

BREAK THROUGH

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:



YOUR GUIDE TO BREAKTHROUGH

From Waite Park Church

During this upcoming five week season our church will be focused on breaking through to new stages of the Christian Life.

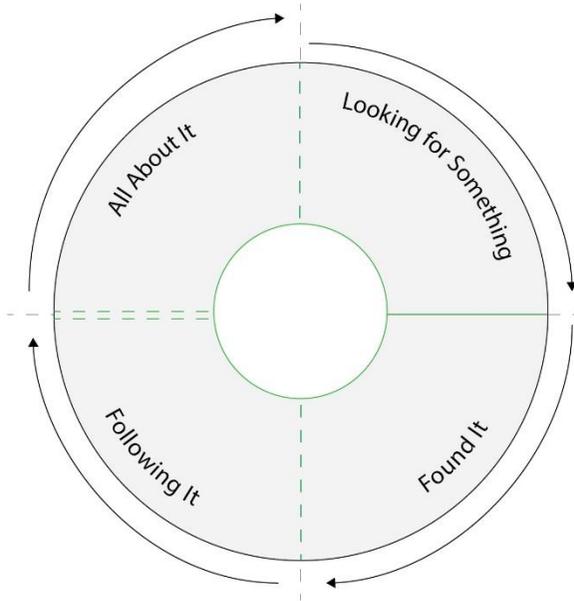
Sermon Notes: Use this portion of the booklet to take notes during the sermon. You can watch the livestream online at <http://www.waiteparkchurch.org/livestream> or use our sermon page, podcast, or YouTube channel to stay caught up on messages.

Small Group Questions: Respond to each question before you meet so that you can be prepared to share when the time comes. In doing so, you won't be caught off guard and you'll be able to offer thoughtful responses.

Family Devotion: Take one night a week in which your family can share and reflect on what we're training for as a church. These are mostly geared towards young children but can still be useful for all.

Soul Training: During this Focus season our soul training will have a different daily emphasis based on the day of the week that will help us approach the week's topic more holistically.

Stages of the Christian Life



Looking for Something: They know something is missing in their life so they're coming to church in search of something that may or may not be faith-related.

Found It: A new or not yet matured believer of Christianity. They've found faith but they're still learning the basics.

Following It: A maturing believer who has a good understanding of scripture and theology, loves God, and desires to go deeper in their faith.

All About It: A fully surrendered disciple of Jesus who lives according to God's kingdom and actively discipled others. They love God and live only for Him.

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Find Your Stage – Self Assessment

Take a moment to see what stage of the Christian life you're in by filling out the following assessment. Check a box for every statement that describes you. Do this for all the stages.

Looking for Something

- I hope God exists but I'm not sure.
- I'm interested in Spiritual things.
- I want something more out of life.
- I'm open to the idea that Jesus is the answer to what I'm looking for.
- Church might be beneficial but it's not necessary.

Found It

- I believe that Jesus is Lord.
- I have a limited knowledge of the Bible.
- I'm fairly new to church or I've been away for a while.
- My faith has little impact on my day to day life.
- Most people wouldn't know that I'm a Christian.

Continued on back

Following It

- I have a good understanding of the Bible and I enjoy learning more.
- I try to do what Jesus would do if He were in my shoes.
- I want to go deeper in my faith.
- I'm contributing to the Body of Christ.
- My primary identity is that I'm a follower of Christ

All about It

- I consistently live in light of eternity.
- I regularly invest time helping others grow in their faith.
- I share the gospel with people who don't know Jesus.
- I hunger to see lives transformed by Jesus.
- I want to see the Church growing and making an impact in the world for Jesus.

Write down the stage that you had the most boxes checked in. If you have a tie, then use the latest stage.

WEEK 1

HOW DO WE GROW?

Rick Warren recently observed: “There is no growth without change. There is no change without loss. There is no loss without pain... Growth requires loss because you have to let go of the old to grab hold of the new.”

As a result of this fundamental truth – many of us will avoid growth. Oftentimes we prefer comfort and familiarity even if it means settling for something inferior. We’re content with less. As C.S. Lewis observed, “Our desires are too weak.”

But the wise will not just observe the pain and loss that comes with growth – they’ll also observe that staying the same has a price tag of its own.

Consider this analogy – would you rather endure the pain of surgery or endure the pain of a slow and sure death? Oftentimes those who are unwilling to grow will die a slow and miserable spiritual death.

