

Growing

"Knowing"

Week 3 – October 16, 2022

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3; John 17:3

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

Share: Each of us has the desire to be truly known. Someone who knows the things we like and dislike, what brings us joy and happiness, and also what sets us off. Who are the people in your life who truly know you?

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:

Knowing about someone and knowing someone are not the same thing. One is information based, the other is experience based. One is objective, the other is subjective. **2 Peter 1:3** says, "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our **knowledge** of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." The word "know" in the original language conveyed experiential knowing. It's not information or facts we come to know about, it's a Person we come to know. When God is reduced to theology, doctrine, or information, the power to be changed is lost. Knowing God is the foundation to following Jesus.



Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Peter writes 2 Peter near the end of his life and his words are like a farewell speech to a group of churches he loved. He wants them to know Jesus' followers must never stop growing, and in order to grow in their relationship with God they must continue to know him better.
 - a. Knowing God is a lifelong pursuit. Is this difficult? What barriers get in the way?
 - b. Continually pursuing God to know him better does not mean we are not close to him. God's promise is that if we move close to him, he will move close to us. How does this give you hope and confidence?
2. Jesus wants us to spend time with him because he loves us. As we spend time with him, we get to know him, and what is important to him becomes important to us. **John 17:3** says eternal life starts with *knowing God*. How does this distinction shape your desire to know God right now?
3. God created us for an intimate friendship with himself. It is not a friendship that starts after this life when we get to heaven, but here and now. Are you making God a priority in your life and growing your friendship with him? Why or why not? How can we make one shift towards knowing him versus knowing about him?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Praise God that he created us for relationship, he knows every detail of our lives, and he loves us unconditionally. Tell him how you desire to grow in your relationship with him, how you desire to *know him*.

Growing

"Seeking"

Week 2 – October 9, 2022

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13-14; Psalm 63:1; John 15:4-5

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

Share: Think about a time in your life when you grew rapidly, either physically or emotionally. Maybe it was an emotional jump transitioning into high school, or that summer you grew two inches in height. Share your "growing" memory with the group.

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

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Discuss the following context:

Relationships require pursuit. This is the foundation for all that follows- knowing, loving, and obeying him. Seeking is the only one of this process that we have the ability to choose to do. What does a life of seeking God look like? We can equate it to how it works in human relationships. Without seeking God he will remain unknown, unloved, and our submission out of duty at best.



Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. When we seek God, we discover that God is the first and ultimate seeker. But for the relationship to grow, we need to show up. Discuss what the following Scriptures say about seeking God:
 - a. **Jeremiah 29:13-14** – Wholeheartedly
 - b. **Psalm 63:1** – Earnestly
2. God invites us to enter into a life where seeking Him is a priority. **Read John 15:4-5.** Abiding, or remaining in the Father, is seeking. The more time we spend with him, the more we will know him. What practical ways can you abide? What do you need to let go of in order to make abiding a priority in your life? What fears do you have about pursuing a relationship with Jesus?
3. God gives us tools to seek him. Spiritual practices create opportunities for him to reveal himself to us. Discuss the following practices and how they could allow you to wholeheartedly and earnestly seek God. Pick one of these practices to focus on this week.
 - a. Read your Bible. Picture Jesus sitting next to you and allow it to become a conversation.
 - b. Pray and spend time in silence. If you do all the talking, you will be less likely to hear what God might want to say.
 - c. Journal about being with Jesus. Write what you are learning, thinking, worried about, or confused about.
 - d. Listen to worship music. Allow your heart to feel the wonder and beauty of God.

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God he invites us into a life of seeking him. Ask him to reveal himself to us. Ask him to open the eyes of our hearts. Praise God for he is inviting us and he is waiting for us.

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!

Growing "Believing"

Week 1 – October 2, 2022

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