REVIVE

A HANDBOOK FOR GROWTH



WEEK 4: GROW

BY RYAN SCHMALL



Hello Friends,

As followers of Jesus, we are called to discipleship. To some, this word can be intimidating, confusing, or simply not explained. Discipleship, at its heart, is about aligning our life (priorities)? with the way of Jesus and modeling our lives after him in all that we do. Sometimes we can over complicate this reality, but my desire for this devotional is to re-frame your understanding of discipleship and help you think critically about your own life as you have chosen to enter into relationship with Christ. Each week is broken down into one simple concept as we think about the process of ongoing discipleship in our lives: cultivate, plant, nurture, and grow. These seven days are an invitation for you to dive deeper into these ideas through Scripture and intentional questions to examine your own journey and how you can grow closer to Jesus. Every day will be divided into four sections:

- Get Ready An opportunity to prepare ourselves for what God wants us to hear.
- Read the Word A time to dig deep into a specific passage connected to the week's main idea.
- Own Your Thoughts An invitation for you to honestly examine your own life as you wrestle with questions connected to the passage for each day.
- Welcome Change A moment with God to reflect on how you can grow in your relationship with Him.

You may have noticed that the four sections also spell out the acronym GROW, which I hope is a simple reminder to you that this devotional is all a part of the growth process as we transform into deeper disciples in Christ.

Feel free to use this guide however best fits you in your life. Print it out, write on it, grab your own journal, or use it as a guided reflection time - it's your choice! Whatever you need to connect more to our God who loves you so incredibly much!

- Ryan Schmall



You may be wondering why I chose to title this devotional, "Revive." Let me explain.

One of my favorite pastimes is growing a vegetable garden. While I knew I could just go to the store and purchase some tomatoes or artichokes, there was something fulfilling about growing my own produce. I enjoyed working hard and watching my plants grow and develop. My family and I always ended up with an abundance of vegetables that we could then share with our friends and neighbors. My dedication to bringing life to this garden ultimately lead to my ability to share that very life with the world around me. This process of gardening beautifully reflects the concept of life. However, as we know from the life of Jesus, an abundant life actually begins with a death.

Death comes first and then resurrection.

Every year when the time came to replant the vegetable garden, there were usually remnants of last year's harvest. To prepare the garden properly so that new life could flourish, I had to get my hands dirty - literally. I had to tear out the old garden to make space for the new one... but the hard work didn't end there. I had to also give my garden the proper attention it needed to flourish such as keeping a watering schedule, looking out for weeds and disease, and protecting it from harsh weather. I knew that this intentional care had to be done in order to revive- to bring new life to where something was dead.

This is the way Jesus pointed us. If you have made the decision to follow Christ, then you have decided to abandon your old self and embrace a new one through Jesus. So what then, is discipleship?

Discipleship is the hard self-work we carry out to enter into the abundant life with Christ that He desperately wants us to experience. It is the revival of ourselves in Christ as we intentionally tend to the lives God has given us.

So, are you ready to begin?



There was a song I always heard in church growing up that had one line in particular that always stuck out to me:

"They will know we are Christians by our love."

Even at a young age, this lyric resonated deep within my soul. I understood that powerful concept that what comes out of your life is a direct connection to what you were putting into your life. My parents would often explain this to me in terms of friend circles. Who we spend our time with is ultimately who we become.

Christianity isn't about simply proclaiming ideas of love, grace, peace, and goodness. Rather, it's about embodying them as we live our everyday lives. Growth is the fruit produced in our lives that examples a revived life in Christ to the rest of the world. The fruit we grow is the very thing that sticks out to others who observe how we are living.

The first three weeks of this series (Cultivate, Plant, and Nurture) were primarily focused on an inward journey, but the idea of growth is the outward reality of how we have cared for the inward. Essentially, fruit is the way in which we can examine how well we've truly followed in the steps of Jesus.

I would often plant zucchini and squash plants side-by-side. If they were left unlabeled, these two plants were often indistinguishable. It wasn't until fruit was finally produced that you could tell what exactly you had grown. If we consider this in relation to that lyric that caught my attention all those years ago, what could that mean for us in our lives with Christ?

Am I truly embodying the things Jesus has called me to embrace?

Is there evidence of this new life in Jesus in the way I talk, think, and act?

Does the fruit I'm producing with my life truly represent a revived life in Jesus?



grow | \ 'grō \grew; grow; growing intransitive verb 1: to spring up and develop to maturity

Take a moment and remove any distractions that may shift your focus. Turn your cell phone off, find a quiet space, whatever you need! Once you are ready, ask God to help fixate your heart and mind on what He has for you to experience this week.

Read the Word

Galatians 5:13-26

Own Your Thoughts

In this passage, we find Paul helping unpack what a healthy, growing life in Christ looks like. He identifies what we have since coined "the fruit of the Spirit." Essentially, these fruits are produced by living life closely to Jesus. As you examine, the list Paul provides, use a spare piece of paper, a journal, or the space on the next page to reflect on each one and how it is or isn't being reflected in your own life. Ask yourself some hard questions about why you avoid or refuse to embrace the one(s) you struggle with.

