

Personal Spiritual Growth

Summary

We have come to the end of our GTN course called Personal Spiritual Growth. I hope that it has been helpful for you. What I would like to do in this short summary lesson is highlight all the key points from each lesson.

You can find this one-page diagram on page 50 of your handout. This diagram contains all the different pictures that we've used for each of the lessons.

It includes the different scripture verses, the main thought, the main theme for each lesson. This will be a helpful tool for you to summarize the learnings, to help to reflect on what God has taught you.

As with all of our GTN trainings, we try to speak to the head, the heart, and the hands.

With the head, there is information. There's biblical truth that we take in.

Information is important. Truth is important. But information by itself, knowledge by itself just puffs up. It can lead us to being prideful. Training doesn't stop with knowing things.

Knowledge of biblical truth should then impact our hearts. There should be inspiration. There are truths we have come to know and believe that should inspire us.

Head = information.

Heart = inspiration.

Inspiration creates a passion, a deeper belief of the things that we've learned. But if training stops there, it falls short of God's desire.

These truths should impact our hands. Our hands represent transformation. It's taking the information we know to be true. It has inspired us. Impacted our heart. And now it's going to cause us to put these truths into practice in our lives.

Our hands represent our life. It is doing something with what we have learned. We are called to take what we have learned and to pass it on to others, to be training others. This is part of discipleship.

The vision of Global Training Network is built around 2 Timothy 2:2, where Paul was teaching things to Timothy. And he said, the things I taught you, would you then teach others who would be able to teach others. There is reproduction, multiplication.

That's a picture of discipleship. The things that you've learned in this course, internalize them, summarize them, put them into words, to be able to teach someone else.

You might lead a Bible study. If you're a pastor, you might teach your church. The key is to do something with what you have learned.

I encourage you after this training to go back through the handout, look up the verses, and become familiar the content. Use this one-page summary.

Another step may be to teach this to someone else.

In Lesson 1, we talked about our identity. It's all about our identity, understanding the big picture process of what God is looking to do in the life of every follower of Jesus.

We focused on transformation and training. You have the picture of the butterfly. God's plan for every believer is to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, to be conformed to the likeness of his son.

We are transformed when we put our trust in Christ. We are a new creation, just like the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly.

Yet, as a Christian, we're not only transformed but we are also being transformed. We're continuing to be changed by God, continuing to be conformed to the likeness of his Son. God will accomplish this transformation in our lives.

Transformation and spiritual training go hand in hand. Training is not about trying harder. We are not trying to earn God's favor, to earn his love. Training is about effort. 1 Timothy 4:7 says to train ourselves for godliness. We are to work at whatever we do, with all of our heart. It's working for God and not for men.

Philippians 2:12 – 13 says, “work out our salvation, not work for it, but work out our salvation with fear and trembling because it's God, the Holy Spirit of God, who's working in us to will and to act.” It is understanding that God's grace is teaching us to make a choice to say no to sin. And his grace is teaching us to make a choice to say yes to living in a godly way.

We are to be walking in a manner worthy of the calling that we've received. This is the transformation that God desires. His method for accomplishing this is through spiritual training and through the power of the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God and by the grace of God.

Also in Lesson 1, we introduced the Navigator's wheel as a spiritual development tool. This is a simple tool that we can use to assess how we're doing spiritually. We can also use it as a tool to help others begin to grow in their relationship with the Lord.

The wheel was incorporated into each lesson. The hub of the wheel places Christ at the center of our lives. The rim of the wheel is the obedient life in Christ, the obedient spirit filled life. There are spiritual disciplines of grace that God gives us to develop our relationship with God, our vertical relationship, through the Word of God and prayer.

And then there are horizontal spokes that help us develop our love for those within the church. We call that fellowship. And then how we show love to those who don't know Jesus yet and called witnessing.

The wheel is a helpful spiritual self-assessment tool and it is a wonderful discipleship tool.

