted to walk away from God to return to Him?
* Have you ever experienced a time when you considered rejecting your faith? What or who helped turn you back to God?
* What are some ways believers can strive to remain “grounded” in Christ?
* When have you needed help remaining grounded in your faith?

**Colossians 1:24-29**

* What are some outwards signs of a mature believer?
* How does this idea of believers “warning and teaching” one another contrast with cultural ideas about how we should relate to one another?
* What can you do to remain open to receiving warnings and instruction from other believers as you grow in Christ?
* What are some things God uses to mature His people? His church?
* How can our group help one another grow in spiritual maturity?
* How is Christ in you the hope of glory?

**For Those in Your Group**

Send the following link to your group members as either a teaser before the group meets or as a follow-up thought:

[What’s Your Favorite Mystery?](https://lynnhpryor.com/2024/04/15/whats-your-favorite-mystery/)