

# PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISE



**BE DILIGENT IN THESE MATTERS; GIVE  
YOURSELF WHOLLY TO THEM, SO THAT  
EVERYONE MAY SEE YOUR PROGRESS.**

**1 Timothy 4v15  
(NIV)**

This booklet, adapted from chapter 11 of Mark Scandrette's book *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, is a helpful tool in understanding the process to which we are growing as followers of Jesus. The following exercise requires the loving and honest support of your trusted friends, family and counselors, as well as your Celebration Community.

# BEFORE YOU BEGIN

We believe that the Holy Spirit often speaks through the wisdom and council of those we know. As Scandrette acknowledges in his book, "trusted friends and wise counselors can help us see the blind spots that sabotage our growth and recognize the progress we can't see on our own."

We recommend that this exercise only be taken in the context of your Celebration Community. It's important to process the feedback you'll receive in a small group, rather than on your own.

Remain centered around these values:

- Being with Jesus
- Becoming like Jesus
- Behaving like Jesus

It's important for us as followers of Jesus to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, read and decipher the circumstances of our lives, and receive insight from our most trusted friends, family and counselors. This exercise requires feedback from trusted individuals in our lives to help us distinguish the Spirit from compulsive and negative thoughts in our head.

# A CIRCLE OF TRUST

Make sure to choose 5-7 people you can trust to help you identify strengths and areas of growth, as well as provide discernment about major life decisions.

Do you have a parent, sibling, spouse, child, friend, housemate, coworker or mentor you would trust answering these questions thoughtfully and truthfully with? We recommend you do *not* choose people from your Celebration Community, as they will help process the responses with you.

Ask yourself these questions before adding someone to your circle of trust:

*Does this person know me well?*

*Can they speak to my dignity?*

*Can I trust them with giving constructive feedback?*

# A CIRCLE OF TRUST

It's okay to choose people who might not tell you what you want to hear. In fact, this could be healthy. Instead, make sure those you reach out to have at least made a significant investment in your life or have a stake in the outcome of your future.

Once you're ready, we recommend that you send the following questions (pages 6-8) to your circle of trust via email or mail. The reason for this is because a voice-to-voice conversation will encourage less thoughtful and honest responses.

At the beginning of your email or letter, make sure to let your circle of trust know the purpose for the exercise (listening to the Spirit as He speaks through the wisdom and council of those we know) and that you consider them to be part of your circle of trust.

Don't feel bad giving a firm deadline. However, we recommend that you allow several weeks for those responding to you to answer the questions thoughtfully and/or prayerfully.

The questions are provided on the following pages:

The first set of questions for my circle of trust should be centered around affirming both my strengths and potential.

Ask the following questions taken from Mark Scandrette's *Practicing the Way of Jesus*:

(1) How have you experienced me and in what contexts have you seen me most empowered and alive?

(2) What do you see as my strengths and gifts?

(3) What do you think I was made to do? In other words, where do you see me in 5, 10, or 15 years?

(4) What is my best contribution to the world? How do I best serve those around me? Where do you sense that God is at work in my life?

# BECOMING AWARE OF GROWTH AREAS

The next set of questions for my circle of trust should be centered around helping me become aware of my growth areas.

Ask the following questions taken from Mark Scandrette's *Practicing the Way of Jesus*:

(5) What are my blind spots? Are there areas in my life where you sense a lack of self-awareness or sensitivity to others? Are there unhelpful ways I affect the people around me that I might not be aware of?

(6) How do I generally come off to people? Are there positive or negative comments that people make after being with me that would be constructive for me to be aware of?

(7) Where do you sense a need for greater wholeness, growth or maturity in my life?

The last set of questions for my circle of trust should give them an opportunity to share their wisdom and insight with you.

Ask the following questions taken from Mark Scandrette's *Practicing the Way of Jesus*:

(8) What cautions, concerns or advice would you give me at this stage in my life?

(9) Right now I am trying to gain clarity on the following decision \_\_\_\_\_. *Describe in detail a particular decision you need to make in the coming weeks and months.*

(10) The questions I am asking about this decision are: \_\_\_\_\_. *Ask your circle of trust questions specifically related to your answer for question 9.*



**"THERE IS AN INEVITABLE GAP BETWEEN HOW WE SEE OURSELVES, HOW OTHERS SEE US, AND WHO WE REALLY ARE.**

**WE CAN CHOOSE TO DISMISS THE FEEDBACK WE RECEIVE, BE DEVASTATED BY A CRITIQUE OR EMBRACE OUR VULNERABILITY WITH A SENSE OF INVITATION TO FOLLOW THE CARING VOICE OF THE SPIRIT INTO GREATER POSSIBILITIES."**

**Mark Scandrette**

It's our choice whether we embrace our vulnerability with a sense of invitation or not. This exercise will undoubtedly open our eyes to that gap between our own perceptions and reality. However, it can also create space to grow.

Once you've received feedback from your circle of trust, resist the temptation to dismiss or be devastated by what you read. Instead, use this as an opportunity to follow the caring voice of the Holy Spirit into greater possibilities.

We recommend that in your Celebration Communities you process the responses and develop appropriate next steps together. As a group, encourage one another to find ways to remember and celebrate affirmations, and develop steps to address growth areas.

Before and after discussing the results with your Celebration Community, we recommend praying.

*What is the Holy Spirit whispering to you?*

