

How People Grow Discussion Questions – Chapter 4

w People Grow. Do not feel the need to complete all of them; choose the questions your group is most interested in discussing. The questions marked with the icon, however, speak to key concepts we might encourage you touch on. If you do not complete all the questions, we might recommend you review the remaining by yourself or with others at a later date.

Overview

1. The primary premise of Chapter Four is that people must discover that God is for them and not against them. What are your thoughts on this? Did you pick up any new insights as you examined scripture around this concept this morning in your quiet time?

A True View of God

2. Cloud and Townsend write, “One of the biggest obstacles to growth is our view of God.” What might be preventing you from having a true view of God?
3. What is the purpose of the law? What is the difference between a life lived under the law and a life lived under grace?

Getting to the Need for Grace

- ➦ 4. On page 71, Cloud talks about getting to the need for grace. He mentions becoming a “candidate for grace”. What does he mean by this? What are the characteristics, situations, and environments that allow one to become a real “candidate for grace”?
5. He goes on to say that some times we must help people get to a “death experience” for grace to take effect and growth to begin. What might be considered a “death experience”?
6. Do you feel that you’ve ever experienced a “death experience”? What was the situation? What helped you realize that you were at your end; that you could do no more?
7. Cloud says that sometimes we must let people, and sometimes even help people, reach the end of themselves and find out that things are really bad. In the situation you shared above, did someone help you realize your dependency on God? If so, who and how?

Helping Others Get to the Need for Grace

- ➦ 8. When we need to help others get to the need for grace, this can be difficult if not downright controversial and confrontational. How can we, as leaders and mentors, help people get to a death experience? How do you feel about this responsibility? How do we handle people who come to us and are in the midst of trials?
9. When might it be appropriate to help others to get to the need for grace? How might this inspire growth in a person? What might be the effects of doing this inappropriately? How do you discern the difference?
- ➦ 10. The chapter concludes by putting grace and truth together. The book shows that by seeking God we begin a process of growth that leads to life. Many books and pastors talk about “safe people” as part of the growth process. What makes for a “safe person”?
- ➦ 11. Grace without truth = license. Truth without grace = legalism. Discuss situations where you found yourself without grace or without truth and how it affected you.
12. How do you handle situations where someone is looking to you, but the answer is beyond your experience in truth and tests the limits of your grace?

How People Grow Discussion Questions – Chapter 7

The following questions relate to Chapter 7 of *How People Grow*. Do not feel the need to complete all of them; choose the questions your group is most interested in discussing. The questions marked with the icon, however, speak to key concepts we might encourage you touch on. If you do not complete all the questions, we might recommend you review the remaining by yourself or with others at a later date.

God Uses People Too

- ☞ 1. How do you feel about “Plan A” and “Plan B”? Are you open to God using others in your life? What strikes you as positive about this? What about this might cause you to struggle?

The Role the Body Plays in Growth

- 2. What is the difference between how the head receives information and how the heart receives information? Do you ever wrestle with a difference between the thoughts of your head and feelings of your heart? How might you be able to get them more in synch?
- ☞ 3. What is the purpose of accountability according to Cloud and Townsend? How have you seen accountability work effectively?
- 4. To experience healing, we need to open up to safe people and feel love and acceptance. How do we help people to open up and build intimate connections to the Body of Christ? What barriers are there that we need to be aware of? How do we break them down?
- ☞ 5. Are we really gracious when those around us open up, or do we judge and dispense advice? Are we loving people or fixing people? How might the wrong approach provide results contrary to what our intentions desired?
- 6. What have previously been your thoughts on the proportion of who carries the load of your life - you, God, and those around you? Has this chapter changed how you think about this?
- 7. When or how do you know when NOT to approach the Body with an issue? How do you discern what, when, for how long to stop looking to the Body and to deal with an issue for yourself? How do you know when not to “do” something for someone else (other than just pray or be there for them)?

Mentoring the Whole Person

- ☞ 8. What is the role of the church in mentoring the whole person? Do you have a mentor? What is their role in your life? If you don’t have one, how might you go about getting one?

