

KEEP BUILDING

PATTERNS OF A FAITHFUL LIFE



PRAISE AND WORSHIP



SERVING AND CARING



SHARING YOUR FAITH

growth track book

2

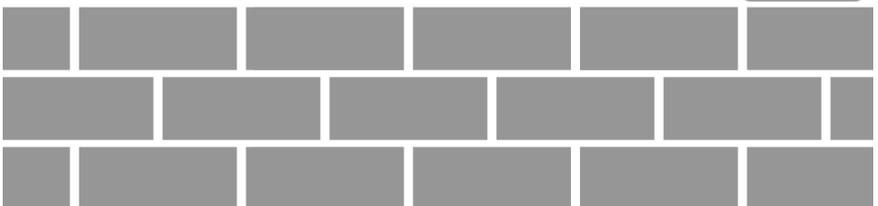
by Cain Atkinson

BUT GROW IN THE GRACE AND
KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD
AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. TO
HIM BE THE GLORY BOTH NOW
AND TO THE DAY OF ETERNITY.

-- 2 PETER 3.18

growth track book

2



NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Hi, welcome to book 2 of our spiritual growth track series. If you haven't worked through book 1, now might be a good time to allocate yourself a copy of the first book. The thrust of this second book is simple—what do Christians do? Jesus said “you will know them by their fruits.” It seems to me that there are three patterns that when present, make the Christian life distinct from any other. We need to be continually building these up so they are increasingly more pronounced.

The first pattern we'll discuss is worship and devotion to God. Christians give God the glory for every victory and seek His counsel for all of life's challenges. We don't serve God out of an obligation, we praise Him for who He is.

The second distinctive pattern is service and care. A Christian life is characterized by a servant leadership mindset and model. All Christians are trying to show those around them the Way by giving them a physical example of the kind of sacrificial love God has for us. Serving others inside and outside the faith should be an automatic reflex for the Christian.

Finally, a disciple will “become like their teacher.” Jesus was a disciple maker. Disciples make disciples, too. This is how our faith has been handed down some 2000 years. Sharing our faith is not optional in our walk. If we truly love the people around us, we will come alongside them and offer them what God poured out on the cross—untold joy, peace and purpose in Jesus.

If we build these patterns of service, we'll find all those things in new ways. We can overcomplicate things, but it really comes down to these patterns, and everything else takes care of itself. No need to put extra pressure on ourselves.

Trust God and Keep Building,

Cain Atkinson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Worship and Devotion	p. 5
Serving and Caring	p. 17
Sharing Your Faith.....	p. 25

WORSHIP AND DEVOTION



It's Sunday morning. Your neighbors look out their windows as they're waking up and making their coffee to see you loading up into the car, fully dressed, ready to head out to church. "Why are they up and at 'em?" they may think. The simple answer? You've got a date with God.

It's mid day on a Tuesday. You're in the car with your friends or your family. Someone starts humming a gospel hymn. Soon, everyone is singing along praising God together. A boring car ride becomes a worship service.

It's late, you don't even remember what day it is. Your mind is racing with doubts and feelings of inadequacy. You hit your knees and pray to God for deliverance. You open his Word and find words of comfort, encouragement and instruction.

This is the kind of devotion that colors the Christian life.

Here's what we'll talk about:

- ✔ Why do we praise?
- ✔ How do we praise?
- ✔ The gift of the assembly
- ✔ Everyday devotion



WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

WHY WE PRAISE

Why do we praise? We can answer this in one word—God. The very person of God is what inspires us to praise. His glory, power and love for us should cause us to revere him. We believe that every good thing has been given to us by him.

When we think about who God is, the only appropriate response is to give him our full respect and passion. When we devote ourselves to God, we find peace, joy and new purpose in the surrender. We were designed to glorify him—and when we become a praising people we will be a fulfilled people. So, what do you think?



Why should we praise God?



Is our worship and devotion an obligation or privilege?



Check out [John 4.24](#); [Revelation 5.12](#)



YOUR THOUGHTS



Why should we praise God?



Is our worship and devotion an obligation or privilege?



WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

DO I HAVE TO COME TO CHURCH?

...is the wrong question. *You get to come to church.* The assembly is a gift, and if we participate and open ourselves to God, an assembly of a faithful church will do what it is designed to do—build you up. While it's true that God has commanded us to meet together in this way—it is not for his benefit, it's for ours.

He knows that your mission to make it to Heaven is not a solo mission. Our coming together is encouraging and strengthening for everyone. God has given us a pattern and a design for how we should come together, and while it may be a sacrifice to make time for it—it is always worth it.



What are some common reasons people give for not coming to church?



What are some reasons we should make a commitment to worship God together?



Check out Hebrews 10.24-25



YOUR THOUGHTS



What are some common reasons people give for not coming to church?



What are some reasons we should make a commitment to worship God together?



WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

THE WAY WE PRAISE

While we can glorify God indirectly through our actions, there are certain things we can do to directly praise God. These are things that we do especially when we come together as a church—just like the first century church did. These things are given to us and detailed in scripture; prayer, song, the supper and preaching. They are not just given to us as commands to fulfill arbitrarily—participating in each of these deepens our relationship to God.

Let's identify how that happens together:



Why do we pray?



Why do we sing together?



Why do we take communion?



Why do we listen to God's Word?



Check out Acts 2.42; Colossians 3.16



YOUR THOUGHTS



Why do we pray?



Why do we sing together?



Why do we take communion?



Why do we listen to God's Word?



WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

SMALL GROUP DEVOTION

In addition to the worship and devotion we do as a church, we can also meet together in smaller and more intimate settings to talk about the Word. These settings can have unique advantages and help us to get to know each other a lot better than when we have the whole church together.

Jesus had more than just the twelve—but he even had a small group he attended! Whenever we meet together and talk about the Word, pray together, sing together or glorify God together—we are participating in devotion together. These close settings are a great place to pursue God together and deepen our relationships.



What are some benefits of meeting in smaller groups outside of the main assembly?



Check out [Luke 6.13](#); [Acts 20.20](#)



YOUR THOUGHTS



What are some benefits of meeting in smaller groups outside of the main assembly?



WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

PERSONAL DEVOTION

Praise isn't something we just do as a whole church, or even in smaller groups—often times the most intimate times we can draw near to God are when we go to him in the quiet silence of our own lives. There are times where we are struggling, anxious, or scared. There are others where we are rejoicing over some victory.

God is our Father. He wants to be with us in those moments. When we invite God into our most personal, intimate and quiet moments in prayer, reading and meditation—we'll see our relationship to him strengthening and deepening.



What does your prayer life and personal devotion look like?



What are some ways we can draw near to God during our alone time?



Check out Luke 5.16



YOUR THOUGHTS



What does your prayer life and personal devotion look like?



What are some ways we can draw near to God during our alone time?

SERVING AND CARING



Being a good neighbor is considered a universal good. There is something in our hearts that recognizes something higher—something transcendental—when we see someone lending someone else a helping hand. This is because the signature of God, eternity, has been written on our hearts.

Christians serve each other and love each other. In a fully restored and functioning church, you'll see community. You should see people coming alongside each other and finding ways to serve one another. Many times, it will seem automatic. That's because a mature church will have service baked into their DNA.

Not only that, but Christians should be an outstretched hand and a listening ear for those in the community. This is because that by acting in service, we'll be able to shine the light of Jesus in a unique way—leading by example.

Here's what we'll talk about:

- ✓ The motivation for our service
- ✓ Who should we serve?
- ✓ Finding opportunities to serve



SERVING AND CARING

WHY WE SERVE

Christian service is a mark of faith. It's important to note that “good works” like helping does not give us brownie points with God, though. Doing good things for other people is not a way to be saved—but it is a result of being saved.

Christians serve others because we realize that God humbled Himself in human form in the person of Jesus to serve us. This belief that God's love is a sacrificial love that reaches down into our lives to provide for us and help us in our affliction motivates us as individuals to do the same.



Why should we help people?



What is the reward that we get for helping people?



Check out 1 Peter 4.10



YOUR THOUGHTS



Why should we help people?



**What is the reward that we get
for helping people?**



SERVING AND CARING

SERVE ANYWAY

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. In the cultural context, this was unprecedented. For a teacher to kneel at the feet of his students...this was totally unheard of. It was a show of absolute respect. Why would Jesus do this?

“To set an example.” Jesus didn’t just wash the feet of the disciples that were loyal to him. He even knelt at the feet of Judas, who later betrayed him. Sometimes when we offer service, we do it because we expect something in return. Jesus knew Judas would not be paying his kindness back—in fact, the opposite. He washed his feet anyway. Let that one sink in.



What is the point of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples?



What can we learn from Jesus washing Judas' feet in particular?



Check out Luke 6.27; 13.12-17; 26



YOUR THOUGHTS



What is the point of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples?



What can we learn from Jesus washing Judas' feet in particular?



SERVING AND CARING

OPEN HEARTS AND READY HANDS

If we focus on ourselves, we'll struggle to find opportunities to serve. If we focus on loving the way Jesus did, opportunities to serve will be everywhere. Jesus teaches us to look within ourselves and ask ourselves—how can I help?

God has given us everything we have. He has nothing to gain by bringing us into life and by keeping us, but he does. His love is sacrificial. When we love the way he does, service will be an automatic reflex. (Remember, practice makes perfect.)



What are some ways you can serve?



In your inner circle? (immediate family and/or best friends)



In your church family?



In your community?



Check out 1 Peter 4.10



YOUR THOUGHTS



What are some ways you can serve?



In your inner circle? (immediate family and/or best friends)



In your church family?



In your community?

SHARING YOUR FAITH



If we are passionate about something, we'll take every chance we can get to talk about it. We love the things we love, and people can tell what's important to us by the frequency, knowledge and passion with which we talk about them. So the question is this. How important is Jesus to you? Is He worth sharing? We know the answer, but sometimes we overcomplicate the method.

