

YOU CAN GROW HERE

Welcome | Equip | Send, #2: EQUIP | Dave Geldart | September 13, 2026 | Tru Community Church

1. [1] INTRO: RUNNING A MARATHON

- a. I want to tell you about a guy named Wayne —
 - i. not our Wayne, a different one.
- b. He signed up for a marathon.
 - i. Never run more than three miles in his life.
- c. Bought the expensive shoes. Registered.
 - i. Told everybody. Put it all over his social media.
- d. Then showed up race morning with zero training and figured adrenaline and drive would get him through.
 - i. He made it four miles.
- e. [2] Contrast Wayne with our very own Cooper Mowry who not only runs all over the bass guitar neck on Sundays, but who also has run lots of actual races.
 - i. Ultra marathons. Some in the mountains. Some in the extreme heat.
 - ii. Here he is at a 50k last year. Smiling before, and grimacing yet still alive afterward!
 - iii. And he'd be the first to tell you, he's practiced and trained. A LOT!
 - iv. And now training for another ultramarathon!
- f. Here's the thing — nobody stumbles into running 26.2 miles — let alone 50 or 100!
 - i. Nobody accidentally becomes a marathoner.
- g. It takes months of intentional, unglamorous, often uncomfortable work —
 - i. most of it happening nowhere near a finish line, nowhere near a crowd, nowhere near applause.
- h. That's true of your legs. It's true of your soul too.
- i. [3] Last week we talked about Welcome —
 - i. Jesus and Zacchaeus, an empty chair, making room for people.
 - ii. And I hope some of you have already taken that step.
 - 1. Written down a name. Reached out. Extended an invitation.
 - 2. There's still time.
- j. But welcome was never the finish line. It's the starting line.
 - i. Because we don't just want people walking through our doors.
 - ii. We don't want to get really good at getting people into a room and then leave them sitting in the same spiritual seat for the next twenty years.
- k. We want people to grow.

2. Welcome. Equip. Send.

- a. Today, we're leaning into word two: **Equip**.
- b. Here's the question underneath everything I'm going to say this morning.
 - i. Not *Do you go to church*.
 - ii. Not *do you know more Bible stories than five years ago*.
 - iii. Not even *would you call yourself a Christian*.
- c. **Are you actually becoming more like Jesus?**
 - i. Sit with that for a second. Because those aren't always the same question.
- d. [4] COLOSSIANS 2:6–7 -- "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."
- e. This is what we mean, in the Wesleyan tradition, when we talk about sanctification —
 - i. the belief that God isn't just interested in getting you into heaven someday,
 - ii. he's interested in shaping you into someone holy, someone whole, starting now.
- f. Growth isn't optional extra credit for serious Christians.
 - i. It's the normal Christian life.
- g. Look at that language again: Rooted. Built up. Strengthened.
 - i. That's not a snapshot — that's a process! A plant growing, a building going up.
 - ii. Paul isn't describing somebody who had one encounter with Jesus and then parked the car.
 - 1. He's describing someone who's going on an adventure.
 - 2. That will change them in ways they could scarcely have imagined
 - iii. That's Equip!

3. [5] As Followers of Jesus, WE GROW INTENTIONALLY

- a. Not perfectly. Not overnight. Not alone. Intentionally.
- b. Just as you had to choose to receive Christ
 - i. So also you have to choose to grow in him.
- c. *[Hold up a houseplant]*
- d. Look at this. Nobody plants something in a pot and forgets it exists and comes back six months later to find it's thriving.
 - i. If it's alive and healthy, if it's growing, Somebody put it where the light was. Somebody watered it.

1. This thing dries out every few weeks and I have to make sure to top it off or the leaves start turning yellow and dropping off.
- ii. That didn't happen by accident, and neither does this.
- e. There's a real difference between being *around* Jesus and *following* Jesus.
 - i. You can sit in a room like this every week for years and never let Scripture actually touch the real you –
 1. how you spend money, treat your spouse, or forgive somebody who hurt you.
 - ii. You can know a lot about Jesus without becoming much like him.
 1. It's fairly easy to see when we look around at church.
 2. Harder to see in the mirror.
- f. Go back to Acts, the series we just finished.
 - i. Peter had to keep learning. Paul had to keep learning.
 - ii. Those pushpins are still on our maps because God's mission didn't stop with them — Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth.
 - iii. It all starts with our Jerusalem — St. George, Manhattan, Wamego.
- g. **You can't live the mission of Jesus without becoming the kind of person who can live the mission of Jesus.**
 - i. If I'm going to love a difficult person, Jesus has to form something in me first.
 - ii. If I'm going to forgive somebody, disciple somebody, have a real gospel conversation with my neighbor —
 1. that all requires formation, not just information.
- h. [6] MATTHEW 4:19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."
 - i. He doesn't tell his disciples, "come listen to me."
 - ii. He says "come **follow** me."
 1. There's movement built into the invitation from day one.
- i. Spiritual growth requires the same intentionality as anything else worth having.
 - i. You don't wake up one day and discover you've been going to the gym four times a week for six months.
 - ii. You don't pick up guitar and just absorb it through the air.
 - iii. You need Scripture. Prayer. Obedience. Community – people who will celebrate our growth and challenge our excuses.
- j. None of that works under our own power, though – it's the Holy Spirit meeting us in it, doing the actual forming.
- k. And that's exactly what our discipleship pathway is for –

- i. not a machine that produces growth, but a map of what showing up actually looks like at each stage.

