



Growing Followers of Jesus

The '4 C' Distinctives

Growth Group Discussion

At latechurch we have the motto: growing followers of Jesus. We want to be growing as followers of Jesus, while we play our part in growing new followers of Jesus. But how do we know if someone is growing as a mature follower of Jesus? Recently at latechurch we launched 4 'C' words which unpack this motto for us. A mature follower of Jesus is a Committed, Connected, Clear-Thinking, and Compassionate, follower of Jesus. Let's see what these 4 words mean and how it should impact us as a church.

To begin with a bit of fun why not start with a game of GG Taboo. On 4 blank pieces of paper write down what you think it means to be:

1. A Committed follower of Jesus (i.e a Committed follower of Jesus is someone who)
2. A Connected follower of Jesus
3. A Clear Thinking follower of Jesus
4. A Compassionate follower

Have a vote on what you think the best answer is and write it on some butcher paper for all to see and to look at again at the end of the study to see how close you guys were

1. Committed to Jesus

Everything we believe, teach and do at mpc revolves around one person—Jesus Christ. Our motto says it all – we are 'growing followers of Jesus.' Read Colossians 2:6-8.

1. From this passage, what does it say about beginning and continuing as a Christian?
2. In contrast, what does it look like to be un-committed to Jesus?
3. In what ways do you see this un-commitment at latechurch? If you feel like being more personal—In what ways do you see it in your own life?

The first and most important step in growing as a follower of Jesus is to be committed to Jesus. 'Receiving Jesus as Lord and Christ' means submitting your life to his rule. It also means placing your trust in him as the one who gave his life as a sacrifice for your sins. While this is the starting point in the Christian life, it's a commitment that continues. Being a committed follower of Jesus means you will keep growing exactly where you were planted! How did your Taboo answers compare to this understanding of Committed?

2. Connected to God's People

Why bother meeting together? It's a fair question. And lots of people - even those who say they're committed Christians - have simply given up on meeting with other Christians, and decided to go it alone. But there are two reasons to think this isn't right.

Have a read of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 because it teaches us the implication of being a part of the body of Christ.

1. Using the passage to guide your advice, what would you say to someone who's decided to not come to church regularly? Why would you encourage someone to come to church regularly?

One interesting thing to come out of this Corinthians passage is that the unity & connectedness Christians have isn't created by them...it already exists because we are in Christ! That means that it would be completely unnatural for the body to be disconnected, or uncaring, or to not have the good of others in mind!

When we commit ourselves to Jesus, we become part of God's family. Coming to church week by week isn't just about meeting with God – it's about encouraging one another. We want people to be enthusiastically connected with the body of Christ through regularly meeting together on Sundays, through involvement in a mid-week growth group, and through supporting one another in everyday life. The more we are committed to better we build up one another and ourselves! How do your taboo answers for committed compare?

3. Clear-thinking about God's Word

Every church or denomination is defined by a historical "doctrinal standard." Within the Presbyterian church it is called The Westminster Confession of Faith; our ministers and elders are required to affirm its teaching. Ordinary church members are not required to be experts on 'the Confession', but it's good to have some level of familiarity with it. The great beauty of the Westminster Confession of Faith is that it places the Word of God, the Bible, as the "supreme authority." The supreme judge by which... all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined... can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." (WCF 1:10) In short, we are a church guided and sustained by God's word, the Bible; and the whole Bible leads us directly and simply to Jesus Christ. **Read Ephesians 4:7-16.**

1. We see in v.7 that Christ has apportioned grace to all his people. What other gifts does Paul list in v.11?

2. And what's the aim in giving these gifts to His people? (v.12-13)

3. What are the two places people can end up? (v.14-16)

Mature Christians are clear-thinking Christians, who know and understand what the Bible says, and know how it affects the way they should live and think. Our desire to grow clear-thinking followers of Jesus means we place a high value on clear and Christ-centered bible teaching. How do your taboo answers for clear-thinking compare?

4. Compassionate in Thought & Action

Because of what Jesus has done for us, our standing before God doesn't rely on what we do (phew!), but on Jesus himself. But we are saved for a purpose. We are saved to live transformed lives - lives that reflect the one who has saved us, Jesus Christ. Lives of compassion.

Read James 2:14-19.

1. From James, do you think it's possible to be committed to Jesus and have no compassion for others? Why / Why not?
2. If latechurch was to grow in compassion, what would look different about latechurch? Would we do things differently? What might a compassionate life look like for us today in our church, community and wider world?

We are striving at latechurch to be followers of Jesus who characterised by compassion. We want this to happen at latechurch through growth groups and we as other relationships that form at church. But while we want to look after people's physical needs, we also know there is a greater problem that all mankind faces.

3. How do you think we should balance people's physical needs with their spiritual ones?

It's only natural that those committed to following Jesus will grow to be like him - reaching out to the lost, caring for the poor, sick and lonely, supporting & encouraging God's people. Compassion is the heart-response to the needs of others – an attitude that will work in all kinds of creative and loving actions. How do your taboo answers for compassionate compare?

The 4 C's

At latechurch, we know we're not perfect. And yet, through the death & resurrection of Jesus, we have a new heart with which to live out who we are - God's people.

Where do you think you / we need to grow? How can your growth group help with that?

Spend some time in prayer with your GG.