The fact is – most of us want to grow. Most of us know we have room for improvement. The question for us is this: Are there some ingredients that work better for growth than others? If so – what are they and how do I apply this to my life and use it for my advantage?

WEEK 1
02/24/19

SERMON NOTES
How Do We Grow?

FAMILY DEVOTION

God's Family

Read Matthew 12:47-50

⁴⁷ Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside. They want to talk to you."

⁴⁸ He answered, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"

⁴⁹ Then he pointed to his followers and said, "See! These people are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ My true brothers and sisters and mother are those who do the things that my Father in heaven wants."

(We suggest the NIRV, ICB, or the NLT for young children)

Jesus knows that his mother is Mary but he asks two surprising questions: "Who is my mother?" and "Who are my brothers?" He does this because he wants us to pay attention to what he says next. Jesus answers his own question and says "anyone that does what God wants is my brother or sister or mother." In other words, when we do what God wants us to do, Jesus sees us as family.

This not only means that we become like family to God and to Jesus but it also means that we become like family to all the other people around the world who do the things that God wants.

FAMILY DEVOTION

ASK:

1) What do families do together?

Possible answers:

They have fun together, they spend time together, they eat together, they learn together, they sing together, they do chores together, they love each other, etc.

2) Can you think of ways that our Church does things that a family would do?

Possible Answers:

We spend time together every Sunday, we eat together (through communion and other events), we learn together, we sing together, we serve together (like doing chores), we love each other, etc.

3) Jesus said that his family were people that did the things that God wants them to do. What are some things that God wants us to do?

Possible Answers:

God wants us to love Him and love people. God wants us to help others who are in need. God wants us to tell other people about Jesus. God wants us to spend time with Him.

Assess

02/25/19

As we discuss “How to Grow” it’s worth taking some time to consider the things that we’re trying to grow in and how it is that we pursue growth in those areas. Let’s try an experiment where we compare a secular pursuit to our faith.

What’s one secular activity that you’re trying to grow in? (a skill, a hobby, a job, a talent, etc)

What are your top practices for growth in this particular area?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Now consider your spiritual life. What are your top growth practices when it comes to your soul?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Knowledge, Affections, Practice, and Community are the main ingredients for how we grow. Look at your lists above and use the key below to write a letter next to each practice you listed. And consider what you tend to neglect.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| K – Knowledge | A – Affections |
| P – Practice | C – Community |

Knowledge

02/26/19

Read Romans 12:2

²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

It seems that for Paul, we're moving in one of two directions. Either we're conforming to this world or we're being transformed (according to the pattern of God's kingdom).

If we want to be transformed then Paul says that we must be renewing our minds. Notice that this isn't a one and done process. This is an ongoing effort. We are to be forever renewing our minds.

If you want to know whether or not you're being conformed to this world, the test is a simple one. What are you doing to regularly renew your mind with the Word of God? If you can't answer that question, then according to Paul – you're being conformed to this world because something is always shaping us.

Perhaps reading isn't your thing. That's okay! It wasn't even a possibility for the majority of the early Church. Identify your favorite ways to learn and engage with God's Word – podcasts? Audiobooks? Sermons? Do them and do them regularly!

Affections

02/27/19

Read Proverbs 4:23

*²³ Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.*

For ancient Hebrews, the heart was the seat of the intellect, the will, and the emotions. That word “guard” is closely related to the Hebrew word for watchman. Consider what a watchman or a guard does – he prevents the bad while permitting the good.

Pastor Jonathan Edwards says that we neither approve nor reject all affections but instead we distinguish between them and approve the good and reject the bad.

In scripture – emotions aren’t our enemy. They’re not to be suppressed. In fact, they often help us to lose our inhibitions and worship God with the freedom of expression and rendered heart that He deserves to receive.

Christians are supposed to love, hate, fear, desire, grieve and experience gratitude, compassion, zeal, and hope. It’s these affections which, when cultivated correctly, often help us to move to appropriate action. What are some affections in your life that hinder your faith? What are some affections you’d like to nurture?

Practice

02/28/19

Read Matthew 6:1-18

During the Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells the crowd to practice keeping three secrets: Secret Deeds, Secret Prayer, and Secret Fasting.

He refers to these things by using the phrase “practice your righteousness.” For Jesus, righteousness isn’t a purely intellectual or emotional pursuit but it’s something we can put into practice.

Similarly, James tells us to not just be “hearers” of the word but also “doers.” (James 1:22) Sometimes we think we can only “do” something if our hearts are “in it.” And that often translates into: “I should only do things that I want to do.” Which makes us “hearers” of the Word and not “doers.”

