

Spiritual Growth Assessment & Renewal Plan

The moment you placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord you began a new journey of renewal in which God is reshaping your heart for growth in godliness. From that point, until death or the return of Christ, your life's call is to grow in Christlikeness. This growth and reshaping is a process, it doesn't take place overnight. As people on this journey, we desire daily renewal where our hearts more fully match Christ's and the way we relate to God and one another is transformed. God plans for our renewal and He desires us to participate (**Phil.1:6, 2:12**).

There is no magic formula for this spiritual renewal. As human beings living in a fallen world in relationship with God and one another, our journey is dynamic. The process of spiritual growth includes highs and lows, major leaps forward and major setbacks, times in the fast-lane and times in rush hour congestion. Therefore, this assessment and plan are not meant to give the impression that your journey of renewal can be neatly packaged and perfected through statistical analysis. On the contrary, spiritual growth and renewal is often messy. But even in the messiness, it is possible to look back on our journey and evaluate our progress over time. That is where this tool comes into the picture. Though spiritual growth can be messy and all over the place to a degree that doesn't excuse us from regularly reflecting upon and evaluating our growth (**Lam. 3:40; 1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 2:9, 8:8, 13:5-7**).

The framework for this assessment is taken from Jesus' answer to a question directed to him by a religious teacher. **"And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that [Jesus] answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all"? 29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."** Mark 12:28-31. We believe these verses capture the extent of the transformation that God is bringing about in each of us as His followers on our journey with Him. We have identified five characteristics, each encompassing the entirety of our being yet highlighting a particular emphasis, which we can evaluate to examine where we are on our spiritual journey and where God needs to grow us more into Christlikeness.

Five Increasing Traits of Growing Disciples:

- 1) ***Passionate Lover*** – **Love the Lord your God with all your heart:** The only reason it is even possible to love God like this is because He places a new heart within us at salvation. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** Ezekiel 36:26 ESV. When we love God this way we are emotional and passionate about our relationship with Him. We want to declare our love from the rooftops and we don't care who hears. There is a certain degree of irrationality to loving with our whole heart because it can and often will drive us to do things that just don't logically make sense, but make complete sense to those who know love and romance. Disciples who love God with their whole heart are passionate worshippers of their eternal lover – Jesus Christ.
- 2) ***Zealous Chooser*** – **Love the Lord your God with all your soul:** Loving God in this way is seen in our lives when we choose God above anything or anyone else. This is when love begins to become deep, as we choose Christ regardless of circumstance or consequence. Disciples who love God with all their souls are single-minded and unwavering brides to their eternal groom – Jesus Christ. These disciples declare with the Psalmist, **I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.** Psalm 40:8 ESV.
- 3) ***Critical Thinker*** – **Love the Lord your God with all your mind:** When we love God in this way we allow our minds to be renewed by His Word through taking every thought captive. As we saturate our mind with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit re-forms our view of reality to conform to what is True. As a result, these disciples live a life in which they, **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** Colossians 3:2 ESV. Disciples who love God with all their minds are biblical and critical thinkers consumed by the eternal Truth – Jesus Christ.
- 4) ***Sacrificial Server*** – **Love the Lord your God with all your strength:** Scripture teaches that, **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** Matthew 6:21 ESV. Loving God with all our strength is taking all our treasure and laying it at His feet so that our lives are a reflection that nothing is more valuable to us than Him. It is living by the mindset that every possession and ability is God's in the first place, given to us to be used to bring Him glory and carry out His eternal purposes. Disciples who love God with all their strength are sacrificial servants that steward everything they have for their eternal All-sufficient – Jesus Christ.
- 5) ***Missional Liver*** – **Love your neighbor as yourself:** We love God by loving what He loves. The redemption story clearly illustrates God's love for people. Those who love God in this way live with an outward focused, selfless stance in which they, **Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** Philippians 2:3 ESV. This love manifests itself for other followers of Jesus Christ and for those who are yet dead in their sins. Disciples who love others as themselves are followers of Jesus Christ who want to share His love because they know there is more than enough divine love for all humankind from the eternal Savior – Jesus Christ.

As disciples we never fully reach completeness in any of these five areas. It is better to see them as five measurable markers that provide us with a gauge to determine where we are growing in the gospel of grace and where we are slipping or stagnating. At any particular time in our spiritual journey with Jesus Christ our desire should be to have balance between these 5 areas. Rather than scoring ourselves as a ten in one area and a zero in another our goal should be that the scores in each area are closely connected to the scores in each other area. Low scores with balance may reflect greater maturity than some scores that are high and others that are significantly low.

The following assessment is intended to provide you with six Scriptural measurements for each of these five traits. By honestly and prayerfully filling out this assessment our desire is that you will be able to more intentionally develop regular spiritual goals and regularly evaluate how God is bringing those spiritual goals to reality. Though this is a personal assessment, we encourage you to share your spiritual goals with an individual or group who you trust will encourage you on your journey of growth in grace.