I. [7] Within Equip, we see movement from Family → Disciple → Servant.

- i. Family is when church stops being a place you attend and becomes a family you belong to.
- ii. Family become disciples when you start intentionally following Jesus in every corner of your life.
- iii. And disciples become servants when that growth inevitably turns outward.
- m. *[Point to the pathway graphic]*
 - i. This is describing a person. Maybe you.
 - ii. Maybe you've been at Tru for years but nobody's ever really walked closely with you.
 - iii. Maybe you're new and thinking, *I don't even know where I fit.*
 - iv. Maybe you've followed Jesus for decades.
- n. The question isn't whether you've arrived. Nobody has.
- o. **[8] PHILIPPIANS 1:4-6⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."**
- p. Paul reminds these believers, God isn't finished with you. With any of us!
 - i. So don't settle, and don't compare your growth to the person next to you.
 - ii. Just ask: **What next step is Jesus inviting me to take?**

4. (WE GROW THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS)

- a. Now — here's a trap. If growth takes intentionality, it's easy to hear that and think, *"Great. I need to try harder at being a better Christian."*
 - i. That's not it.
- b. Here's why: the Christian life was never designed to be lived solo.
 - i. **[9] We grow through relationships**
- c. You can read your Bible alone. You can pray alone.
 - i. But you cannot be discipled alone.
 - ii. **[10] Personal Discipleship isn't information transfer — it's life-on-life formation**
 - 1. Somebody notices you. Walks with you. Opens Scripture with you.
 - 2. Prays with you. Helps you see truth when you need it.

- d. *Quick show of hands* — how many of you can think of at least one specific person who changed the trajectory of your life just by showing up in it?
 - i. Parent, coach, teacher, a minister, friend, somebody with no title at all?
 - 1. *[Pause. Let hands go up.]*
 - ii. Keep that person in your head. Almost every one of us has one.
 - iii. They saw something in you. They invited you. They challenged you.
 - 1. And kept by your side through the ups and downs of life.
 - 2. Then, and at some point you realized — *I'm different because this person walked with me.*
 - iv. That's discipleship. And it's exactly what we're about to hear:

5. [11] TESTIMONY — COOPER MOWRY (5-7 min)

- a. I'd like you to hear from someone at Tru who can say, *somebody walked with me.*
 - i. Not somebody with all the answers. Just somebody who invested.
- b. **(INVITE COOPER UP)**
- c. Interview Questions:
 - i. **Before somebody started walking with you, what did your spiritual life actually look like — be specific?**
 - ii. **Tell us about the moment or season someone stepped in. What did they actually do? What did a normal week or conversation with them look like?**
 - iii. **What's one thing they said or did that you still think about?**
 - iv. **What's different about your life now that wasn't true before?**
 - v. **If someone in this room has never had anyone disciple them one-on-one, what would you say to them?**
- d. That's what we're after — not primarily programs for us to complete.
 - i. But **People helping people take their next step with Jesus.**
 - ii. Because you can't run a marathon, or your life, without a team around you.
- e. [12] And that's exactly why **LIFE Groups matter so much.**
 - i. LIFE Groups aren't a smaller version of Sunday morning.
 - ii. They're one of the only places where people actually know you well enough to help you grow — where the "one anothers" of Scripture can actually happen.
 - 1. Love one another. Forgive one another. Bear with one another. Encourage one another. Admonish one another. Serve one another.
 - 2. There's a limited number of those you can live out sitting in rows on Sunday.
 - 3. What we're doing now is necessary, but not sufficient.
 - 4. For the kind of growth God has in mind for us, we have to get smaller.