The truth is that sometimes the very act of “doing” will grow us and change us (regardless of whether or not we’re enjoying it). What’s one thing you can do today to grow in your relationship with God? Can you serve? Can you give an anonymous gift? Can you extend forgiveness? Can you speak out for someone? Do something externally, big or small, that will grow your faith.

Community

03/01/19

Read Ecclesiastes 4:12

12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Our community shapes us. It has the ability to strengthen us or weaken us. Who we spend time with will often dictate what we believe and how we think. The significance of community when it comes to growth is a powerful but often overlooked force. Perhaps its the subtlety of community that gives it its effectiveness. Our minds love to hold onto ideas and principles that we think we've arrived at on our own.

More often than we know, we make decisions based on "What would people like me do in a situation like this?" In other words - what will "my group" think of this? Would a rock wall climber drink soda or kombucha? Would a hemp farmer shop at the Gap? Do construction workers listen to Taylor Swift?

Do you see how strong community can be? If you want to grow in faith ask yourself this question - are the people that I surround myself with the type of people that I want to be spiritually? What can you do to make your community conducive to you becoming who you want to become? Who do you need to spend more time with? Who do you need to spend less time with?

Gameplan

03/02/19

Look over the last week of devotions, consider the sermon from Sunday, as well as your small group discussion questions. As we've discussed there are four main ingredients that help us to grow: Knowledge, Affections, Practice, and Community.

What are you doing now and what more can you be doing to better cultivate each "ingredient" in your spiritual life?

Knowledge

Affections

Practice

Community

WEEK 2

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING

There's a Church Leader from the 4th century named Cyril of Jerusalem who was speaking to people interested in being baptized. In his talk, he recognized that there would be people among them who were "looking for something."

He said something like, "Possibly you've come for another reason. Maybe you're a man wishing to find a wife or maybe you're a woman looking for a husband. Maybe you're a servant wanting to impress your master or a friend who wants to please a friend."

In the end, Cyril says that he's just glad they're there – regardless of why they've come. He hopes that ultimately, they will find more than what they're looking for.

Conversion is both a journey and a moment. The disciples followed Jesus before they worshipped him. In fact, when Peter finally realizes that Jesus is God he says, "Get away from me Lord; I am a sinful man!" The Gospel of Mark records a father, desperate to see his son healed and pleading with Jesus, "I believe. Help me with my unbelief." Some Christians talk about being "born again" but we can forget that pregnancy can last up to 9 months and birth itself can sometimes take days.

Proverbs 16:9 "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."

WEEK 2
03/03/19

SERMON NOTES
Looking for Something

GROUP QUESTIONS

Looking for Something

WEEK 2

Start with a worship exercise then show the recap video.

1. Look through your sermon notes. What stood out to you the most about the sermon?
2. Which of the four stages of the Christian Life best describes you? What makes you say that?
3. Think about your own faith journey. What drew you to God, Church, or even small group? Did you know you were looking for God?

FAMILY DEVOTION

God Shaped Hole

Read Acts 17:26-28

²⁶ God began by making one man. From him came all the different people who live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they must live. ²⁷ God wanted them to look for him and perhaps search all around for him and find him. But he is not far from any of us: ²⁸ 'By his power we live and move and exist.' Some of your own poets have said: 'For we are his children.'

(We suggest the NIRV, ICB, or the NLT for young children)

The Bible tells us that God made us and hopes that we would want to look for Him and find Him. We're also told that God isn't far from us. Do you know remember that children's game where you try to find the right shape to fit through the right hole? There's a circle shape for the circle hole and a square shape for the square hole. God is kind of like that. Each of us has a desire for God that can only be filled by God. You could say that each of us has a "God-shaped hole" that only God is able to fill. Some people spend their entire lives with a desire for "more" that they can't seem to explain. Some people might never figure out that the thing they're missing in their lives is God.

FAMILY DEVOTION

ASK:

- 1) What do you think the Bible means when it says “God is not far from any of us”?

Possible answers:

God is everywhere. God is invisible. God is available. God wants to be known.

- 2) How can we “look for God?”

Possible Answers:

Through prayer. Through seeing prayers answered. Through worship. Through reading about Him in the Bible. Through learning about Him in Church and through asking other Christians about Him.

- 3) Why is life better when we know God?

Possible Answers:

He’s the only one that knows what we are supposed to do with our lives. He can do things we never could. He loves us more than anyone else ever could. He’s our Heavenly Father.

