

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH DISCUSSION GUIDE

Spiritual growth doesn't happen by accident. We must intentionally and regularly connect with God in order to grow spiritually. This session will provide insight, guidance, and practical steps to grow spiritually by developing spiritual disciplines and practices. We will learn how to connect with God in new, deeper ways in order to become more like Jesus.

### AGENDA OVERVIEW

- Connect | 30 Minutes
- Learn and Apply | 110 Minutes
  - Verse and Prayer Practice | 20 Minutes
  - Reflection Exercises | 90 Minutes
- Pray | 30 Minutes
- Looking Ahead | 10 Minutes

### CONNECT

Spend the next 30 minutes connecting, and use these [Icebreaker Questions](#) if needed.

### LEARN AND APPLY

#### VERSE REVIEW

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

(John 15:4–5)

#### PRAYER PRACTICE

Discuss the prayer practice, and share what you experienced.

#### REFLECTION EXERCISES

**Discuss** *Sacred Rhythms* or *Growth: Training vs. Trying*. If you read *Sacred Rhythms*, then discuss the following questions:

- Chapter 1: Discuss your answer to Jesus's question, “What do you want me to do for you?”
- Chapter 2: Discuss your list of “oughts and shoulds” and expectations you have for yourself.



- Chapter 3: What changes do you need to make to shift your reading of Scripture from using your intellect to gather information to transformational reading with God?
- Chapter 4: How did you learn how to pray when you first became a Christian? What has or has not changed over the years?
- Chapter 5: Describe how easy or difficult it is for you to think of honoring your body as a spiritual practice.
- Chapter 6: What are the benefits of confession? What has kept you from confessing your sins to God and the people they have impacted?
- Chapter 7: What is a prayer for indifference? How can you experience more of God's will through the prayer of indifference? It might be helpful to think of a specific area of life in which you need discernment.
- Chapter 8: What parts of your life (relational, emotional, mental, and spiritual) are you unwilling to live as though there are limits? What is one small change you can make today to live within your limits?
- Chapter 9: Discuss your "Rule of Life" or plan to connect with God daily, weekly, and monthly. Instructions on pages 162–166, and Appendix C. This is a draft, and you will finalize your Rule of Life in the last session.
- Discuss the highlights from your book reflection.

If you read *Growth: Training vs. Trying*, then discuss the following questions:

- Session 1: Ortberg states, "Learning to think, feel, and act like Jesus is at least as demanding as learning to run a marathon or play the piano." Have you ever thought about this when it comes to your relationship with God? How does this quote affect your plan moving forward?
- Session 2: Do you believe you have a good plan when it comes to meditating on Scripture? How should it change?
- Session 3: How was your experience in silence and solitude?
- Session 4: Discuss your experiment with simple prayer.
- Session 5: Discuss your experience praying one of the three transforming prayers.
- Session 6: How do you respond in seasons of waiting? What has God taught you during these times?
- Session 7: Are you known for your love? What is a relationship that needs to be infused with extra love? What is your plan moving forward to make it a priority?





- Discuss the highlights from your book reflection.
- Share your plan for regularly connecting with God.

## **PRAY**

Conclude your time by focusing on one word that describes how you hope to grow spiritually. Then expand on that word to develop a short prayer. For example: "Heavenly Father, the word that comes to mind is **REST**. God, I am feeling so weary these days, and I need you to help me rest." At the end of your prayer time, write down the one word from each person and use that word to pray for one another before the next meeting.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

Review the Assignment Guide for the next session.

