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# VISION 2020

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## Daily Devotions

During the month of May, we will be looking at Gracepoint's vision. Our reason for existence as a community of faith and all the ministry we do, is driven by the "Great Commission" found in Matthew 28:18-20, to make disciples of all the nations, and the "Great Commandment" in Matthew 22:26-40, to love God and neighbour.

We hope that over the next few weeks, these devotions, coupled with the Life Group materials and teaching from the pulpit, will help us to understand our vision better, to grasp all that lies behind it and to practically engage in the outworking of it.

### Week 1 (15-19 May)

We believe that at Gracepoint we are called out as a community that is FINDING GRACE and LIVING CHANGED. At the very least, "living changed" implies spiritual growth. As we experience the grace of Christ, it must impact us in ways that have a practical outworking in our lives...it has to change us in many ways and at various levels. For example, the grace of Christ must change how we view sin in our own lives, how we respond to sin in the lives of others, how we respond to injustice and inequality in society, how we view church, how we view and interact with non-believers, how we spend our time and our money, to name but a few.

We have identified 5 factors, which if are made the anchors in our spiritual life, will bring about growth and changed living. We will explore these 5 anchors in the week ahead.



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**Monday 15 May**

**GRACE**

The bible tells us that whilst we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). God has extended love and forgiveness towards us despite our sin and unworthiness. We did nothing at all to deserve God's favour. We believe that if God extended his grace towards us, it stands to reason that his grace is available to everyone. No one is beyond God's grace.

At Gracepoint we invite everyone to encounter the love and grace of Christ. Not a single person is excluded or somehow disqualified.

**Scripture:**

Read Luke 14:15-23

Read this passage a few times, read it out loud, read it quietly. Focus on the words.

**Observation:**

Look at the passage again. What stands out for you? Are there any words or phrases or sentences that really jump out at you? What is going on in this passage?

**Application:**

Who is the "man" that is preparing the banquet? Who are those who have been invited?

Who are the "poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame"?

What does this passage mean in relationship to the church? Who has God extended his invitation to? Is it for the pious believers or is it for the "undesirables", those "out there"?

What does this mean for us, as his "servants"? How are you doing as a servant inviting the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame?

Do you view the church as an exclusive club only for the benefit of paid up members who do and say the right thing?

**Pray:**

*Lord please forgive me if my attitude towards church and who should be in it has been wrong. Forgive me if I have considered myself and my Christian friends as the only chosen recipients of your grace and the church as our exclusive domain. Please give me the boldness and courage to extend your invitation to receive your grace and forgiveness to those outside the church. Help me to actively participate in bringing people into your church.*

**Tuesday 16 May**

## **GROUPS**

The West, generally, has become highly individualised, but within the African culture we say “*I am because I belong and you are human because I am human*” – this is the underlying premise of Ubuntu. Desmond Tutu, expressed it like this:

*One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity.*

*We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.*

In the Triune God, we see the perfection of fellowship, unity, community and love. The scriptures tell us that we are created in the image of this Triune God. The need and desire for fellowship and community is in our spiritual DNA. God created us for community and the Christian journey was never intended to be travelled alone.

We don't join in community with fellow believers because we like the idea of community. Rather, we gather with other believers because we love one another. Love for one another is what drives us to meet in community. It's also that love that helps us to work through issues when they arise in the community.

### **Scripture:**

Read Hebrews 10:24-25

Read this passage a few times, read it out loud, read it quietly. Focus on the words.

### **Observation:**

Look at the passage again. What stands out for you? Are there any words or phrases or sentences that really jump out at you? What is going on in this passage?

### **Application:**

What is this passage primarily calling us to do? What are some of the things we are to do for one another? Can we do these things if we are not in community?

Do you see a sense of urgency in the passage?

### **Prayer:**

*Thank you Lord that you have created me for community. Thank you that I don't have to try to travel this journey alone, but that you have intended for brothers and sisters in Christ to journey with me. Please fill me again with a deep love for my brothers and sisters and give me a desire to be in deep fellowship and community with them.*

**Wednesday 17 May**

## **GROWTH**

If we're not changing we're not growing and if we're not growing, we're not changing. One of the characteristics of a living organism is that it grows. If something does not grow, it has no life – its dead. As believers in Christ, we have been called from darkness into light and we have received new life. We have received HIS eternal, higher, abundant life. With that Life, comes GROWTH.