Assess

03/04/19

When you first came to church or first started pursuing God, what were you looking for? Or what are you looking for now?

How would life be different if you found what you were looking for? Would it satisfy you or would you start looking for something else?

Look at your sermon notes what barriers and breakdowns do you relate to?

Knowledge

03/05/19

Chief End of Man

When asked what he was living for, a man recently said: "To be honest I don't know, I guess just working for now and my main goal for the future is trying to be happy with where I am in life." It was as sad as it was honest.

Switchfoot once famously sang: "We were meant to live for so much more, have we lost ourselves?"

When people ask, "What's the meaning of life?" they want to know: what's the purpose of all this? And perhaps even more personally: "What's the purpose for MY life?"

Christianity believes the Bible provides an answer to this question and it should. After all, shouldn't God know what we're doing here?

One authoritative answer from the tradition of the Church (in light of scripture, of course) is that humanity was made to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Reflect on that concept. Do you believe that enjoying God and glorifying Him is really your purpose? For further reading, explore the following verses. 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 11:36, Psalm 73, Ecclesiastes 12, Acts 17:24-31.

Affections

03/06/19

Christian Hedonism

Read Psalm 16.

Pastor John Piper says, that “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”

The illustration he gives for this is compelling – when we tell our spouse that nothing would make us more happy than spending time with them, they don’t accuse us of being selfish. Instead, they’re honored.

When we find our full satisfaction in God, when we treasure Him, cherish Him, and enjoy Him – He’s honored. We must learn to enjoy God immensely. How do we enjoy God?

- Enjoy his Attributes

What is God like? What makes Him beautiful?

- Enjoy his Promises

What has God assured us in scripture?

- Enjoy his Works

What has God done in the past? In your life?

- Enjoy his Presence

What do you feel when you’re attentive to Him?

- Enjoy his Gifts

What has He given you that you enjoy?

Choose one of the ways to enjoy God that seems easiest for you and foster your affections today.

Practice

03/07/19

Worship – Sacred Pathways (By Gary Thomas)

What is one of your favorite ways to worship God? Consider these 9 Sacred Pathways and choose one that best fits you to practice today.

1. **Naturalists – Loving God in the Outdoors**
Take a prayer walk around the block, hike a mountain, sit by a lake, look up at the stars & enjoy God's creation with Him.
2. **Sensates – Loving God in the Senses**
Dance, color, take communion, journal, paint, light incense, anoint with oil, visit a Cathedral, look at stained glass, etc.
3. **Traditionalists – Loving God in Ritual**
Read a hymn, recite the Lord's Prayer, Recite a Prayer from Church Tradition, Recite a creed, etc.
4. **Ascetics – Loving God in Simplicity & Solitude**
Fast, Retreat, Downsize, Sabbath, Meditate in Silence, Slow down, etc.
5. **Activists – Loving God in Confrontation**
Support a cause, give to charity, volunteer your time, give to someone in need, etc.
6. **Caregivers – Loving God by Loving Others**
Visit a shut-in, go on a hospital visit, invite someone over for dinner, bring someone groceries, etc.
7. **Enthusiasts – Loving God in Celebration**
Sing, Praise, Dance, Shout, Give thanks, Consider his works, share your praises with others, etc.
8. **Contemplatives – Loving God in Adoration**
Meditate, practice the presence, breath prayer, write a love letter to God, etc.
9. **Intellectuals – Loving God with the mind**
Study the Bible, Read a commentary, listen to a podcast, watch a sermon, etc.

Community

03/08/19

Read Psalm 1

Notice that the person in discussion in Psalm 1 is becoming increasingly comfortable with his community. First, he's walking, then he's standing, and finally he's taken his seat among them. He is one of them.

Think of the five people that you spend the most time with – what's their spiritual condition? Maybe they're not even people you know personally. Perhaps they're authors, celebrities, news anchors, singers, or journalists.

Who can you pursue this week that's as close to God as you want to be? Take them out for coffee and spend time with them. Ask them about their faith and enjoy their company and conversation.

If you're in a small group, text, email, call or spend time with some of your members. Invest in people who are close to God.

If you're more of a recluse than you'd like to admit you might want to spend time reading the works of a Christian who has lived out a life of exemplary faith.

Do something today to work towards surrounding yourself with and investing into a more godly community.

Gameplan
Breakthrough

03/09/19

Look over the last week of devotions, consider the sermon from Sunday, as well as your small group discussion questions. Review the Barriers, Breakdowns, and Breakthroughs of this stage.

