

2024 | EDITION

YEARLY SPIRITUAL GROWTH CHECK-IN

• GROWTH GAUGES ASSESSMENT TOOL •

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~45 minutes

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Crest

“Many of us try to shove spiritual transformation into the nooks and crannies of a life that is already unmanageable, rather than being willing to arrange our life for what our heart most wants. We think that somehow we will fall into transformation by accident.”

RUTH HALEY BARTON

Name: _____

Date: _____

HELLO!

This booklet is designed to help remind us of practical things we can do to grow spiritually while being part of Crest Community Church. Far from scientific, this tool is simply designed to help us all reflect on various ways we can actively partner with God in our own growth as apprentices of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul told members of the early Church, “**Examine yourselves** to see whether you are in the faith; **test yourselves**. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?” (2 **Corinthians 13:5**). Then in another letter, he said, “Each one should **test their own actions**. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, **without comparing themselves to someone else**” (Galatians 6:4).

Personal and serious self-assessment, without the insecurity and competitiveness that comes from comparing ourselves to others, can be a significant tool to help us grow as students of Jesus. The mark of a mature Christian is not attaining and maintaining a particular level of holiness—it is having an ongoing orientation toward Jesus that results in continual, gradual **growth**.

The Apostle Peter also says, “**Make every effort** to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities **in increasing measure**, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, **forgetting that they have been cleansed** from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, **make every effort** to confirm your calling and election” (2 **Peter 1:5-10**).

Because we already “have been cleansed” from our sins and have “crossed over from death to life” (Jesus in **John 5:24**), our job is to “make every effort” to grow in our realization and experience of this reality.

Instructions

You'll need to set aside close to an hour to slowly, thoughtfully, and prayerfully work through this document. For many of us, this will be time well spent as one important element in our ongoing apprenticeship to Jesus — especially if you use this tool prayerfully and relationally. When you're done, talk to someone close to you about what you are learning about your own spiritual health.

Some of these descriptions are about your beliefs and some are about your behaviors. Each statement portrays 5/5 living in that area, so don't be discouraged if you're not there. Only Jesus would score perfect on this. It's good to name the bullseye we're aiming for while at the same time being gracious with ourselves about the distance between the ideal and the real in our lives.

Also note: this self-assessment tool is geared specifically for life as a member of Crest.

So let's get started. Rate yourself 0–5 for each statement, with 0 being “the good news is, I have nowhere to go but up” and 5 being “I'm a gold star student.” At the end, tally up your “score,” consider a few reflective questions, and use this as a benchmark to measure future growth against.

READY? LET'S DIVE IN!

JESUS & HIS GOSPEL

1. JESUS ORIENTED I am wild about Jesus (or crazy about Jesus, or in love with Jesus, or my heart belongs to Jesus...). Jesus is Lord, which is to say that Jesus is my Maker, Master, and Mentor, and I find my primary identity in being his apprentice. I am a follower, a student, a disciple of Jesus. If you were to observe my life, the things I say, the choices I make, the way I treat people, and even my thought life toward others, you would see abundant evidence of my life as a disciple of Jesus. I am increasingly Jesus oriented in thought, experience, and expression. I see Jesus as the Word of God (what God wants to say to this world), and therefore Jesus is the greatest answer to every meaningful question. For instance, when engaging in spiritual conversations or when asked questions about my faith, I always start with Jesus as the centerpiece of my thinking and living (more than merely God in general, the Spirit, the Bible, our Church, etc.). In other words, if you cut me, I bleed Jesus.

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2. BAPTISM & COMMUNION I have been baptized as an expression of my own faith in and commitment to Jesus. I also encourage others to be baptized as their outward expression of internal faith in Jesus. And I always welcome the opportunity to thoughtfully participate in the Lord's Supper (AKA Communion or the Eucharist) as a meaningful reminder of the good news of Jesus.

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3. AMAZING GRACE I understand and celebrate that God loves me and gives me spiritual life, not because of my good deeds but because of his grace. And this truth motivates me to offer to others the same unconditional love, kindness, forgiveness, and grace without judgement that God has given me.