Part of our journey of growth is to be motivated by love to work together, in community, to bring about change in society – to care for the broken, to stand up against injustice, poverty and inequality, to work for transformation and to live it out in our lives.

### **Scripture:**

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

Read this passage a few times, read it out loud, read it quietly. Focus on the words.

### **Observation:**

Look at the passage again. What stands out for you? Are there any words or phrases or sentences that really jump out at you? What is going on in this passage?

### **Application:**

What is the role of the clergy (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, etc)? What happens as we become spiritually mature? What is the connection between spiritual growth and Christ? Does Paul present growth as an individualistic pursuit? If the whole body grows to maturity and builds itself up in love, what would be some of the outcomes or consequences – what would be its impact?

### **Prayer:**

*Lord thank you that you have imparted your life to me. Please help me to remove all obstacles to growth in my life and help me to grow within the body. Help us to mature as the body of Christ and unleash within us all the potential you have placed in us, that we may truly be transformational in the world.*

**Thursday 18 May**

## **GIFTS**

Every single one of us, if we call Christ our Lord, has been given unique gifts by the Holy Spirit. Our gifts are essential for the functioning of the church. God has so ordained that everything that a church needs is already within the body of that church. We should never have to look beyond the boundaries of our faith community – all the gifts essential for the healthy functioning of that community are already there.

Many people really struggle to identify their unique gifts, but actually there are a number of factors that play into our gifting. We have all been uniquely SHAPeD to serve God in the church: spiritual gifts, heart (passion), abilities, personality and experiences all work together to equip us for service.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 13 Paul goes to great lengths to explain that love needs to underscore everything – our role in the church, the use of our gifts, our service, etc. It is very important to keep this in perspective as we seek to serve God and one another with our gifts.

### **Scripture:**

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and 27-30

Read these passages a few times, read them out loud, read them quietly. Focus on the words.

### **Observation:**

Look at the passages again. What stands out for you? Are there any words or phrases or sentences that really jump out at you? What is going on in this passage?

### **Application:**

What do these passages say about spiritual gifts? Where do the gifts come from? Why are gifts given – for what purpose? What is said about the body of Christ (the church) – who is part of it? Do we all have the same gifts?

### **Prayer:**

*Lord thank you that you have called me into Gracepoint church. Thank you for the unique gifts that you have shaped within me and thank you that I am at Gracepoint in order to exercise those gifts for the benefit of this Christian community. Please help me to be ready and eager to serve, using the unique gifts that I have.*

**Friday 19 May**

## **GIVING**

In the New Testament we see that Jesus spoke more about money than about heaven and hell combined. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables were concerned with how to handle money and possessions. In the Gospels, an amazing one out of ten verses (288 in all) deal directly with the subject of money. The Bible offers 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions.

All that we have, money and possessions, is from God. If we understand that, we will realise that we are never really the owners of anything here on earth. We are merely God's stewards, overseeing, looking after or administering the things God has given us. If we let the full weight of this truth sink in, we will realise that we have a responsibility before God for how we use the things, including financial resources, which he has blessed us with. The more we have, the greater that responsibility.

### **Scripture:**

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Read these passages a few times, read them out loud, read them quietly. Focus on the words.

### **Observation:**

Look at the passages again. What stands out for you? Are there any words or phrases or sentences that really jump out at you? What is going on in this passage?

### **Application:**

What is Paul praising the Macedonian churches for? Do you see the apparent paradox between extreme poverty and rich generosity? What does this tell you about giving? How much did the churches give – what was the measure? What does Paul equate giving with? What is Paul hoping to see achieved through generous giving?

### **Prayer:**

*Thank you Lord for the material blessings that I enjoy. Please help me to retain a healthy perspective on my possessions. Please help me to always be a cheerful giver and not to selfishly withhold that which you have entrusted me to share.*