

Committing to Personal Growth
Exercising Self-control and Goal-setting

2 Peter 3:17-18 – We are to grow, we know that—but the question is *how*?

Cultivating Reverence

- **Deut 5:24-27** - We must take God more seriously
- **Jer 30:21** – It is a daring thing to attempt to approach the living God! Our life depends on it!
- **Deut 8:3** - We must realize the nutrition of God's word. What would our souls look like if they were visible?

“Many of us would say we love God. If we actually do, that’s a good thing. But the truth about whether we love Him or not is revealed by the depth of our *determination to be close to Him*. So, how easily are we distracted from thinking about Him? How much time do we spend actually working on our relationship with Him? What price would we pay to keep from losing Him?” – Gary Henry, *Reaching Forward*, January 10

Setting Goals

- **Daniel 1:8, 2 Chron 2:1, Luke 9:51** – Determination to move forward is the impetus we need
- We need specific, tangible checkpoints to broad, spiritual goals
- **Heb 12:1-2** – We need *endurance*. We need *reminders*. Use objects around the house to remind you—Ceiling verses, bathroom mirror, etc.
- **Eph 5:15-16** - Time management is key!

Consider the Example of Jesus:

- **Mark 1:35** – Got up, had a time and place to pray, away from distractions. Made sacrifices.
- **Matt 9:36** – We must cultivate *compassion* for the lost! That’s what our Lord did.

“Prayer takes time, and those who have spent a great deal of time praying have had to make some sacrifices. Whatever it is that we've been doing while they were praying, they've had to do without those things.” – Gary Henry, *Diligently Seeking God*, Nov 30

Questions for discussion:

1. What are some of the broad spiritual goals you have? What *should* your goals be?
2. What are specific ways to those goals?
3. What are you currently doing to grow closer to God? What more can you do?

Example from Royce Chandler:

Suppose Judgment Day was Dec 31 – Write 250 words describing what you've done this semester to grow in Christ.

1. Note specific parts of the Bible you studied this semester and why.
2. Describe how you grew from your study – Give specific examples of your growth as a servant.
3. Describe the main spiritual goal you set for yourself and how you planned to achieve it.
4. If you reached that goal, how then are you a better servant?
5. What is the most memorable spiritual event? Why?

6. List and describe your greatest spiritual achievements in 2009.
7. How did you glorify God in the past year?
8. How is your family better because of your spiritual growth this year?
9. How is your local congregation better because of your service this year?
10. Describe the growth you produced in yourself and others during the year.

Convince Me that you love Me with all your heart, soul, and mind, and that you love others as you love yourself.

Are you ready for your final exam?

Extra Quotes:

“Without setting deliberate goals, we simply "drift" -- occasionally stumbling forward perhaps, but more often than not falling backward into further neglect and worldliness. ... Most importantly, however, we need to *study the character of Jesus Christ* and let Him define our concept of spiritual maturity. What we're aiming to do is “grow up in all things into Him who is the head” (**Eph 4:15**). Doing that will often take us (as it did Him) in a different direction than the popular picture of “spiritual maturity.” – Gary Henry, *Reaching Forward*, Jan 19

“Our first step in rediscovering an authentic Christian spirituality is to gain a clear picture or a mature Christian. If we ignore this question, spiritual growth will become an accidental occurrence.” – Gary L. Thomas