Sharing the gospel is the greatest act of kindness we can show to someone. We have something that no one else could offer them—eternal life in Heaven with their Maker. They may not hold this gift as valuable, and they may not understand why you find it important to share your faith—but that doesn't change our privilege of sharing it anyway out of pure love.

Our faith is precious to us. Putting it out there for scrutiny can be scary, but if you believe that Jesus is the Christ then you will move from faith and reach out to those around you and build sharing your faith as a pattern of life. So, how do we do it?

Here's what we'll talk about:

- ✓ The "faith" we share
- ✓ Why we don't share our faith
- ✓ Everywhere is a mission field
- ✓ Sharing your faith like Jesus



SHARING YOUR FAITH

WHAT ARE WE SHARING, EXACTLY?

When we use the word “evangelism”...people tend to overthink things. We feel like we need to come prepared to deal with every sin, every false teaching, every hypothetical...but it’s not necessary. We need to have confidence in the gospel—that if an individual hears and believes the gospel that they will be converted to Jesus. They may need some help along the way, but when we realize the power is not in us but in Christ it changes things.

We’re not sharing our entire belief system with the world. We’re not sharing “why they’re wrong.” We’re sharing the gospel, which cuts through every symptom and gets directly to the root.



What is the gospel?



What is the power contained in the gospel?



Check out Romans 1.16



YOUR THOUGHTS



What is the gospel?



What is the power contained in the gospel?



SHARING YOUR FAITH

WHY WE DON'T SHARE OUR FAITH

Why isn't your church growing the way the church did in Acts? Is it because the gospel has lost its power and influence? Is the world too wicked? Before we cast everyone off as dishonest or unreceptive—let's ask...am I moving in "Acts of the Apostles" ways?

We have many reasons not to share our faith—anxiety, social pressure, feelings of inadequacy, business, you name it. These things are not impossible barriers to overcome. These are real, but there are ways that we can overcome these. After all, our spiritual siblings in Acts overcame Roman and Jewish pressure to quieten their voices. So can we.



What are some barriers in your life to sharing the gospel?



What are some ways to overcome those?



Check out Acts 8.4



YOUR THOUGHTS



What are some barriers in your life to sharing the gospel?



What are some ways to overcome those?



SHARING YOUR FAITH

WHERE SHOULD I START?

You want to share your faith...but you're not sure where to start. Where's the mission field? Maybe you think you need to do something major and radical like going to some foreign country and planting churches. We think of the epic journeys of the apostle Paul or the powerful preaching of Peter that converted the masses in Acts 2.

The truth is the mission field is anywhere there are people. Family, friends, work, even folks in your church right now. Each setting will present unique challenges—each will cause us to stretch our faith and step out onto the battlefield for our King. When we begin to see every arena of life as a mission field, we find our purpose.



Where are some areas of your life where you could start looking for ways to share your faith?



Check out Mark 16.15-16



YOUR THOUGHTS



Where are some areas of your life where you could start looking for ways to share your faith?



Write down a brief game plan for reaching out with the gospel.



SHARING YOUR FAITH

JESUS-STYLE LEADERSHIP

Why did Jesus leave Heaven? Why leave the most comfortable place in the world to come to a broken and shattered world like ours? When he got here how did he live? Jesus came here out of pure love and fierce commitment to do the will of his Father. He came here to help us get back to Heaven. He offered us hope for eternity when we had none. This was his mission—and now, his mission has become ours.

Christians are meant to be like Christ. Christ made disciples. We are to do the same. We aren't judges, lawyers or morality police...we are messengers, blessed with the greatest message ever. Jesus' example should motivate us to lead others to the Way—to step outside of our own comfort zone to reach into the lives of others for the express purpose of helping them prepare for heaven.



What attitude of heart did Jesus lead with?



Where was Christ leading them to?



Check out Luke 19.10



YOUR THOUGHTS



What attitude of heart did Jesus lead with?



Where was Christ leading them to?



SHARING YOUR FAITH

DO THIS ONE THING

The advice in this book certainly doesn't cover everything that the Bible has to say, but it will provide a good starting point for spiritual growth. Devotion to God, service to others and sharing your faith are the over arching three areas to pursue to super charge your growth process. We are all stronger or 'get more out of' one area or the other and that's okay so long as we are growing.

It can seem complicated when we look at this mountain of things we have to work on to pursue Christlikeness. If I could boil down all the advice in this growth track book 2 to one thing—"seek first the kingdom of God." (Matthew 6.34) If we keep our eyes fixed on Heaven, and never give up on God and our commitment to allow him to build us up we will stand any test that comes our way. In the meantime just need to keep building.



**USE THIS SPACE TO COME UP WITH
ONE THING TO WORK ON IN EACH
AREA**



WORSHIP AND DEVOTION



SERVICE TO OTHERS



SHARING YOUR FAITH



5051 Wilmington Pike, Centerville, OH 45440

(937) 434-8481

cornerstone@cornerstone-coc.com