What was the most helpful day of Soul Training from this past week?

If this is currently your stage, how do you plan to “breakthrough”?

If you know someone at this stage, how might you help them to breakthrough?

WEEK 3

FOUND IT

In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon writes that God “has set eternity in the human heart.” (3:11). It’s as if deep within all of us there is an innate desire for more beyond this life and this world. In fact, C.S. Lewis wonderfully speculates that,

“Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” (Mere Christianity)

Oftentimes when we “find God” it can be exhilarating – we are loved by the only One who knows us fully. We’re forgiven and we’re accepted, and we’re given a sense of purpose. We’re even told that angels celebrate.

Yet scripture tells us to count the cost. Why? Because God isn’t interested in just your praise or just your tithe or just your admiration or just your heart or just your Sundays or just your habits... He wants all of you. When Jesus tells people to count the cost he says, “Those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.” (Luke 14:33).

WEEK 3
03/10/19

SERMON NOTES
Found it

FAMILY DEVOTION

God's Name

Read 1 Peter 4:16

¹⁶ But if you suffer because you are a Christian, then do not be ashamed. You should praise God because you wear that name.

(We suggest the NIRV or the ICB or the NLT for young children)

What do you have in your house that your name is written on? Sometimes we write our names on clothing tags or coat labels or important papers. Sometimes we write our names on things we make like drawings or paintings. Usually we write our names on things that belong to us, on things that we create, and on things that we think are valuable.

In the Bible verse that we read, we found out that people who believed in Jesus were calling themselves "Christians." This is because Jesus was also called "Jesus Christ" and Christian means "little Christ."

When we call ourselves Christians we're saying that we belong to Jesus, that He created us, and that we're valuable to Him.

FAMILY DEVOTION

ASK:

1) What are your favorite things about Jesus?

Possible answers:

How loving He is. How kind He is. That He died for me. That He wants me to know God. That He forgives me.

2) Who do you know that is a Christian?

Possible Answers:

Parents, pastors, Sunday school teachers, small group members, etc.

3) Do you think you're valuable to Jesus?

Possible Answers:

God loves everyone (John 3:16), God knows your name and how many hairs are on your head (Luke 12:7). You were "bought" with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20)

4) What would you say if someone asked if you were a Christian?

Assess

03/11/19

Where are you when it comes to this stage? Do you feel like you're close to Finding it? Have you already found it? If so, when?

If you have "found it," what is different about your life as a result?

What barriers are keeping you from breaking through to the next stage?

What breakdowns are you concerned about?

Knowledge

03/12/19

Salvation as Covenant

The Lord's Supper is what early Christians would've considered to be a covenantal, sacrificial, meal. In the Old Testament, when a covenant was made, the parties involved would kill an animal and make a pact: "May my fate be that of this animal if I break my covenant with you." Then, they'd eat the animal together.

God does this four times in the Old Testament with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and King David. But even the Old Testament speaks of a New Covenant which is yet to come.

When Jesus told his followers to take communion – it was to serve as a reminder of what Jesus called the "new covenant in my blood which is shed for you."

You see Jesus' sacrifice was a covenantal sacrifice and at the same time His sacrifice was the price for our sin. Salvation then, isn't merely following a set of doctrinal beliefs but it's a covenant or a partnership with God, if you will. Through communion, we're to be reminded of this partnership.

Read and consider 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 & Hebrews 8-9. How does understanding your salvation as a partnership change the way you think about your faith?

Affections

03/13/19

Salvation as Relationship

In Galatians 2:20 Paul says that Jesus loves him and died for him. Paul uses very personal language – he doesn't say that Jesus died for a collective "us" but rather Paul personalizes it and says that Jesus died for him.

What Paul says is true for each of us – Jesus loves you and died for you.

We mentioned in the last "Soul Training" devotion that salvation was a covenant. That's true but don't miss the fact that covenants form a relationship.

You see, salvation isn't just a contract between two parties but it's a contract that binds a relationship. Much like a marriage certificate!

Salvation is unique to us because it's both a communal activity (we join the Body and Bride of Christ) as well as an individual one (He knows our names and numbers the hairs on our head and we are His adopted children).

In fact Jesus expects that we'll have an intimate relationship or union with Him. Read and reflect on John 10:1-18 and then develop your personal relationship with Jesus by spending time listening prayerfully for His voice. Thank Him for loving you and for dying for you.