Spiritual Growth Assessment

For each statement, place an 'x' on the scale of 0 to 10. The statements are designed to help you prayerfully evaluate where you currently find yourself with this trait. Read the verse, goal, and accompanying statements and then consider which statement best describes how you would describe yourself in each area right now. At the conclusion of the assessment for each trait you will add up your total for that particular trait and record it.

Passionate Lover

Love the Lord your God with all your heart: The only reason it is even possible to love God like this is because He places a new heart within us at salvation. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 ESV.** When we love God this way we are emotional and passionate about our relationship with Him. We want to declare our love from the rooftops and we don't care who hears. There is a certain degree of irrationality to loving with our whole heart because it can and often will drive us to do things that just don't logically make sense, but make complete sense to those who know love and romance. Disciples who love God with their whole heart are passionate worshippers of their eternal lover – Jesus Christ.

- 1) **“4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:4 (see also Psalm 63:1)**

Goal: I am finding my delight in my relationship with God.

My greatest delight is in the Lord. My greatest delight is in (list: _____)
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- 2) **4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? Romans 2:4 (see also, Matt. 3:8, Luke 5:32, and Acts 20:21)**

Goal: I growing in awareness of the greatness of God's holiness, the depth of my sin, the sufficiency of the cross, and my need to regularly confess and turn from my sin.

I repent of my sin regularly. I repented at salvation, that is enough.
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- 3) **“2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” Colossians 4:2 (see also 1 Thess. 5:17)**

Goal: I am talking to God all the time

I pray/converse with God moment by moment. I have never prayed/conversed with God.
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- 4) **“18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

Goal: I am actively and endlessly thankful

I can't stop expressing how grateful I am to God for His love for me. I have nothing to thank God for.
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- 5) **“28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28-29**

Goal: I am learning/experiencing more of who God is and it is prompting awe filled worship

Who God is has consumed/overwhelmed me resulting in acceptable worship. God still seems small and distant to me.
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- 6) **“11 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,” Philippians 3:10**

Goal: I know God and am known by God.

My relationship with God growing ever deeper and cherished. I know about God.
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Zealous Chooser

Love the Lord your God with all your soul: Loving God in this way is seen in our lives when we choose God above anything or anyone else. This is when love begins to become deep, as we choose Christ regardless of circumstance or consequence. Disciples who love God with all their soul are single-minded and unwavering brides to their eternal groom – Jesus Christ. These disciples declare with the Psalmist, **I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.** Psalm 40:8 ESV.

- 1) **“not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,”** Ephesians 6:6 (see also John 6:38).

Goal: I am making decisions based on what pleases God as revealed in His will.

My choices are based on whether they will please God.

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My choices are based on whether they will please people including myself.

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- 2) **“I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”** Psalm 40:8

Goal: I know God’s will instinctively and do it automatically.

I know God’s will and I find joy in doing it even when it’s hard.

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I struggle to know God’s will and when I know it I resist doing it.

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- 3) **“¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,”** Ephesians 5:18 (see also, Gal. 5:16-24).

Goal: I am consistently walking in the Spirit not gratifying the desires of the flesh.

My life is marked by the ongoing evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.

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My life is marked by the ongoing evidence of the works of the flesh.

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- 4) **“⁷Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;”** 1 Timothy 4:7 (see also, 1 Cor. 9:24-27).

Goal: I am living a disciplined life focused on training in godliness.

I have a spiritual growth plan and I am keeping it.

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I am aimlessly wandering in my Christian life hoping I end up at the right destination

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- 5) **“¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”** Philippians 4:11-13

Goal: I am trusting Christ moment by moment no matter what my circumstance.

There is nothing that can shake my trust in Christ and His strength.

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Christ is not trustworthy.

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- 6) **“¹²Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 3:12-14

Goal: I have a focused commitment to obtain all Christ has called me to in the gospel.

Nothing distracts me from living a gospel-centered life.

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My focus is as scattered as the stars in the night sky.

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Critical Thinker

Love the Lord your God with all your mind: When we love God in this way we allow our minds to be renewed by His Word through taking every thought captive. As we saturate our mind with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit reforms our view of reality to conform to what is True. As a result these disciples live a life in which they, **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** Colossians 3:2 ESV. Disciples who love God with all their minds are biblical and critical thinkers consumed by the eternal Truth – Jesus Christ.

- 1) **“² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2 (see also, Col. 3:1-2; Phil. 4:4).**

Goal: My old sinful thought patterns are regularly being replaced by new Christlike thought patterns.

My mind is saturated with God’s Truth.	My mind is a garbage dump.
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- 2) **“⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.” Psalm 19:7-11**

Goal: I can’t get enough of God’s Word, the Bible.

