

John 15: 1-8  
Ephesians 4:15

“Growing Up In Faith”

Oct. 30, 2011  
(All Saints Sunday)

“Instead speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:15)

**Learn or Teach!** During the journey of life, life is a lively process of becoming –maturing by learning the meaning of life as well as reflecting on the purpose of life through the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. Think back to the first places you heard about the Bible, faith, and God’s love for you. Where did this happen? Who did you first learn from?

In the *Peanuts* cartoon series, Lucy is in business as a psychiatrist. “Advice – 5 cents,” says her sign. Charlie Brown is her client. Charlie Brown woefully asks Lucy’s advice on finding a purpose in life. Using the metaphor of the bow of a large boat, Lucy responds, “Some people go through life with their deck chair facing backwards, looking at where they’ve been.” Then she asks, “Charlie Brown, which way is your deck chair facing?” Charlie Brown concludes sadly, “I really don’t know – I’ve never been able to get my deck chair unfolded!”

As humans, we can go only so far on our own. Growth-whether spiritual, physical, social, or emotional-happens in a network of relationships and interdependencies. For example, an infant grows well in a loving environment supported by personal relationship. Faith development also takes place in the context of relationship and connection - *persistent and consistent and intentional*.

The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of “growing up” in Christ – developing faith, learning together through worship and study, taking the journey - From spiritual birth to spiritual maturity.

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“I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don’t get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward-to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back” (Philippians 3:12-14).

**Intentional Faith Development for the Christian is about purpose. It is about being equipped to fulfill our purpose as God has made us; and there is no doubt that God has made us for a purpose. When we are intentionally living to fulfill God’s purpose for our lives, then life becomes an exciting adventure as we embody the Gospel in our lives. Life without purpose is a life without meaning.**

**Faith development must be intentional because faith development requires discipline. Too often in life the temptation is to take it easy, to relax, and to take the path of least**

resistance. That is another message we are constantly confronted with in our culture. But without Intentional Faith development, we cannot find our God-designed purpose, because the only way we can discover that is to have a relationship with God in Jesus Christ. Our greatest desire is to know God. We human beings are driven to believe.

Christian faith is looking for future that Jesus leads us to go.

The problem is that, at some point, we begin to think we are mature Christians. We begin to think that classes where we can grow in faith are for those people who are still growing—those who are still coming along. We don't need that anymore. We're comfortable where we are. We think we are mature Christians. There is nothing sadder or more dangerous in the Christian faith than one who claims to be a mature Christian, because the more we grow in faith, the more we realize how far we have to go. Growing in faith-sanctification, becoming holy, becoming Christ-like— is a process that goes on throughout our entire lives.

Jesus not only calls us to grow in our faith; he calls us to live our faith. We are to become, literally, a living faith. We are to be people who become more and more like Jesus. And in that process, we become the hands and feet of Christ...God moves us along by faith. God gives us the gift of faith so that we might become all God is asking us to be. This is the hope, the promise that God gives us. It is life in Christ—"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

#### *We Honor You Today*

You give your love so freely by the things you do and say.  
We become so much richer when you share in your special way.  
Thank you for your friendship, thank you for your care.  
We're blessed so much, you've touched our lives.  
We honor you today.  
Reaching out to one's around us who need our love each day. Showing kindness,  
a smile, a hug, a tear. We cherish the laughter, we treasure the moments you've brought  
along the way. We honor you today.

Our loved ones finished their course of life with their best; they continued to grow in faith of Jesus, learning the knowledge of God by showing their intentional participation in small groups – Bible Study, UMW...

Learn or teach! Remember the following verse: "Instead speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). Amen.