- f. I can preach to you every week for a year and still have no idea what happened in your life this past Tuesday.
 - i. Much less that pivotal time in your life a few years ago.
- g. But your LIFE Group can.
 - i. They can know when you're struggling, pray with you, notice when you're pulling away, encourage you, care for you, and celebrate when you take a step.
- h. That's why one of our Big Hairy Audacious God-Sized Goals this year isn't just more people in the building.
 - i. We want **at least 30 people in discipling relationships**, and **six healthy LIFE Groups** — one-another practicing, discipleship-based groups,
 - 1. not just Bible-study-and-snacks
 - a. though our LG does those pretty well too!
 - ii. Those numbers aren't the mission. They're movement. They're our mission made concrete.
 - 1. And we're growing! — last count we're up to 31 ppl in dship! relationships!
 - 2. We just planted a new LIFE Group
 - a. Binging us to 3, with some excellent other small groups like the Womens Journey Group and Moms in Prayer!
- i. So maybe you've been here a while and never joined a LIFE Group.
 - i. You've thought, *I don't know those people.*
 - ii. Exactly — that's the point.
 - 1. You don't join because you already know them.
 - 2. You join *so that* you can know and be known.
- j. Maybe you've never had someone personally disciple you.
 - i. Then I suggest that maybe your next step isn't another Sunday sermon.
 - 1. Or even another Bible Study.
 - 2. It's a conversation: *"Would you meet with me once a week and help me grow in following Jesus?"*
- k. Or maybe you've been discipled, and the uncomfortable step is realizing you've become the person somebody else needs.
- l. [13] 2 TIMOTHY 2:1–2 "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."
- m. Four generations of disciples in two verses.

- i. Paul. Timothy. Reliable people. Others.
- n. No graduation ceremony. No moment where Timothy says, "well, I've completed discipleship."
 - i. Just someone who was invested in,
 - ii. becoming someone who invests in somebody else.
- o. Disciples who make disciples who make disciples.
 - i. That's Jesus' master strategy for growth!

6. [14] GROWTH TURNS OUTWARD (WES)

- a. If you look at the pathway again, Equip isn't only moving from Family → Disciple.
- b. There's a third step: **Servant**.
- c. It's possible to misunderstand spiritual growth —
 - i. to think the goal is simply knowing more, feeling more mature, or even experiencing more.
- d. But if all my growth just makes me more focused on me, something's gone wrong.
 - i. Jesus doesn't just grow us up. He grows us out.
- e. John Wesley used to provocatively say "there's no holiness but social holiness" —
 - i. there's no such thing as a holy life lived in isolation from other people.
 - ii. Which means growing in Christ was never going to leave you looking inward forever.
- f. Servant doesn't mean "congratulations, you're finally spiritual enough to fill a volunteer slot."
 - i. It means becoming the kind of person who looks at what God's already done in your life and asks, "**How can I use this for somebody else?**"
- g. Maybe that plays out on Sundays through a ministry team:
 - i. loving up on kids, running sound, helping with youth.
- h. Or maybe it's noticing the person nobody else notices.
 - i. Caring for your neighbors.
 - ii. Making a casserole for the person in your LIFE Group who's grieving a loss.
- i. Service takes a thousand shapes.
 - i. even the shape you didn't expect or would've picked for yourself.
 - ii. Underneath all of them is the same posture: what God gave me isn't just for me.

j. [15] Servant is a lifestyle.

- k. **EPHESIANS 2:10 "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."**
- l. He's already prepared the good work.

- i. Your job is just to become available and responsive.
- ii. That can feel uncomfortable — maybe you served once and got burned,
 - 1. or tried something and found out you weren't great at it.
 - 2. Welcome to the club!
- iii. But by God's grace, you don't have to be impressive to be useful to Jesus.
 - 1. And sometimes stepping into serving won't be your first choice, or convenient, or exactly your gifting —
 - a. And you'll serve anyway, because it's not really about you
 - 2. Go back to Acts — Peter, Stephen, Philip, and a hundred people whose names barely get mentioned, were really just ordinary people who kept saying yes to Jesus.
 - a. Even when it was inconvenient and uncomfortable
- iv. That's the ripple we've been talking about this year.
 - 1. Our simple steps of obedience, God's transforming power.
 - 2. One life changed by Jesus touches another.
- v. And that's why we're not primarily chasing bigger attendance at Tru on Sundays.
 - 1. I want way less and way more for us.
- vi. We want a church full of people being equipped to live like Jesus wherever they've been placed — at work, at home, in the neighborhood.

7. KEEP TAKING YOUR NEXT STEP

- a. I don't want you leaving today thinking, *"that was a good sermon about discipleship — like all the others."*
- b. [16] I want you leaving asking, **"what's my next step?"**
- c. Your next step probably isn't my next step.
- d. Maybe you're still at the beginning —
 - i. attending, but not really belonging.
 - ii. Your next step is moving from Friend to **Family**:
 - 1. [17] join a LIFE Group.
 - 2. Or other small group like our Women's Journey Group
- e. Maybe you're connected here, consider this your church home,
 - i. but nobody's intentionally walking with you spiritually.
 - ii. [18] Your next step is to become a **Disciple**: Get into a personal discipling relationship.
 - 1. Ask somebody you already know that you respect, someone who could help you grow.

