

Growing "Believing"

Week 1 – October 2, 2022

Scripture: Mark 4:26-29; John 6:22-29; Luke 14:25-35

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Is there something you liked so much you worked really hard to improve at? Perhaps it was a sport or a hobby. Share your experience about putting in extra effort and if you experienced growth as a result.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Watch the video posted here together: www.kensingtonchurch.org/growing Each week has a short video about the weekends message.

Discuss the following context:

Christianity easily drifts into a form of behavior modification when it comes to growth as followers of Jesus. There is much said and written about discipleship and spiritual formation, but when it comes down to it, we end up believing in Jesus so that our sins are forgiven and heaven is ours one day, and in the meantime, the Bible is our resource for how we are to live. But is knowing what God wants from us, and even wanting it ourselves, and putting in the effort all that is involved in life transformation?

A linear process of Believe → Learn → Effort → Trust is not what Jesus describes in Scripture. Instead, Jesus shows us there is a certain mystery in growth (**Mark 4:26-29**), just like there is mystery in how God actually transforms us.

*"This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, **though he does not know how.**"*
Mark 4:26-27

Scripture describes an ongoing, cyclical process of growth.



Once we believe, we seek God (relationally). As we do, we get to know him, and in that knowing, our sense of his love for us, and our corresponding response of love for him grows. This increases our desire to surrender to him (obeying).

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. How can we grow in our relationship with God so that our lives are increasingly changed for the better? To answer this question we must ask two other questions: Do we want to grow? And, are we willing to put in the effort to grow? Discuss the following.
 - a. What do you want to be true of you when your life is over? What do you want to be said of you? Your legacy?
 - b. It's one thing to wish for your legacy to be true and another thing to put effort into pursuing what it takes to make it a reality. Share something you wish to improve or accomplish in your life, but lack the follow through to take action steps toward making a reality.
2. When Jesus uses the phrase "eternal life" he is not referring to some other place we go **after** we die, but to the fullness of life that we can experience **right now** if we know, trust and follow him.
 - a. Do you feel like you are experiencing "eternal life" right here and now? Why or why not?
 - b. Read **John 6:29** and **James 2:19**. We can believe things about Jesus, but if we really believe that he can lead us to "eternal life" of peace, hope, fullness, and abundance, we might take a step to believe **IN** him, not just **ABOUT** him. What is the difference?
3. Believing is much more than mental assent; it is better described as trust. Trust is the beginning of life with God. What barriers exist in fully trusting God?
4. Read **Luke 14:25-35**. Jesus does not ask us to believe a certain set of things, instead he asks us to join him – ALL in and fully committed. What does it mean to be fully committed to Jesus? How do you find his invitation in **Luke 14:26-27** to be challenging?
5. Jesus follows the challenge in **Luke 14:26-27** with two metaphors. The first is about a builder who starts building without a plan (**Luke 14:28**), and the second is about a king who goes into battle against another king (**Luke 14:31**). Jesus wants us to understand his expectations before we trust in him. What does this reveal about the character of God?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that trusting in him leads to seeking, then to knowing, then to loving, then to obeying. Thank him his invitation is to believe – to consider, explore, and investigate – if he is the Son of God and worthy of our lives. Ask God to help us begin, or to continue, the journey to believing in Jesus!