

# Week 4

## *Growth Into Maturity*

### Day 1

*1 John 2:12-14: 12 I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus. 13 I am writing to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I am writing to you who are young in the faith because you have won your battle with the evil one. 14 I have written to you who are God's children because you know the Father. I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God's word lives in your hearts, and you have won your battle with the evil one.*

The spiritual life is a progression. We go through phases of growth much like a person progresses from child, to adolescent, to adult. In this passage, John is encouraging believers at all stages of their spiritual life. Just because one has been a believer for a long time does not mean that they too do not need encouragement. John sets a beautiful model here that we would do well to emulate as we seek to encourage those we encounter in our pursuit to become more like Jesus. What confidence arises from encouragement! It can make all the difference in the world to one who is secretly feeling defeated. Do not quench your encouragement. Give it often and freely, even to someone who you think doesn't need it. It is likely they are the ones who need it most.

Who is someone in your life that you can encourage today?



## Day 2

**John 14:1-7:** *“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.” 5 “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. 7 If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”*

One of the great advances in technology is the GPS. No longer do we need to rely on the minuscule writing on maps or printed off directions. Instead, we have a gentle voice that accompanies our route to get us to our destination. I’m sure the disciples probably wanted a GPS when Jesus told them of the place he was going to prepare for them. What they didn’t realize in this moment was that they already had the directions to get to where Jesus was going. Jesus tells his disciples that he is “the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through him.” We have a tendency to complicate and overthink things. Jesus’ way is simple. Believe, become, follow, and go. While the process laid out is simple, executing it takes discipline and a reliance on the one giving direction. Jesus’ way is not burdensome. Do not look too far down the road because you might miss what’s right in front of you. Be faithful with what the Lord has put in your path right now.

What is it God has called you to be faithful in right now?



## Day 3

**Ephesians 6:10-18:** **10** A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. **12** For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. **14** Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. **15** For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. **16** In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. **17** Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18** Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

One of the great revelations of the Scriptures that Paul outlines here is who we're fighting against. It can be really easy to look at someone we disagree with and blame them for their actions. But what Paul lays out here is that our battle is not against other people. The devil would like us to believe that it is and he does a really good job at setting us up against one another. We must be aware of these attacks by the enemy. Paul outlines what equipment is necessary in such a battle against Satan and his minions. Notice that Paul says that we will be able to "resist" the enemy and then after the battle, we'll "stand firm." There is no mention of attack or going on the offensive; Paul's language is of a defensive posture. This seems strange and counterintuitive when speaking of a battle, but we must remember, Jesus has already won. We have the truth through Jesus. We are made righteous through his sacrifice. We have a peace that transcends all understanding through Jesus. Our faith is strengthened by the workings of God in our lives. We have received salvation from Jesus. And the one weapon we have is the Scriptures, the very word of God that "is sharper than a double



edged-sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.” (Hebrews 4:12).

How can you “stay alert and be persistent” in your battle against the enemy?

## Day 4

***Luke 24:44-48:** 44 Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. 47 It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ 48 You are witnesses of all these things.*

***Acts 8: 29** The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.” 30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. 32 The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 33 He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” 34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?” 35 So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.*

Think about what is happening in the first passage. A couple of unnamed disciples are walking along the road, when all of a sudden Jesus appears. He then proceeds to show them every place in the Old Testament that speaks to his



arrival and the prophecies he fulfilled. That must have been the ultimate Bible study! The entire Old Testament points towards his coming to earth and being the sacrificial lamb that sets people free. Jesus is the main character of the entire Bible. The first mention of his victory is seen in Genesis 3:15 and Revelation closes with the promise that he will return to make all things new. Anyone who is a Christ follower is a witness to his work in their lives and it's our job to tell of all he's done in our lives. Philip gives us a great model in the second passage where he assists the eunuch in his understanding of the Scripture. People need to hear about Jesus and the place we get to learn about him is the Scriptures.

Who is someone you can sit down and go through Scripture with who may not know it? Don't worry about not knowing everything. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and the words to say.



## Day 5

**Proverbs 4:23-27:** *“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech. Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don’t get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.”*

One of my favorite ways to pray is by praying Scripture and this is a passage I try to pray daily before I start my day. Maybe you have a passage or two that you like to pray through. Or you pray through whatever you read in the Bible that day. Take some time right now to pray through this passage, line by line. Stop at the end of every line to see if God is saying something to you or pointing your heart in a specific direction. Allow space for him to enter the conversation. Too often, we bring our list of things to pray and don’t spend enough time listening to hear what he says back. Jesus tells us to ask when we pray, we must be cautious though to not make it a one-sided conversation.

Did the Lord say anything to you when you prayed? Look for other Scriptures you can pray through in the Bible. (Hint, check out the Psalms)