Practice

03/14/19

Remember your Baptism

Romans 6:3-11 encourages us to “remember our baptism.” Those who have never been baptized but consider themselves as having “found it” ought to get baptized by the Church as soon as possible.

Those who were baptized as infants can’t remember the experience of their baptism but they can recall and reaffirm their baptism.

If you’ve been baptized, practice “remembering” it today. Doing so is a common practice within the tradition of Christianity. Sometimes people will sprinkle holy water on themselves in the sign of a cross as they enter a sanctuary as a way to remember their baptism.

Many churches don’t have holy water (including ours) but there’s no reason you can’t remember your baptism as you shower today and say this prayer by UMC Pastor Adam Hamilton:

“Lord, as I enter the water to bathe, I remember my baptism. Wash me by your grace. Fill me with your Spirit. Renew my soul. I pray that I might live as your child today, and honor you in all that I do.”

Contact the church office if you want to find out more about getting baptized.

Community

03/15/19

Share Your Testimony

One of the benefits of speech is it turns abstract thoughts into concrete ideas. When we share our faith or share our testimony, we don't just encourage other people's faith, but our own faith is strengthened in the process as well.

We talked about Baptism in our last devotion. Baptism is not just a personal event but it's also a public declaration of our faith. As we remember our baptism, it makes sense for us to once again confess our faith publicly.

Consider one of these options:

1. Create a Facebook story sharing how you came to faith. (Tag us so we can see and share it!)
2. Ask a fellow Christian or small group member if you can share testimonies over a cup of coffee.
3. Invite a non-Christian out for coffee and ask questions about their faith experience and then ask permission to share yours "Can I tell you a bit about my spiritual experience?"

Gameplan
Breakthrough

03/16/19

Look over the last week of devotions, consider the sermon from Sunday, as well as your small group discussion questions. Review the Barriers, Breakdowns, and Breakthroughs of this stage.

What was the most helpful day of Soul Training from this past week?

If this is currently your stage, how do you plan to “breakthrough”?

If you know someone at this stage, how might you help them to breakthrough?

WEEK 4

FOLLOWING IT

James 2:19 says,

“You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.”

The word “disciple” is used almost 270 times in the New Testament. The word “Christian” is used a grand total of 3 times. Yet many Christians today are content to believe without experiencing much life change. Sometimes we call them “Cultural Christians” or “nominal Christians” but whatever we call them, the truth is – they have a similar faith to demons.

As James says, even demons believe in God. In fact, they even fear God! There are many people today who believe in God and don't fear Him – let alone follow him.

It becomes readily apparent as we read the New Testament that the “Found it” stage of our faith can't last forever. Why? Because conversion isn't the end of the journey, it's the beginning.

Follow along as we talk about what this looks like, what comes next, and how to “breakthrough” and not “breakdown.”

WEEK 4
03/17/19

SERMON NOTES
Following It

GROUP QUESTIONS

Following It

WEEK 4

Start with a worship exercise then show the recap video.

1. Review your sermon notes from Sunday. What stood out to you? What challenged you? What did you want to hear more about?
2. What's been the hardest part of following Jesus?
3. What's been the most rewarding part of following Jesus?

FAMILY DEVOTION

God's House

Read Psalm 8

(We suggest the NIRV or the ICB or the NLT for young children)

Every home belongs to someone. Every home has different rules.

The rules of each home are usually made by the person or people that own the home. Some homes want you to take your shoes at the door. Some homes put a limit on the amount of screen time people have. Some homes pray before they eat.

When we visit someone else's house – it's good for us to follow their rules. Most of the time rules are there for our benefit – so we don't get hurt, so we don't hurt others, or so we don't hurt our home.

The Bible teaches us that this world belongs to God. He created it and He's invited us to live in it according to his rules. Just like our parents have rules for our home and for our lives – God is a loving father who knows what's best and wants us to be able to live life in the best way possible. His rules help us to live a life that is helpful instead of a life that is hurtful.

FAMILY DEVOTION

ASK:

1) What are some of your home's rules?

Possible answers:

Wash hands before we eat. Obey the first time. Don't throw things.

2) What are some of God's rules?

Possible Answers:

Love people. Turn the other cheek. 10 commandments. Worship God and nothing else.

3) Where do we find out what God's rules are?

Possible Answers:

The Bible. Church. KidsPark Sunday school/children's ministry. Pastors. Other Christians.

4) What would happen if everyone followed God's rules?

Possible Answers:

The world would be safer. No one would steal. Everyone would have food to eat and homes to sleep in.