The picture for Lesson 2 is in the bottom of the chart. It's a cross with the grapevine wrapped around it. This is a reminder that our life is to be focused on Christ. Jesus is the true vine. We are the branches. There's an expectation that God will produce fruit. We're just branches that are to bear fruit.

The Holy Spirit of God is working within us, conforming us to the likeness of Christ. And the Holy Spirit will produce more love and joy and peace, in our lives over time. What was important out of this lesson was that it is good to know who we were, who we were before we trusted Christ from Ephesians chapter 2. We were dead in our sin. We were separated from God. We were under God's wrath.

Yet because of God's love, he made us alive in Christ. And it is good to know who we are in Christ. When Satan attacks, when our doubts come about, when our flesh is rising up within us, we do not rely on how we feel.

We can say, I know what the Bible says about who Jesus is. And I know what the Bible says about my identity as a follower of Jesus, as someone who is in Christ. So that was the focus of lesson two.

The picture for Lesson 3 is at bottom right-hand corner of page 50. It's this obedient spirit-filled life. In the picture, the circle represents the life of a person.

The chair is the throne of our life. The cross represents Jesus. Is Jesus on the throne of each area of our life? Are we continuing to yield more and more control to the Holy Spirit in our lives? The letter S represents each of us. Are we on the throne or is Christ on the throne? And we talked about the difference between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that takes place at the moment of salvation.

When we put our trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit indwells us. We are sealed and marked with the promise of the Holy Spirit. And then we compared this to being filled with the Spirit as a moment-by-moment process of yielding control, yielding our lives to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit desires that we give him full control. We are commanded in Ephesians 5:18 to be filled with the Spirit of God.

These first three lessons provide a firm foundation for our spiritual growth.

Then the next four lessons focused on spiritual disciplines of grace that help us develop our relationship with God, our love for God through the Word of God. We used the Word / hand picture. There are five fingers wrapped around a Bible. We can hear the Word of God. That's on one of the fingers. We can read the Word of God. We can study the Word of God. We can memorize the Word of God and meditate on the Word of God.

And when we bring all those together, we have a firm grasp of the Word of God. We spent time talking about the value of studying the Word.

We introduced a simple 3-step process to study the Bible called observation, interpretation, and application. As we apply these three simple steps, we can become self-feeders of the

Bible. We can begin to feed ourselves, not relying on what other people have studied, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, the illumination of the Holy Spirit, we can begin to understand for ourselves what the Bible says.

And through that process, will be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

In Lesson 4B, We talked about the discipline of prayer. And we looked at Matthew 6 and the prayer model that Jesus gave us.

Jesus said, don't pray like the hypocrites. They pray with the wrong motives to be seen, to glorify themselves. Don't pray like the Gentiles or the pagans. They pray with the wrong methods. They think that long prayers, loud prayers, they think that prayer is a magic formula. If you say just the right words or pray just long enough, you can influence God to respond in the way you want Him to.

Jesus said, no. Instead, you, as my followers, pray this way. And He gave us what we call the Lord's Prayer.

And the picture for prayer was this four-step process. There is a conductor leading an orchestra or choir. He is providing a beat or rhythm for the instruments and singers to follow. Jesus' model prayer also provides a rhythm for praying. Prayer is first upward to God. It's in reverence to Him, with praise and thanksgiving.

Next it is downward in an attitude of submission, surrender, confession of sin. We are yielding our heart to God's kingdom come and His will being done.

Next, with hearts aligned to God's will, we begin to bring requests before the Lord for ourselves and for others.

And then we move out into the world. There's an outward movement of praying for readiness, protection against the temptation of the evil one, claiming the promises of God, to walk in a manner worthy of the calling that we receive.

And the prayer ends back upward, For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

We said that we do not need to pray through each step of this model prayer every time we pray. There are times it's fine, just to say, God, I need help. I need you. We can just praise and thank God is a prayer. We can just confess our sin through prayer.

But anytime we have extended times of prayer, there should be balance to our praying with thanksgiving, with praise, with surrender, with confession, with prayers for ourselves, prayers for others.