Welcome Change

Reflect on your answers. Spend some time listening for God's voice of direction in your life. Ask God to help you better embody these fruits in your life so that you can be an example to others what a revived life in Christ looks like.





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Find a space where you can be present with God without distractions. Find your notes from yesterday if you have them. Invite Him to continue to move in your life and reveal His will for you as you draw closer to Him.

Read the Word

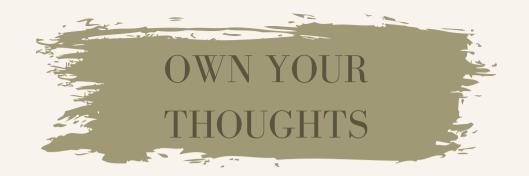
John 15:1-17

Own Your Thoughts

In our culture, we are bombarded with the idea that we must produce results. We work, sweat, and bleed in order to have something to prove to the world. In our walk with Christ, however, the fruit we produce is not of our own accord. Rather, it's work God does in and through us. God has commanded us simply to abide in Him so that His fruit may be apparent in our lives. In your walk with Christ, how have you tried to create your own results and bear your own fruit? What would it look like for you to embrace what this passage conveys to us?

Welcome Change

Pray for God to challenge you remember to abide in Him. In the moments where you feel tempted to take things into your own hands, ask God to help you hand it all over back to Him.





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Quiet your heart and take a moment to ask God to help you more clearly see His path to growth in your life.

Read the Word

Matthew 7:15-20

Own Your Thoughts

This passage provides a warning for those who provide a false idea to others of what following Christ looks like. The author brings up the idea of "good fruit" vs. "bad fruit." What are ways that you can decipher the difference between these ideas? What does "bad fruit" look like? Does it always look bad or are there times it can actually appear enticing but be rotten on the inside? Examine your own life for a moment and ask yourself which type is most prevalent in you.

Welcome Change

As you reflect on the exercise above, invite God to help you identify ways in which you are embodying "bad fruit." Pray for His guidance on how to can shift your heart, attitude, or behavior to abide more fully in the ways of Jesus so that "good fruit" may be more evident in you.





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Take a moment to ask God to quiet your mind, heart, and soul as you invite Him to help you more fully reflect the ways of Jesus in your life.

Read the Word

Matthew 28:16-20

Own Your Thoughts

This passage has come to be known as "The Great Commission" because it epitomizes our responsibility with the "good news" that we've been given as followers of Jesus. You and I have been called, or commissioned, to take the fruit that we've been blessed with and share it with the world. Take a moment and examine how you are embodying this call in your daily life.

Welcome Change

As you reflect on the exercise above, invite God to give you the courage to more boldly and passionately share the gift of the Gospel with the world around you, not just with words but the very way you carry yourself in your daily life.





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Spend a moment preparing your heart in prayer, asking God to give you the courage to honestly acknowledge your need to resemble Him and His ways more and more in your life.

Read the Word

John 6:1-14

Own Your Thoughts

This passage provides a beautiful illustration of a life lived for Christ and how that ultimately created an overabundance of food to share with the world. You see, the boy in this story is a reflection of what happens in our lives, even today, when we abide in Christ. God produces more and more through us. We, then, have an opportunity to take the abundance of life God has given to us and share it with those around us. This process begins as an individual deciding to follow Jesus then moves into a collective reality. In what ways has God used you to do something similar? Reflect back on your life and think about the ways God has utilized you to bring the life-giving truth of Jesus to those around you? Or perhaps take some time to consider how you may have been a recipient of such blessing in your own life.

Welcome Change

Thank God for the ways in which He has used you and others to feed truth to this world. Invite Him to identify one area of your life where you can, like the boy in this story, volunteer yourself and what you have to be grown into something the world around you can also utilize.





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Spend some time with God reflecting back on the past four weeks. Thank Him for His ongoing grace and love in your life as you foster your relationship with Him. Invite God to continue revealing ways in which you can grow closer to Him.

Read the Word

James 1:1-26

Own Your Thoughts

Here we are at the end of this series. You can probably see that this process of discipleship is not quick one so we are "in the club," so to speak. Rather, it's a commitment to an entire way of life, a daily surrender to living life for God and God alone. This passage speaks to that truth. As you reflect on the past four weeks in conjunction with this passage, examine the new ways in which God has inspired you, opened your eyes and heart, and help produce new fruit in your life. Reflect on the ways in which you have grown and changed and how you will continue to implement the ideas and patterns that have guided you through these weeks.

Welcome Change

Reflect on your answers and thoughts to the exercise above. Ask God for His help to keep your entire life fixated on Him and Him alone. Create a plan for how you will continue to Cultivate, Plant, Nurture, and Grow your relationship with Christ.