Assess

03/18/19

Where are you when it comes to this stage? Do you feel like you're close to "Following it"? If not, what's holding you back?

If you are here, what's it like for you? Is it fun? Is it hard? Is it boring? How would you describe your current faith experience?

What barriers are you facing? OR what barriers do you find relatable?

What breakdowns are you concerned about?

Knowledge

03/19/19

Read Matthew 22:37

³⁷Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

What does it look like to love God with ALL of your mind? Consider these three categories:

Right Posture

To love God with all of our mind means to have a posture of teachability and a desire to understand more. Some get frustrated with doctrinal learning or have finished learning and end up having a mind that does not fully love God as a result of poor posturing.

Right Understanding

As we move beyond posture we must not just have the right inclination but also the right conclusions. Right understanding involves being humble enough to listen to the authority of Church Tradition. It's not just a matter of what YOU think scripture says about God or what YOU want to be true of God.

Right Fantasies

Daydreaming about sin is not uncommon and sometimes we let ourselves do it because it's not "hurting" anyone. But loving God with ALL of our minds means being obedient even with our fantasies. (Philippians 4:8)

Affections

03/20/19

Read Revelation 2:1-7

Jesus knew the Church in Ephesus and saw that on the surface they did everything right. Their good deeds were known, they worked hard, they persevered, they guarded against heresy and false prophets, they endured hardships, and did not grow weary!

But something was wrong. Their affections were off and Jesus said that He held it against them saying that they've forsaken the love they've had at first.

Jesus gives them these instructions for changing course: Consider how far they've fallen, repent, and do the things they did at first.

Don't marriages do this when they're in danger or in need of cultivating love? They consider how far they've fallen, they repent, and they go on dates and remember to act like newly weds. In fact, one piece of advice for married couples is to treat every date with your spouse as if you're trying to get a second one.

So what was your faith like when you were just beginning to take God seriously? What things did you do when you were excited about getting to know Him? Brainstorm a list and choose one of those things to do today.

Practice

03/21/19

Surrender Something – Luke 9:23

²³ And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Following Jesus isn't just a one time decision but it's also a daily one. In the same way, Surrender isn't a one time decision either. In fact, God seems to slowly reveal to us that which is unsurrendered over the course of our lifetime. We are also constantly producing desires that have to potential to turn into unsurrendered areas of our lives.

As a result, Jesus tells us that we are take up our cross daily. In other words, we must die to self each day. We must constantly examine and ask God what parts of our lives are offensive to him like David in Psalm 139.

²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

What's something that you need to surrender to God today?

Community

03/22/19

Accountability & Confession

James 5:16 teaches, ¹⁶ *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

Pastor James Hervey, shared these reasons as to why he was committed to asking hard questions as part of John Wesley's "holiness club":

1. Because we are ignorant and shortsighted... and often unable to discern things that are excellent. But God reveals to one what is good for another; so that, in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom.
2. Because we are lovers of ourselves... unwilling to see our own errors, therefore unlikely to amend them. Whereas our friends will, with a meek and impartial spirit, show us our faults.
3. Because we are weak and irresolute...[we] let go our integrity upon any opposition. But a band of friends who are like minded, inspire us with courage and confidence.
4. Because we are lukewarm in religious duties. But a holy fellowship will kindle and keep alive a holy fervor.

Is this the next step for your faith?

Gameplan
Breakthrough

03/23/19

Look over the last week of devotions, consider the sermon from Sunday, as well as your small group discussion questions. Review the Barriers, Breakdowns, and Breakthroughs of this stage.

What was the most helpful day of Soul Training from this past week?

If this is currently your stage, how do you plan to “breakthrough” to “All about it”?

If you know someone at this stage, how might you help them to breakthrough?

WEEK 5

ALL ABOUT IT

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Sometimes it's easy for us to view the journey of Christians in two parts – infant Christians and mature Christians. But the truth is, there's more to it than that. After we mature we're also expected to reproduce. You could think of the Christian life in 4 stages – Non-Christian, Newborn, Mature, And Parent.

What does a disciple do? She follows Jesus, yes but she also works to fulfill the Great Commission because that's the work that Jesus gave His disciples to do. So disciples make disciples that make disciples.

The truth is, making disciples is hard work. Sharing our faith is difficult and caring about other people's spiritual growth can be taxing. In order to do this, we need to be “All About It” because it's not always going to be easy or exciting or fun and sometimes we'll need other people in our lives who are also “All About It” so that they can encourage us and keep us on task.

