



## *Practices for Becoming Mature Disciples* SIGN #5 - YOU HELP OTHERS GROW

### *Introducing The Nine Signs of Spiritual Maturity*

We have identified nine characteristics that define a transformed and mature follower of Christ. We hope to use these characteristics, or signs, as mile markers to help us pay attention to the path we're on. It is important to note that these are all broad simplifications. They're not meant to be a pass/fail test, but a gauge we check regularly and to know when and where to adjust as we go. Each week we will explore one of these nine signs in depth using a variety of exercises and spiritual disciplines designed to help you evaluate where you're at and how you can continue growing towards maturity in Christ.

### **This Week's Focus:** A Mature Disciple Helps Others Grow

In the great commission, stated in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus doesn't command the disciples to teach others what he commanded, but rather "how to obey all that he commanded." So often we think helping others grow is about teaching them principles and expectations; we assume that if someone knows better, they'll do better. But Jesus understands that we are flawed humans who are wired for relationships over rules. So his call to us is to walk alongside others. This means "making disciples" looks more like an apprenticeship than a tutorship. When someone wants to become an electrician, they work under an established electrician as an apprentice. They will follow that electrician closely for years and learn through observing and practicing on the job, rather than in a classroom. After the apprenticeship, they'll know how to do the job well enough to go out on his own. Then a few years down the road, that newly established electrician will likely take on an apprentice of their own and the cycle will continue. It's the same for followers of Jesus. We have to become apprentices of Jesus who learn enough to pass on both knowledge and skills to the followers walking right behind us, so they can then pass it on from there.

For us, that means taking personal responsibility to directly support the spiritual maturity of others reflected in the nine signs. This is done most commonly by guiding them to participate in the ministries encouraged by our church that best fit them. A mature disciple recognizes that while we are all unique in our personal callings, we are all commissioned by God to help others grow.

# TIME ALONE

## PRAY: Let God Lead

When we are in an intentional relationship with someone for the purpose of helping them grow, it is just as vital to pray for them as it is to meet with them. Helping someone grow is less about having all the answers, and more about advocating for the work God is doing in their life and encouraging them to engage that work.

If you are not yet helping anyone, start by asking God to open your heart and mind to who He has put in your help to lead. If someone comes to mind right away, use the section below to start praying for them intentionally. If not, ask God to lead you into conversations and open doors for potential relationships.

If you are already helping someone grow, spend time intentionally praying for that person. Consider specific things taking place in their life and their spiritual development. Ask God how He wants you to help grow them; Is there a personal story or revelation he wants you to share with them? A piece of scripture or encouragement? Or a question he wants you to ask them? As you get insights, ask God to help you share those with humility and grace.

## READ: Matthew 28:16 - 20

Read through this passage each day. It can be helpful to read in different translations, such as NIV, ESV, or The Message.

## WORSHIP: This Week's New Songs

We now have a playlist made up of worship songs that are meaningful to our community; including our Sunday setlists and even a few originals! Each week, we'll add new songs. Find the playlist using the links below. Here's what we added this week:

- Jireh by Maverick City Music



# TIME ALONE

## REFLECTION: Who Helped You Grow?

As you consider how you can help someone else grow, it may be helpful to consider how you have been helped. In a journal or notebook, answer the following prompts:

- Who has been a mentor or role model to you in your faith journey?
- How often did you see them? What kinds of things did you do together?
- What were some of their most influential pieces of advice to you?
- What did they do or say that was helpful to you? (Ask good questions, let you talk without interrupting, challenge/push back on you, listen without judgment)
- What did they do or say that was not helpful to you?

Once you're done, consider how you want to help someone else grow. Identify what is most important to you in being a mentor, and what you want to avoid doing. Then finish the statement "I want to be the kind of mentor who..."

*Going deeper: Ask God what kind of mentor He wants you to be. Spend a few minutes listening in silence and then right down what you hear.*

## ACTION: Know Your Apprentice

To help others follow Jesus well, we need a good understanding of who they are and where they uniquely need to grow. So we have developed a tool to help you be intentional in how you coach your people. Use this assessment to evaluate where they are at in their faith journey and what areas you can focus on with them as they grow as an apprentice of Jesus.

**See next page for assessment.** Note: you might not have all the information to adequately answer this form. If this is the case, don't be afraid to ask intentional questions over coffee, lunch, etc. in order to have a better understanding of where they are at.

# VC Spiritual Maturity Assessment

*For Helping Others Grow*

<b>1: Seldom True</b>	<b>2: Sometimes True</b>	<b>3: Typically True</b>	<b>4: Almost Always True</b>
<b>1: Barely Started</b>	<b>2: Showing Some Growth</b>	<b>3: Gaining Momentum</b>	<b>4: Often Thriving!</b>

----- **WE ARE WORSHIPERS OF GOD** -----

## ★ They love Jesus

- They consistently trust Jesus as their personal Savior and the Leader of their life
- They spend time with him and depend on him each day for life, love, & meaning
- They find deep joy and satisfaction in their relationship with Jesus

1      2      3      4

## ★ They are growing in the Spirit

- They demonstrate character such as love, joy, and peace, regardless of their circumstances.
- They approach their relationships with gentleness, kindness, and patience, even in situations of conflict.
- They have left behind destructive habits and impulsive actions that previously were more common in their life.