Grieving

- 9. Previously, in chapter four, we spoke about “death experiences”. In chapter 7, Cloud and Townsend speak about grief. What is grief? Are physical deaths the only thing we grieve? If not, what else? How can we and how do we grieve our “death experiences”? What is the role of The Body in processing grief?
- 10. How has our culture instructed us to deal with difficulties in other’s lives? How might this be in contrast to God’s way of doing things?

How People Grow Discussion Questions – Chapter 7

Healing

11. What happens if we don't honestly heal our deepest hurts? How can the body help us to heal these hurts? What are positive and negative ways members of the body approach healing of others?
12. Though accountability, confrontation, encouragement and guidance are all important and powerful, we need to discern when to just freely rest with those struggling, without feeling the need to ask a lot of questions or dispense advice. Henri Nouwen speaks of this as the "ministry of presence" and writes that sometimes the greatest gift we can provide others, is to be present and silent (see following handout). How might we discern the appropriate approach in different situations?

Confronting, Containing Sin, Administering Truth

13. When is it appropriate as part of the body of believers to confront someone on an issue? How should this be done? Discuss situations in which you've done this successfully and/or when you've struggled with this and what you learned from the experience.

Modeling

14. What is your role in modeling Christ-like behavior to others? How do you feel about this?

Universality of Imperfection and Suffering

15. How or why is it so powerful to be genuine and open about certain struggles with those you are ministering with, and maybe even ministering to? Where do you think boundaries might be?

Discipleship

16. Cloud and Townsend encourage each of us to be in two types of discipleship relationships, one in which we're being discipled and one where we're discipling. Why? If you are not in each of these types of relationships, how might you initiate the process?

Your Personal Growth Rings

The following questions relate to Chapter 12 of *How People Grow*. Do not feel the need to complete all of them; choose the questions your group is most interested in discussing. The questions marked with the icon, however, speak to key concepts we might encourage you touch on. If you do not complete all the questions, we might recommend you review the remaining by yourself or with others at a later date.

Overview

1. “Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Cloud cautions that many people don’t completely understand this verse. What has this verse meant to you in the past? Has he added any new insights?
2. Cloud states that unresolved grief and emotional detachment are the two greatest causes of depression, as well as he provides examples of how these can cause all sorts of interpersonal issues. How can we get around unresolved grief and emotional detachment to get to the endured growth and intimacy that lead to life?
- ☞ 3. What correlations exist between “becoming mature” and “becoming righteous”?
- ☞ 4. On p. 236 Cloud and Townsend write about God giving us things we are mature enough to use, and that until we grow we cannot have them. They wrote in Chapter 4 “The God of Grace: A True View of God” (p.67), that in order to grow we need things that we do not have and cannot provide. These seem to be at odds. How do you resolve this issue: receiving God’s grace and seeking His righteousness?

Turning from Worldly Ways to Kingdom Ways

- ☞ 5. What is the difference between the “religious way” and the “right way”? In which manner are you going about change in your life? How are you motivating change in others?
6. Cloud and Townsend mention two things we must do in order to find life worth living: first, seek the ways of God, and second, internalize those ways. How can we do both of these things first, for ourselves, and second, within the Body? How does the Body seek His Kingdom and His ways?

Understand and Gain Insight

- ☞ 7. On p.244 they talk that “knowledge and depth of insight” means at least two things: we need to be learning and we need to be applying that knowledge. What systems of growth are you applying to your life or the lives of others?

Discipline

- ☞ 8. The chapter concludes dealing with discipline. Cloud and Townsend tie together some of the themes such as harvesting the fruits of righteousness and learning the laws that govern healing and growth. Discuss how this ties into both chapter 4 & 7. How does learning the law allow us to master ourselves? Our relationships? How can we foster an environment that aids change and growth?

Your Personal Growth Rings

Pulling It All Together

9. In the last two days, we've come full circle. We began by talking about God's grace and our need to simply receive that. We then talked about the work of the body in growth, including encouragement, accountability, counsel and presence. Now we've talked about our need to actively pursue both God's kingdom and God's ways. How can you put this all together in your own life? In which part of the circle do you feel you need to focus on when we return home?

10. This chapter discussed gaining knowledge and applying it. What have you learned this weekend that is most significant to your journey of growth in Christ? How will you apply it?

Your Personal Growth Rings