WEEK 5
03/24/19

SERMON NOTES
All About it

FAMILY DEVOTION

God's Children

Read Matthew 5:44-45

⁴⁴ But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. ⁴⁵ Then you will be children of your Father who is in heaven. He causes his sun to shine on evil people and good people. He sends rain on those who do right and those who don't.

(We suggest the NIRV or the ICB or the NLT for young children)

A lot of times children act like their parents. This starts from the moment we're born. When babies see parents smile – they'll smile back. Children play house or pretend to cook in a play kitchen or pretend to go to work and send emails from pretend phones.

Children also learn to respond and react and interact in ways that they've learned from their parents. Jesus says that one of the ways that we act like children of God is to love people who are mean to us and pray for people who hurt us.

Jesus wants us to know that God is our heavenly Father and we are to act the way that we would if we truly understood that we were God's children. Isn't it amazing that Jesus thinks we can love like God does?

FAMILY DEVOTION

ASK:

1) Who does God love?

Possible answers:

Those who do right, and those who do wrong. Everyone! Those who are "evil" and those who are good.

2) Why does God want us to love people that are mean to us?

Possible Answers:

Because people are valuable – even the mean ones who forget to value people. Because water puts out a fire the way love puts out hate.

3) What are some things we can do to love our enemies?

Possible Answers:

Pray for them. Give them gifts. Respond kindly to them. Say nice things to them. Forgive them.

Assess

03/25/19

Are you here? If not, what's holding you back?
What do you need to do to get here?

Who do you know that you would consider to be
"All About It"? What is it that you see in them that
makes you say that?

What barriers are you facing? OR what barriers
do you find relatable?

What breakdowns are you concerned about?

Knowledge

03/26/19

Read James 1:2-5

How we respond to trials will dictate whether or not what James says here will be true for us. James tells us to “let perseverance finish it’s work so that you may be mature and complete...”

It’s human nature for us to fight against trials. We don’t want our faith to be “tested.” When we are in hardship our prayer is usually, “God, help me escape this” rather than “God, help me learn from this.”

But James says, “Let perseverance finish it’s work.” We have to drill this idea into our heads. If we don’t we’ll continue to face hardships (small and large) with resistance and evasion rather than with a teachable disposition.

The next time you’re suffering, the next time you’re frustrated, the next time you feel hurt, the next time you’re down and out, the next time you want some struggle to be over – pause. Ask God to help you to learn what there is to learn from it. Lean into it.

At some point we have to be willing to let trials become our teachers if we’re ever going to be “mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Affections

03/27/19

James 1:12

12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

Do you see the key to persevering under trial? It's love. James says that the crown is promised to those who love him and those who love him are the ones who persevere.

Consider for a moment these familiar words:

"To have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, forsaking all others, till death us do part."

What are we saying? We're saying: I love you so much, there's nothing I wouldn't suffer for you. As long as you're with me, it's worth it."

Consider this prayer:

"I take you God, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, forsaking all others, and not even death can part us."

Practice

03/28/19

Litany of Humility (Adaped)

Recite the words of this powerful prayer as we seek to be "All About It!"

Deliver, me, Jesus.

From the desire of being esteemed

From the desire of being extolled

From the desire of being honored

From the desire of being praised

From the desire of being preferred to others

From the desire of being consulted

From the desire of being approved

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being humiliated,

From the fear of being despised

From the fear of suffering rebukes

From the fear of being dishonored

From the fear of being forgotten

From the fear of being ridiculed

From the fear of being wronged

From the fear of being suspected

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire

That others may be loved more than I

That others may be esteemed more than I

That others may be chosen and I set aside

That others may be praised and I unnoticed

That others may be preferred to me in all things

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

In Jesus Name, Amen.

Community

03/29/19

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

*³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— ³³ even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. **11** ¹ Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

All over The New Testament we see that we're to teach others, to mentor others, to be an example to others, to influence others, and to show care for other's spiritual health. We are, most definitely "our brother's keeper."

The question for you to consider today is simple: Who are you caring for spiritually? Make a list of people that you're either currently caring for or that you'd like to be more intentional about caring for:

Gameplan
Finishing Strong

03/30/19

Consider the whole Focus Season

What was the memorable and impactful moment or idea for you?

What are your next steps in response to this series?

Which of the following options would you consider:

- New Believer's Class
- Joining a Small Group
- Leading a Small Group
- Membership Class
- Accountability Partner
- Being Disciplined
- Disciplining Others

Send an email to office@waiteparkchurch.org to find out more.



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