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4. WORD OF GOD I believe in the inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God — and his name is Jesus. Therefore, I do not read the Bible as merely a divine rule book but as a story of God's ongoing care for his people that ultimately points to Jesus. I read all of Scripture joyfully because I can meet and learn from Jesus there. In other words, I READ the Bible so I can FOLLOW Jesus.

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JESUS & HIS GOSPEL SECTION TOTAL: /20

SPIRIT & SCRIPTURE

5. BIBLE ENGAGEMENT I treasure the whole Bible as God’s unique and inspired gift to us to help us know God and the story of God’s people better. And if you were to observe my actual use of my Bible, you would see ample evidence of this conviction—e.g., I read it daily (or listen to an audio version), make notes and/or mark it up, use it in my prayer and meditation, refer to things I’m learning from it in conversations, take it with me to church gatherings, and actively seek answers from other Christians and/or study tools when I have questions.

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6. PRAYER I am aware of and able to use different kinds of prayer, such as using the Lord’s Prayer as a framework, using the Bible for Conversational Prayer, and Intercession. I make time to pray daily on my own. I also offer to pray for others on the spot when needs come up in conversation. And when I tell someone, “I’m praying for you” or “I’ll pray for you,” I really follow through.

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7. FRUIT I seek to be filled with God’s Spirit, growing in love for Jesus and living life every day with a moment-by-moment awareness of his presence. In every decision and interaction, I choose to partner with the will and the way of the Holy Spirit in me: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

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8. CONVICTION When I sense the Spirit’s conviction about sin in my life (whether that comes through direct awareness, reading Scripture, or the challenge of a brother or sister in Christ), I welcome this conviction, confess my sin (to God and a fellow believer), and take steps to avoid temptation in the future. I also take steps to understand and discern what my heart really desires and how Jesus can meet me in that longing.

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SPIRIT & SCRIPTURE SECTION TOTAL: /20

BEING & BELONGING

9. IDENTITY & VALUE I know and embrace my identity in Christ: I am God's dearly beloved child, his beautiful bride, a part of the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. I have been given a new heart, a new spirit, and God's Spirit. I have been cleansed of my past and now live free from the accusation of the enemy. Moreover, I move through my day with an increasing conscious awareness of the infinite worth not only of myself but of everyone around me. I relate to others, especially those in need, according to their great value to God. I am also increasingly aware that I can worship, serve, and love Jesus by serving the needs of people around me, and likewise I can represent Jesus and his love to others when I serve them.

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10. SERVING I see myself as a member of the Crest family, not just a guest in this home (e.g., I have moved from talking about Crest as just the church I attend to being "my" church and "our" church). I know God has gifted me in unique ways, and I am intentional about investing these gifts into church family life. I do not wait to be asked but offer to serve others in official capacities and also spontaneously as needs arise.

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11. LIVING SIMPLY I know that my ability to give generously is tied together with my commitment to live simply. E.g., When shopping, I am awake and aware of the spiritual implications of my decisions. I practice the joyful discipline of self-denial when purchasing. I make it my goal to go beyond just living within my means to living beneath my means so I can practice radical generosity with all that God has given me. What I own I consider on loan from God, and I see myself as a steward and manager over these things for the sake of the Kingdom. I take practical steps to share what things I can (home, car, lawnmower, etc.) with others. I care less about how products make me appear and more about how they enhance my ability to love others well. I try and slow down to savor and appreciate the food I eat as a gift of God's generosity to me and my friends/family.

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12. GIVING GENEROUSLY I embrace financial generosity as a privilege, not a burden. I understand that the Holy Spirit leads the New Covenant people of God into a pattern of giving that goes beyond the "minimum requirement" approach of the Old Testament (e.g. tithing or giving 10% of our income) to giving radically and joyfully to our local church family. Therefore, I give regularly, generously, and joyfully to the ministry and mission of Crest and beyond. I also see the things I own as gifts from God to be invested in ministry, and I regularly look for opportunities to use what God has given me to bless others in tangible ways. As a rule of thumb, I try to invest more of my finances in kingdom work each year than in vacation, entertainment, and purely discretionary spending combined.

