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ONE DAY YOUR LIFE WILL FLASH BEFORE YOU, MAKE SURE IT'S WORTH WATCHING

GUARD YOUR GROWTH (Week 3)

WELCOME: Do you think you have grown in your faith over the last few months?

WORSHIP: Share one major lesson you've learned in our Bucket List series that you are most thankful for?

WORD: When God causes your spiritual life to grow, it is essential to guard your growth. One of the things that the enemy is not happy about, it's your progress. As John 10:10 says, "*The enemy has come to steal, kill and destroy...*" He doesn't want to see you make progress in your relationship with God. Once you belong to God, you are His forever (Read John 10:28), and since Satan knows that he cannot destroy you, he will do everything to distract you, to keep you from making progress. The Apostle Paul writes about how you can guard our growth in **Philippians 3:12-16** (NLT).

Your Declaration of Destiny: *God is making you into the kind of person he wants you to be! He is transforming you into a man or woman of God! He is turning you from just being a regular churchgoer, into a mighty disciple-maker and a world-changer. God is shaping you into a person who will impact lives for His glory.*

Pastor mentioned that attitude is key to your growth as a follower of Jesus. We need to always embrace a winning attitude or outlook in our Christian life—always believing that God is always present, God is always at work (regardless of how you feel) and God has an amazing plan for your life. How do we guard our growth based on this scripture?

1. GET YOUR EYE ON THE GOAL (VISION) Verses 12-14.

A. *It's not a project, it's a process.* Growth is part of who we are; but unlike our physical bodies that weaken and die after reaching the peak of maturity, our spiritual life does not reach its full maturity until we get to heaven. Read 1 Corinthians 13:12. That is why Paul encourages us to keep our eyes, and give our self away to pursuits that have eternal impact (read Colossians 3:1-2)! Two things on earth that have eternal value— Isaiah 40:8 and Ecclesiastes 3:11. It is important that we invest our time, treasures and talents on these two. There is nothing wrong with pursuing or having things and treasures on earth, but they are not our top priority (read Matthew 6:19-21). Jesus commands us to invest in what are eternal—the work of God and the people of God.

B. *I'm on this race by God's grace.* Verse 12 says, *...But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.* Being a Christian is not an obligation, being a Christian is a privilege; it's a blessing! God, out of His mercy and grace, has called you to this life of growing relationship with Jesus! You're on this race because of God's grace!

C. *Develop a better sense of focus.* Verse 13 says, *but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead.* Focus is such an important principle in life because as pastor mentioned, "What you magnify you get more of." What was pastor's suggestion on how we can have a better focus (read Psalm 34:3)?

What steals away your focus?

The Past—a mistake we've made, a word we've said, a habit we used to struggle with—he takes those and throws them at us—to distract us, to stall or delay our progress.

Paul says, "*Forget the past.*" It is important to exercise self-evaluation, but not self-punishment. Self-evaluation allows us to learn from our past without being chained to it. Self-punishment is allowing our past to make us suffer out of guilt. Remember that your past is forgiven! Read Isaiah 43:25.

Remember that:

It's not a sprint, it's a marathon: don't stop and to stay focused. In a marathon, sometimes you can slow down or speed up, depending on the condition of your surroundings, but the key to successfully running a marathon is: *don't stop and to stay focused.*

Vision is very important—it keeps you going and pressing on. Keep feeding the vision God has given you. Pastor said, “Having a vision is for everyone. When we set our vision, it is important to point it toward what’s eternal and not just the temporal. Are you keeping in track with reaching your goal to disciple two people in 12 months?”

When you develop a vision, ask: “What is God doing (in my life, family, school, city, etc.) and how can I take part in it?” Visioning, goal-setting is important. Without vision, a church or an individual will stagnate. Having a vision, having a goal helps us guard our growth—it helps us from getting distracted.

2. KEEP RUNNING AND DON'T TURN BACK (DIRECTION). Guard your direction—because your direction not only determines your destination, it also shapes your development. Read Philippians 3:14.

- What distracts you from the purpose of God for you?
- Can you recognize things in your life (relationships/activities/habits) that impedes your growth and effectiveness as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- Pastor said, “These days, it’s easy to be present yet be so distant.” Is this true in your life? Are you present yet distant? How is this affecting your impact? Are you distracted from pursuing God’s purpose for you?

Beware of Distractions

A. Distractions make our life insignificantly efficient.

B. Distractions disengage us from things that truly matter.

How many of those engagements have intentional lasting impact?

How much time do you spend building real and eternally significant relationships?

- Do you date/disciple your spouse?
- Do you date/disciple your children?
- Do you engage in meaningful life-changing, mind-blowing conversations with people?
- Do you pour good things? Do you sow good seeds? Do you speak in faith and feed potential?

C. Distractions make our life appear lavish but we’re actually fruitless.

They give us the illusion that because we do a lot, we produce a lot—but we’re actually fruitless. Growth is not just measured by the amount of fruit we deliver, but the quality of the fruit we produce.

Guard your guard by checking your fruit.

- What kind of fruit are you producing? Are you raising a generation better than yours?
- What kind of things do you engage in? Do they have eternal significance?

WORKS: As a way to close, pray for these specific areas over your life:

- **KEEP FOCUSED ON YOUR PURPOSE (VISION).**
Pray for greater vision. When we embrace our responsibility God increases our capability.
- **MAKE NO ROOM FOR ANYTHING LESS THAN THE BEST (PROVISION).**
Pray for wisdom to choose and recognize God’s best for you. Don’t trade God’s best for anything less.
- **KEEP TRACK OF THOSE RUNNING THE SAME COURSE (ATTENTION).**
Pray for your DGroup and our Church—vision, provision, creativity, connectedness, community and effectiveness.
- **NEVER FORGET WHO YOU ARE BECOMING (DESTINY).**
Declare God’s victory over your life. Refuse to believe the lies of the enemy. Receive in faith what God has for you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

12/11 (1-3PM) - Christmas Party

12/24 (7PM) – Christmas Eve Worship

Remember Your Part in our Vision