The Bible is the book I love best and read most.	The Bible is boring and puts me to sleep, I get nothing when I read it anyway.
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- 3) **“⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. ¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! ¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. ¹² Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! ¹³ With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. ¹⁴ In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. ¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. ¹⁶ I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. Psalm 119:9-16**

Goal: I study, think about, memorize, and seek application of the Bible regularly in my life.

My Bible is a part of my memory so I take it with me everywhere.	My Bible is lost and I didn’t realize it until I took this assessment.
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- 4) **“⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,” 2 Corinthians 10:5**

Goal: I am maintaining purity in my thoughts by not allowing stray thoughts but instead filtering every thought through the filter of God’s Word before accepting and acting upon it.

Every thought is captive to Christ and filtered through His Word.	I take my thoughts as they come and let them control me.
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- 5) **“¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16 (see also, John 3:30 Eph. 3:12)**

Goal: My life is marked by humble boldness as I am infused with the gospel.

The more time I spend in God’s Word the more I realize how awesome God is and how sinful I am.	The more time I spend in God’s Word the more convinced I am that I know it well enough.
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- 6) **“¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” Proverbs 9:10**

Goal: I am applying my biblical knowledge to life resulting in a biblical lifestyle marked by godly wisdom.

My lifestyle and decisions always conform to God’s standards.	I have a lot of head knowledge but it’s not changing my life.
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Missional Liver

Love your neighbor as yourself: We love God by loving what He loves. The redemption story clearly illustrates God's love for people. Those who love God in this way live with an outward focused, selfless stance in which they, **Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Philippians 2:3 ESV.** This love manifests itself for other followers of Jesus Christ and for those who are yet dead in their sins. Disciples that love others as themselves are followers of Jesus Christ who want to share His love because they know there is more than enough divine love for all humankind from the eternal Savior – Jesus Christ.

- 1) **“²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:25**

Goal: I am meaningfully connected to a small group of believers encouraging one another to grow in Christlikeness.

I have a vital connection with a small group and we are living out the 'one another's' of the New Testament.

I am not attending a small group gathering of Christians at all on a regular basis.

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- 2) **“⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:9**

Goal: I am taking advantage of every opportunity given me to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

My sensitivity to and response to opportunities to the share the gospel is such that I seem to have opportunities in nearly every conversation.

I can't remember the last time I sensed an opening to share the gospel, let alone Actually share my faith.

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- 3) **“²⁰But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” Mark 4:20 (see also, 2 Timothy 2:2)**

Goal: I am seeing the gospel overflowing from my life into the lives of others and spreading exponentially, multiplying beyond anything I could imagine.

I am intentionally investing spiritual seed into the lives of others and seeing it take root there and then spread beyond to others.

I have nothing spiritually to invest in anyone else.

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- 4) **“³Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:3-4**

Goal: I value and invest in the interests and needs of others because they are more significant than my own.

I joyfully and willingly put my needs after the needs of others.

My motto is, “me first!”

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- 5) **“¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” James 3:18 (see also, Matthew 5:9)**

Goal: As far as it depends on me, I use every conflict as an opportunity to promote peace and glorify God.

I am committed to the hard work of peacemaking because it is worth the fruit it brings.

When I face conflict I either escape or attack.

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- 6) **“¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matt. 28:18-20**

Goal: I am leading and teaching others to know and obey God and His Word.

I am discipling another believer.

I am not discipling anyone nor am I being disciplined.

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Assessment scores:

Passionate Lover = _____/60

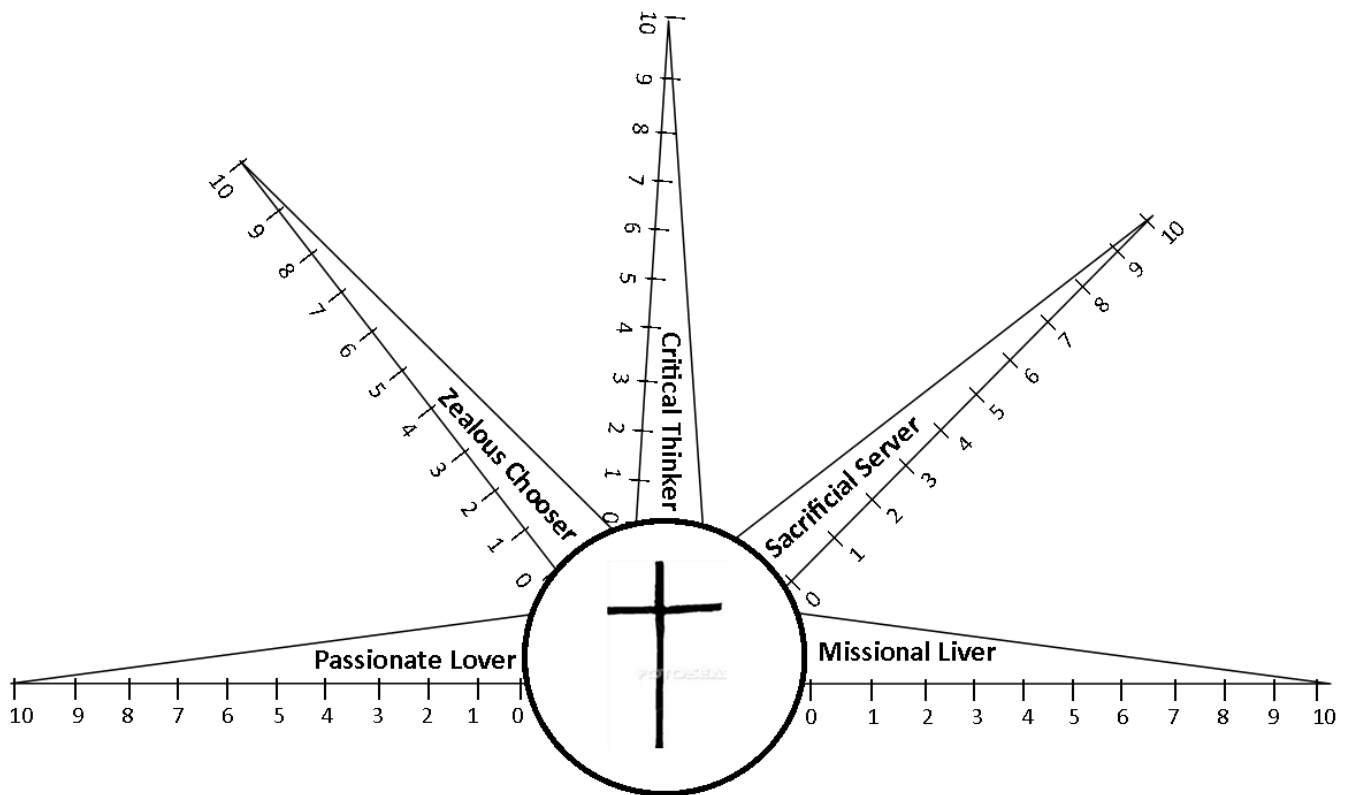
Zealous Chooser = _____/60

Critical Thinker = _____/60

Sacrificial Server = _____/60

Missional Liver = _____/60

- Record your results on the chart below.



4 Seasons:

From the elements below try to discern which words, pictures, and colors best capture your life and relationship with Jesus Christ right now.

Winter:

Crisis of Faith



Hopeless
Lost
Desolate
Hibernate

Spring:

Renewal of Faith



Renewed
Focused
Anticipating
Revived

Summer:

Enjoyment of Faith



Playful
Enjoyment
Uninhibited
Relaxed

Fall:

Harvest of Faith



Celebration
Satisfied
Harvesting
Grateful



3 Components

Answer the following questions to evaluate how you are taking advantage of these resources for spiritual growth in your life.

Celebrating: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” Philippians 4:4. A deep seated confidence that God is in control of everything for the believer’s good and His glory making the believer joyful and delighted.

- How am I celebrating in my personal life?

- How am I celebrating with other believers?

Connecting: “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:22. United in an essential bond with God and with other believers that contributes to my spiritual life and theirs.

- How am I connecting with God personally?

- How am I connecting with God with other believers?

Coaching: “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” 1 Timothy 2:2. A system of instruction whose content is truth in belief and action developed in one another.

- Who is coaching me?

- Who am I coaching?

Charting a Course:

Your spiritual growth is not automatic it takes intentional effort and focus. It also takes commitment. Now that you have taken the assessment the next step is to choose two or three areas to bring before the Lord for improvement. Make a written commitment to spend the next 6 months strengthening these areas of your faith. Be as specific as you are able.

Over the next 6 months I will make intentional effort, by the grace of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to grow in my faith in the areas of:

1)

2)

3)

Below prayerfully think through a few (1-3) next steps you will commit to take within the next month to give you a good start on growing in the areas listed above.

Area 1 next steps:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Area 2 next steps:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Area 3 next steps:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal renewal takes others

At MorningStar, our desire is that every person move toward fruitful Christian living, and we know that fruitful Christian living takes place in biblical community. If you are not currently connected to the Growth Group, either on Sunday morning or throughout the week, we would strongly encourage you to find a Growth Group that fits you. You need it and the truth is, we need you every bit as much. For more information about Growth Groups contact office@morningstardayton.org. In addition, we would encourage you to share your renewal plan with at least one other person who can keep you on course: a Growth Group or ministry leader, spouse or friend...who will it be (Proverbs 27:17)?

Renew your Renewal plan every 6 months!