1      2      3      4

## ★ They trust God with money and their possessions

- They deeply believe that God is to be trusted with their finances and belongings
- They have committed themselves to utilizing their money and belongings to advance his kingdom
- They recognize tithing as the practice of every believer and faithfully give

1      2      3      4

# VC Spiritual Maturity Assessment

*For Helping Others Grow*

----- **WE ARE THE FAMILY OF GOD** -----

★ **They love their church**

- They value and build relationships with other members of Vancouver Church
- They actively foster relationships for their spiritual encouragement and growth
- They contribute to positive relationships in large-groups, small groups, and 1:1s

1      2      3      4

★ **They develop their personal ministry**

- They are moved by the opportunity and benefit of serving in ministry
- They've identified their customized calling & gifting, as well as areas of need & opportunity to join God in ministry
- They consistently serve in ministry in a way that makes impact

1      2      3      4

★ **They help others grow in Jesus**

- They take personal responsibility for the spiritual growth of others
- They foster purposeful relationships for the purpose of passing on their faith to others
- They invest in mentoring relationships in the next generation of believers

1      2      3      4

----- **WE ARE MISSIONARIES OF GOD** -----

★ **They love churchless people**

- They regularly seek and build relationships with people outside the body of Christ
- They show interest, empathy, and grace toward those who do not follow Jesus
- They share the story of how Jesus has changed their life

1      2      3      4

★ **They invite people to their church community**

- They regularly invite friends, relatives, coworkers, or neighbors to join them at church
- They demonstrate the beauty of Jesus to their friends through their words and actions
- They regularly pray for the Holy Spirit's movement and rescue in their friends' lives

1      2      3      4

★ **They serve the most vulnerable**

- They regularly serve the oppressed, the marginalized, and the overlooked
- They seek opportunity to serve the vulnerable both inside and outside the church

1      2      3      4

# TIME TOGETHER

## Welcome:

- Icebreaker: Do you have any items on your “bucket list”? [things you want to do at least once in your life, that you haven’t done]
- Who is a person (i.e. coach, teacher, or mentor) who made a significant positive impact on your life? What story comes to mind when you think of this person?

## Scripture: *Matthew 28:19-20*

Have someone read the passage out loud in any translation. Others can take notes below.

*“16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 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.”*

## Discussion: *The Bible*

- Share any words, phrases, or pictures that stood out to you while reading.
- If this is a passage you have already known, how has your life been impacted by it? How do you see yourself living your life to align with this passage?
- How has God used you to be a part of making disciples?
- Who in your life would you love to see become a follower of Jesus?

# TIME TOGETHER

## **Discussion:** *The Practices*

- Discuss your experience of taking time alone with God  
How hard/easy was it to find time? How did you feel before you started versus after? Do you have a go-to place or spot in the house? What adjustments can you make to help you make time?
- Share insights, questions, and challenges from the “Time Alone” Practices  
What has been encouraging to you this week? What questions do you have from your Time Alone? Where do you see God challenging you? What are 2-3 steps that you can take now to grow in loving your church?

## **Share from your VC Spiritual Maturity Assessment**

- Who is the person you thought of? [you may keep this anonymous, if needed]
- What insights did you find by using the Spiritual Maturity Survey to consider them?
- What are 2-3 steps you can take to help this person grow their apprenticeship with Jesus?

## **Discussion:** *The Journey*

Growing in your relationship with Jesus is a life-long journey. Each of us has highs and lows along the way, and each of us is still growing.

- How have you been encouraged in your relationship with Jesus lately? (the “Wins”)
- What challenges have you experienced that seem to pull you away from trusting God (distractions, defeats, doubts)
- During the next season of focusing on our relationship with Jesus, in what ways are you especially hoping to grow?
- How can the group encourage you and pray for you as we each walk together?

## **Prayer:**

In addition to prayer requests and anything else the group wants to pray about, thank God for the people who have helped you all grow throughout your walk. Then ask Him to continue to give you the courage and wisdom to help others around you.

# FAMILY TIME

Helping others grow in Christ can be intimidating, but it is also incredibly fun! Here are some ideas you can implement as a family.

1. Encourage your children to invite friends to church, don't just invite the child, invite the whole family and have lunch together after!
2. Choose a devotional or a study that your family can do together, this is a fun way to grow together and can give discussion topics for your drives in the car or family dinner.
3. Help your older children lead or host a group. Open up your home and encourage your child to invite their friends over to learn about Jesus. There are a ton of student studies on Right Now Media available that will do the teaching for you!
4. Don't skip opportunities to pray for others as a family. This can be an immediate response to someone sharing a need where you pause and pray together, encourage your kids to pray too!
5. Serve together and invite others to serve alongside you!