

A HEALTHY CHURCH

GROWING CLOSER TO GOD

SERMON 1

Growing Through the Word

Psalms 119:9–16 | James 4:8 (NKJV)

A sermon series on drawing closer to God

1

INTRODUCTION

02

Our goal: grow closer to God

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

James 4:8 (NKJV)

Growth in our personal relationship with God

Growth in our homes and families

Growth as a church

2

INTRODUCTION

03

Four areas for spiritual growth

Today's focus: Growing Through the Word

1. God's Word
2. Prayer
3. Fasting
4. Reconciliation

3

INTRODUCTION

04

Are we still growing through the Word?

- We may have heard many sermons and studied the Bible for years.
- We may know what Scripture says and still need to grow in our relationship with God.
- **God's Word should influence our thoughts, words, decisions, and actions.**

4

1 • TREASURE THE WORD

05

The psalmist's relationship with Scripture**Psalm 119:9–16 (NKJV)**

- Seek God with the whole heart
- Hide His Word in the heart
- Rejoice in His testimonies
- Meditate on His precepts
- Delight in His statutes
- Do not forget His Word

5

1 • TREASURE THE WORD

06

If God's Word is a treasure...**Matthew 13:44 - the treasure hidden in a field**

- **Does that value show in our lives?**
- Does it influence how we spend our time?
- Do we make room to read and study it?
- Do we seek it only when we have a problem, or daily?

6

1 • TREASURE THE WORD

Do not take access to the Bible for granted

William Tyndale worked to translate Scripture into English so ordinary people could read it.

His work faced strong opposition; copies of his New Testament were confiscated and burned.

He was arrested in 1535 and executed in 1536.

We have the privilege of reading the Bible in our own language.

7

2 • GROW THROUGH THE WORD

What helps a plant grow?

Psalm 1:1–3 - a tree planted by rivers of water

- Nourishment
- Water
- Care
- Roots that receive what they need

8

2 • GROW THROUGH THE WORD

09

Build your roots before the storm**Psalm 1:1–3 (NKJV)**

- A person who delights in God's Word meditates on it day and night.
- Spiritual growth needs regular nourishment.
- **We should not study the Bible only when a storm arrives.**

We should build our roots before the storm comes.

9

2 • GROW THROUGH THE WORD

10

How hungry are we for God's Word?**1 Peter 2:2 (NIV)**

- A healthy newborn needs milk to grow.
- Peter uses this picture to describe our need for spiritual nourishment.
- If our desire for Scripture is disappearing, we should not simply accept it as normal.

Ask God to renew our hunger for His Word.

10

2 • GROW THROUGH THE WORD

11

God's Word gives light and understanding**Psalm 119:130 • 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV)**

- We do not have to be the most educated person in the room.
- We come to God's Word with a willing heart, ready to be taught.
- Scripture can give light, correct our understanding, and guide us.
- Let us keep opening our Bibles and seeking understanding.

11

3 • REFLECT THE WORD

12

Let the Word show in our lives**Philippians 2:14–16 (NKJV)**

- Do all things without complaining and disputing.
- Shine as lights in the world.
- Hold fast the word of life.

The influence of God's Word should be seen in our conduct.

12

3 • REFLECT THE WORD

13

Reflecting light

Exodus 34:29–35 • Matthew 5:16

- The moon does not produce its own light; it reflects the sun's light.
- In a similar way, we need to spend time in God's presence.
- Moses' face shone after he had spent time with the Lord.

We cannot consistently reflect the character of a God we are unwilling to spend time with.

13

3 • REFLECT THE WORD

14

Can others see the influence of God's Word?

- In the way we speak?
- In the way we treat others?
- In the decisions we make?

Does our conduct agree with what we profess to believe?

14

4 • PRACTICE THE WORD

Two builders. Two foundations.

Matthew 7:24–27 (NKJV)

- The wise man heard Jesus' words and put them into practice.
- The foolish man heard Jesus' words but did not act on them.
- Both houses faced the same storm.

The difference was the foundation.

15

4 • PRACTICE THE WORD

Same opportunity. Different decisions.

- Both men had the opportunity to build.
- One chose the rock; the other chose the sand.
- Building on the rock may take more time, effort, and work.

When the storm comes, the solid foundation matters.

16

4 • PRACTICE THE WORD

What do we do with what we hear?

- When God's Word shows us something that needs to change, are we willing to respond?
- When Jesus teaches us how to live, are we willing to follow?
- Do we ask only, "What does this passage say?"
- **Or also, "How should I respond to what God is showing me?"**

17

5 • DISCIPLES OF JESUS

What identifies us as disciples?

John 8:31–32 (NKJV)

- Jesus calls believers to abide in His Word.
- Being a disciple is more than claiming to believe in Jesus.
- We are called to remain in His teaching.

His truth should continue to shape our lives.

18

5 • DISCIPLES OF JESUS

We obey because we love Him

John 14:15 (NKJV)

- “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
- We do not obey to earn God’s love or purchase salvation.
- **We respond to Him because we love Him and trust Him.**

A HEALTHY CHURCH

A healthy church keeps growing

James 4:8 (NKJV)

- Treasures God’s Word
- Receives nourishment from Scripture
- Reflects the Word in daily life
- Practices what Jesus teaches

Continues abiding in the Word of Jesus

Let's examine our relationship with God's Word

- Do I truly desire the Word of God?
- Am I making time to read, study, and meditate on it?
- Am I allowing it to transform my thoughts, words, and actions?
- Am I putting into practice what Jesus teaches me?
- Can others see its influence in my life?

Give God's Word a deeper place in your life

- Ask God to renew your desire for His Word.
- Ask Him to help you understand it and live according to it.
- Allow His Word to shape your home, family, and church.

Not simply to read more - but to let it take deeper root in us.

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

Will you make that decision today?

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...”

James 4:8 (NKJV)

NEXT MESSAGE

Growing Through Prayer