

## Spiritual Growth Part 4 Spiritual Growth Happens in the Context of Intentional Relationships

### 1 Thessalonians 2

**MAIN POINT:** God has created us to have relationships that make us more like Jesus.

**CORE TRUTH:** It is in relationships built on trust, intimacy, commitment and sacrifice where we experience spiritual growth.

Jesus told His disciples that their love for one another was central to their mission (John 13:34-35). He later told them that they should love each other in the same way He had loved them.

This tells us that disciples are made as people love in the way that Jesus loved. With that in mind, disciple making can be defined as loving people in such a way that you are teaching them to follow Jesus more fully.

#### **READ TOGETHER: 1 THESSALONIANS 2**

**DISCUSS:** How would you sum up this passage in your own words?

**Key Insight:** In verse 4 Paul mentions that he was approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel. Those words give the idea of God valuing and trusting those who belong to Him.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- How should knowing that God approves and trusts you impact the way you relate to others?
- How do you see trust, intimacy, commitment and sacrifice at work in this 1 Thess. 2?
- What do think it could look like to imitate the kind of relationships that Paul describes in verse 7-11?
- What are barriers to cultivating those kind of relationships and how can we overcome them?

**KEY INSIGHT:** Intentional relationships are purposely centered around Christ and His purpose in each other's lives.

### **HOW INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS CAN WORK**

**When you are together do three things:**

- 1) **SHARE** - Talk about what God is teaching you from His Word.
- 2) **SUBMIT** - Practice mutual submission through accountability.

Possible Accountability Questions:

- Have you spent time nurturing your relationship with God this week?
- How have you felt yourself resisting obedience to God this week?
- Have you responded to the challenges of your week with integrity?

- Who have you pursued to share the gospel with in the past week?
- Is there anyone who has hurt you recently that you need to forgive? Is there anyone you need to ask to forgive you?
- How have you battled sexual temptation and how are you preparing to deal with it next week?
- Is anything (school, work, technology, etc.) isolating you from important relationships?
- Is there anything I need to ask you that I have not asked you?

3) **SEEK** – Pray for one another.

- Based on the previous conversations, take a moment to pray for one another or make a commitment to pray for each other in a more appropriate setting.

**SHARE:** Take a few minutes and talk about how your group can move forward in cultivating intentional relationships.

**CLOSE:** Spend time praying that God would deepen the relationships in your group and that you would grow to love in the way Jesus loves.