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BEING & BELONGING SECTION TOTAL: /20

KINGDOM MISSION

13. AMBASSADORS I identify more as a citizen of the Kingdom of Christ than the United States, and I see myself as an ambassador on behalf of Jesus to the world around me. To this end, I am committed to learning, living, and giving the gospel. I am conversant in various ways of understanding and expressing the good news of Jesus. I don't just memorize memes but can express the gospel in my own words and in various contexts and kinds of conversations. I can remember and refer to specific things Jesus taught, stories he told, or things he did to reveal God's love, save us from sin, set up God's Kingdom and bring new life.

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14. ENEMY LOVE I see reconciliation between once divided parties as a central theme to the gospel, and I seek to live in the way of the life-affirming, other-oriented, enemy-loving, sin-forgiving, relationship-reconciling, peace-promoting, nonviolent agape love of Jesus in the broken places of our world. Therefore, I regularly initiate lovingkindness in my words and actions toward family, friends, strangers, and even my enemies. I act and speak lovingly toward, as well as pray for, people who are antagonistic toward me.

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15. INITIATE I take the initiative to express, explain, ask, and invite. I **EXPRESS** my faith, **EXPLAIN** more when questioned, **ASK** follow-up questions, and **INVITE** people to consider taking a next step in exploring Jesus (including inviting them to church, giving them a book to read, or recommending a podcast or other resources).

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16. SUPPORT As God enables me, I give intentionally beyond Crest's General Fund to special projects and our Benevolent Fund to help further the mission of our church.

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KINGDOM MISSION SECTION TOTAL: /20

CHURCH AS FAMILY

17. AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT I am intentional about making time for my church family, including Sunday gatherings, Home Church, volunteering, and other opportunities to gather together. I participate in church family relationships with authenticity, transparency, and vulnerability where appropriate (in other words, I do not pretend to be someone I am not). And I usually participate with the mindset of being a contributor rather than a consumer. I am less driven by the question of “what am I getting out of this?” than I am by the question “how can I help others grow?” (which I realize is also the best way for me to grow as a disciple of Jesus).

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18. CARING CONFRONTATION If I notice something wrong in someone else’s life who is a brother or sister, I walk through “the plank-eye process” Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:3-5), with the goal of offering gentle, humble help.

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19. FORGIVENESS If someone hurts or offends me, I am quick to forgive. If I become aware of having hurt someone else, I am quick to apologize. I consistently seek out and initiate relational reconciliation when I know I have hurt someone, they have hurt me, or there has been a break in relational harmony.

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20. UNITY I know that Jesus points to our uncommon unity as evidence of his truth, and I celebrate the diversity-in-unity of the Body of Christ. To this end, I intentionally move toward rather than back away from fellow believers who are different from myself, including differences in gender, ethnicity, nationality, age and stage, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, political beliefs and style. I will oppose those attitudes that destroy Christian unity and will fight for unity in my Home Church, in Crest as a whole, and across denominational lines with other Christians of other churches. I actively seek to promote unity in person and online in how I talk to and about other Christians who are different than me.

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CHURCH AS FAMILY SECTION TOTAL: /20

SO WHAT?

Now tally up your results:

(5 sections of $x/20$) = _____ /100

- A.** Were there any surprises or personal discoveries that happened while working through this?
- B.** What are you doing well at (individual point or section)?
- C.** What do you need the most growth in (individual point or section)?
- D.** What action steps can you take to help you grow in your weak areas?
- E.** Regardless of your results, who will you talk to about this to help encourage and challenge one another? (Suggestion: Make sure you talk about next steps with your Home Church Elders and ask them to check in with you over the next few weeks to see how you're addressing your next steps for growth.)
- F.** If you have taken this questionnaire before, did you follow through on your action steps then?