We said that a key thought about praying was not just to pray to seek God's hand, not just to get things from Him.

We must seek His face more than just His hand. Prayer is a means of grace to develop and deepen our relationship with God. It's a picture of abiding in Christ.

Remember, when we abide in Christ, it's going to impact our praying as well. Our effectiveness for Him, our witness, every relationship that we have will be strengthened because of the way we begin to approach prayer.

The final two lessons focused on the two horizontal spokes of the wheel.

How do we grow in our love for people? If we say we love God, is our love for God demonstrated in how we love others. These are people within the church and others who don't know Jesus yet.

In the bottom right-hand corner, is a picture of the way we love others, we just call that fellowship. And it's a picture of the basin and the towel, someone washing the feet of someone else.

We are following Jesus' example. He said, I have given you an example. The way I have washed your feet, you now go and wash the feet of others.

Serve others. Live a life of servanthood, a life of submission, a life of surrender. Find ways to use the spiritual gifts that God has given to us to build up the body of Christ, to edify the body of Christ, again, in service of others, to live out the one anothers, serving others, encouraging others, showing hospitality to one another, showing mercy towards one another.

There are 25 of these different one anothers in the Bible. These that are a picture of fellowship within the body of Christ, discipleship within the body. The way we show love towards each other within the body of Christ will be a witness to the world that people will know that we are followers of Jesus.

When God opens the door for witnessing opportunities, our love for Jesus will compel us to love others and point them, to Jesus. We are called to be witnesses.

We are ambassadors for Christ. We are fishers of men.

Much like in agriculture, there is a process of cultivating, planting and reaping. This process takes time to build relationships with people. God opens doors to plant the seed, the seed of the gospel, that he will use to bring about growth and transformation in the lives of people and open their eyes to first put their trust in Christ as Savior and then to begin to grow as a follower of Jesus.

In that lesson 5 on witnessing, we reviewed different techniques for sharing the gospel. The picture witnessing is the Bridge to Life using Romans 6.23.

We must be prepared to witness. We must be ready to give an answer for the hope that we have in the Lord Jesus. And the most effective witnesses for Christ will be those who are living a life that's reflecting more of the character of Christ. When we share the gospel, the words that we're sharing match the life that we are living.

Not in a perfect way, but there's an alignment. There's a synergy between what we're sharing and how we're living. People may begin to ask questions because we're in relationship with them and they are seeing a difference in our lives. They're seeing a transformation that is taking place in our life that will lead to open doors to share the gospel.

This summarizes the Navigator's Wheel, which was at the heart of this course on personal spiritual growth. Page 51 provides you with a blank page for you to review your learnings. You can test yourself.

You may memorize some of the key verses from each lesson and each part of the Navigator's Wheel. Once you are able to do this, you can begin to teach and disciple others.

Share these truths with someone who's a new believer. It would help them to begin to take steps in growing with Jesus. Or you could even begin to share these truths with someone who doesn't know Jesus yet. Here is my closing prayer for you.

Thank you, Jesus, for your obedience to go to the cross in our place. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for the work that you do within each of our hearts and lives, as you teach us and encourage us and you guide us into all truth and for the gifts that you've given to us.

Thank you for these lessons. Thank you for the picture of this wheel that can help us to assess how we are doing spiritually, how we are growing in relationship with You.

I pray that You will help each student to make this training their own. That they would begin to memorize Your Word. They would have a renewed passion to study the Word of God. They would have a great understanding who Jesus is and what He has accomplished for them.

When Satan comes to distract and deceive and discourage, they would be rooted in the truth of Your Word. Lord, would You help them to be disciple makers as they live these truths and teach them to others.

We thank You for the time that they have invested in listening and reviewing this course. We pray for the pastors who may be reviewing this course as they prepare to teach others.

Be glorified in all that will take place in Your Name, Jesus. Amen.

I look forward to continuing with you either in person or through these recorded teachings.