2. Talk to a LIFE Group leader, and say, "I want somebody to walk with me."
3. Or fill out our online Discipleship Connection Form (QR code on screen or online at tru.church) and we'll help you get connected.
- iii. It's not complicated, even if it might feel uncomfortable to start.
- f. Or maybe you're already being discipled.
 - i. Personally or in a small group.
 - ii. [19] Your next step is into **Servant**:
 1. In a church ministry or in your neighborhood, workplace, school
 - iii. Where could you step in and help meet a need?
 1. We've got a number of opportunities to participate in the Mission of Jesus
 2. Talk to a ministry leader or fill out a Serve Form and we'll connect with you – QR on screen or online @ tru.church
- g. And maybe you've been serving for years.
 - i. Don't assume you've reached the end. The journey continues.
 - ii. Ask somebody you trust: *"Who could I begin investing in?"*
 1. or *"What's a next step you see for me?"*
 2. more about that next week.
- h. Don't wait until you feel ready. You probably won't.
 - i. Peter didn't. Philip didn't. Paul didn't.
 - ii. They took the next faithful step, and then another.
 1. God showing up every step of the way.
- i. That's how growth happens.
 - i. **Progress. In relationship.** Over time.
- j. Here's the good news:
 - i. you don't have to manufacture your own transformation.
 - ii. We make space. We walk together. And **the Spirit brings the growth.**
 - iii. We're not the ones doing the deepest work. We can't.
 1. You can join a LIFE Group, get discipled, serve every week —
 - a. and still, apart from the presence and power of the Holy Spirit,
 - b. none of it makes you more like Jesus.
- k. [20] GALATIANS 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
- l. This isn't about becoming a more impressive version of yourself.

- i. It's about letting Jesus have more and more of your life.
- m. So here's this week's challenge —
 - i. Take a next step
 - 1. one action, one specific move,
 - ii. before you sit back down in this room next Sunday:
- n. Don't compare yourself to the person next to you.
 - i. Don't worry how far ahead or behind you think you are.
 - ii. Just ask: **What next step is Jesus inviting me to take?**
 - 1. And then take it.
- o. [21] Because you can grow here.
 - i. And more than that — Jesus wants to keep growing you.
 - 1. Both for your good and for the good of others, far beyond you could anticipate or imagine.
 - ii. Because as he grows you, equips you, it ripples through you — to your family, your friends, your LIFE Group, your neighborhood, this church, this community, our cities, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and wherever else he sends us.
- p. That's what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.
- q. Eventually, discipleship changes the question we ask.
 - i. We stop asking only, 'How am I growing?' and begin asking, 'Who is God asking me to help grow?'
 - 1. That's where we're going next week.
- r. And that's the kind of people we want to become
- s. Because it's not just the life He's calling you toward, because there's work needing done.
 - i. It's also the deeply good life – for you.
 - ii. Deepened not only for good works for others,
 - 1. but for your own joy and peace and meaning and purpose.
 - 2. The life you've always wanted, where you least expected to find it.
- t. So let's grow together.

8. ENDING PRAYER





WELCOME | EQUIP | SEND



— TRU.CHURCH —

EQUIP

COLOSSIANS 2 ⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,
⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.



WE GROW INTENTIONALLY

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MATTHEW 4:19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said,
"and I will send you out to fish for people."





WELCOME | EQUIP | SEND



**NEIGHBOR
GUEST
FRIEND**



**FAMILY
DISCIPLE
SERVANT**



**DISCIPLE
MAKER
LEADER
PLANTER**

— TRU.CHURCH —

WE GROW INTENTIONALLY

PHILIPPIANS 1 ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you,
I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in
the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being
confident of this, that **he who began a good work in
you will carry it on to completion until the day of
Christ Jesus.**



WE GROW THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS



WE GROW THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP



WE GROW THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP

COOPER MOWRY



WE GROW THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP

COOPER MOWRY

LIFE GROUPS



WE GROW THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

2 TIMOTHY ¹ You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.





WELCOME | EQUIP | SEND



**NEIGHBOR
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**FAMILY
DISCIPLE
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**DISCIPLE
MAKER
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— TRU.CHURCH —

SERVANT IS A LIFESTYLE

EPHESIANS 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.



WHAT'S MY NEXT STEP?

EQUIP

**FAMILY
DISCIPLE
SERVANT**

WES

WHAT'S MY NEXT STEP?

EQUIP

JOIN A LIFE GROUP
or other small group

**FAMILY
DISCIPLE
SERVANT**

WES

WHAT'S MY NEXT STEP?

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JOIN A LIFE GROUP
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BECOME A DISCIPLE



WES

WHAT'S MY NEXT STEP?

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JOIN A LIFE GROUP
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BECOME A DISCIPLE

STEP INTO SERVING
in a church ministry
or your neighborhood



WHAT'S MY NEXT STEP?

GALATIANS 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

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DISCIPLE
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