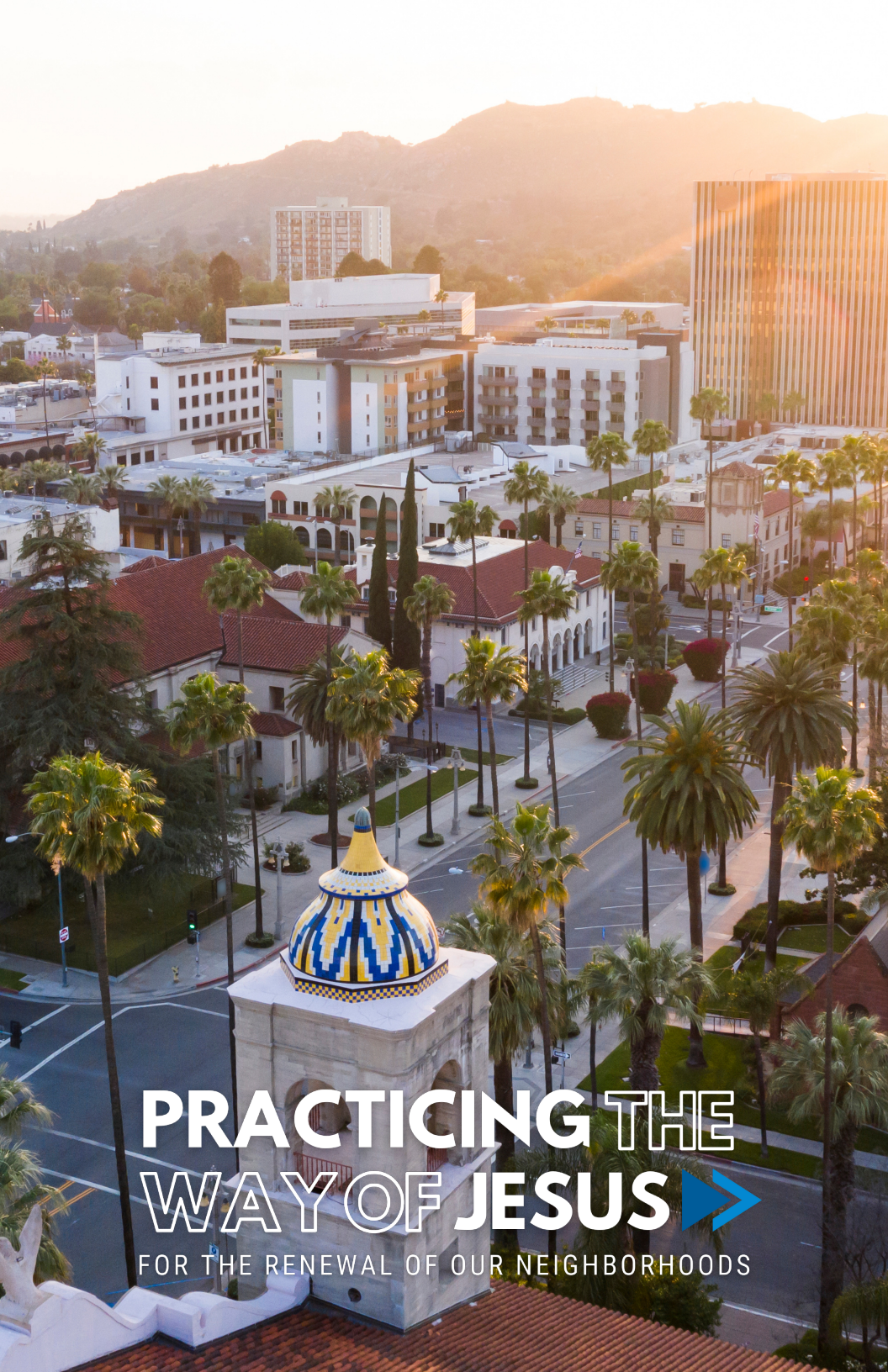
“Spiritual formation cannot, in the nature of the case, be a ‘private’ thing, because it is a matter of whole-life transformation. You need to seek out others in your community who are pursuing the renovation of the heart.”

DALLAS WILLARD

Let's grow together.

More ways to engage fully at Crest:





PRACTICING THE WAY OF JESUS

FOR THE RENEWAL OF OUR NEIGHBORHOODS