



BIBLE STUDY # 2

Value Statements with Creedal Statements and Study Questions

Continual Growth - The Son calls us forward

Jesus graciously goes before us and invites us to follow Him in personal responsibility, life-long learning, and love. His Spirit replaces our sinfulness with His truth, grace, and love so that each of us grows more like Jesus in our character, words, and life.

Opening Questions to get started

- 1. In the statement above, what stands out to you today? And Why?**
- 2. Rather than just telling us to grow, Jesus says, "Come follow Me."
What does this invitation show us about our Lord?**
- 3. In your own words, what does it mean for you to be a life-long learner?**
- 4. At this time in your life, what do you think God is wanting you to learn?**

CREEDAL STATEMENTS OF CONTINUAL GROWTH

- Made right with God and adopted into the family of God (justified status), Christ continues to call us as His sisters and brothers to be more and more like Him (sanctified living).
- God's Law continues to curb, convict and guide our spirits as God's Gospel continually saves us and empowers us toward greater lives of holiness. Even so, upon this earth, we are simultaneously saints and sinners.
- The inspired and inerrant Word of God and Christ's life-giving Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) are His means of Grace working new life and empowerment in us for every day He gives us upon this earth.
- We seek personal devotion and group study opportunities.
- God has uniquely S.H.A.P.E.d each of us as members of Christ's Body to participate in His ministry and mission.

WATCH VIDEO

Passages in the video

[Galatians 2:20](#)

[I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.](#)

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (Who are we continually maturing to be more like?)

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds^[c] and teachers,^[d] ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,^[e] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Do or Review opening questions # 1 and #2 if not done before.

The Capacity to Grow / Learn

3. God created living things upon this earth the capacity for growth. As people made in God's image with a body and a soul, we have the capacity to also grow in our minds and spirits. What intrigues you or fascinates you about this capacity of ours to continually grow and improve?
4. How does our sinful human nature work against continual growth?
See Romans 8:7 "The sinful mind is hostile to God, it does not submit to God's Law..."
5. How does man's proverb "*everybody loves progress, but nobody likes change*" relate to this value?

Simultaneously Sinners and Saints

In Lutheran theology, we recognize our sinner side and our saint side living inside of us at the same time. We call it simultaneously justified and sinful. (saint and sinner.)

See ambigram below (turn page upside down)



Inside of us, our “new man” (our holy nature baptized and redeemed by Christ and living for Him) battles against our “old man” (self-centered and rebellious sinful nature).

Read Paul’s description of this battle in Romans 7:21-25

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

6. How have you been aware of this internal battle in your own life?

7. Who is our hope and our deliverance? Yes, thank You Jesus.

Even so, it’s still a battle and as long as we are on this earth, we fight it. This battle is common to all people, as God has put in the heart of all mankind a desire for God and being reconciled / connected to Him and to do what is right (conscience.) This truth was being explained to a native American youth growing into adulthood with a fable.

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two "wolves" inside us all.

One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

8. What do you think of this story?

9. So how is the new person inside of you fed?

God’s Word and Sacraments

God promises to meet us and feed us through His Word and Sacraments. In theology, we call these the “Means of Grace” as they are the means by which God brings His grace to us. (For further study see Going Deeper “God’s Law and God’s Gospel”)

We want to be faithful in our gathering with God's people. We want to be present at His table and fed with the nourishment of His Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper. We especially want to interact with God in His Word.

10. God's "Holy Scriptures make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. 3:15) **How do God's Scriptures equip us for doing everything the Lord wants us to do?** (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

11. There is often a direct correlation between our spiritual growth and involvement in Bible classes and personal devotions. Have you noticed this correlation in your life?

12. Philippians 4:13 is quoted by many athletes as a verse that we can be much stronger in Christ than we could ever be by ourselves, we can even accomplish "all things" or "everything" as many versions translate. Paul knows that Christ will give him the strength to accomplish whatever Christ wants him to do. Specifically, Paul is talking about having learned to be content no matter his earthly circumstances. Notice the modern rendering of Philippians 4:12-13. ¹²*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.* ¹³*I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

13. Who is at work in us giving us strength to be more and more like Jesus?
How is this comforting for you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

14. **How is knowing that we are simultaneously saints and sinners both challenging for you as well as comforting?**

15. **What do you think the Lord has wanted you to learn or relearn from this study today?**

GOING DEEPER

(Means of Grace)

The Holy Spirit brings God's grace to us in Christ Jesus through His Word and Sacraments

By Grace Alone, Through Faith Alone, on the basis of Scripture Alone

How does God speak to us?

How do we know God speaks to us? Through His Word
Jesus is the Living Word of God.

We believe and teach that the Bible IS God's Word.

2 Timothy 3:16 "God-breathed" = inspired

"thoroughly equips us for good works"

1 Timothy 4:15-16 "practice these things" "let others see your progress"

"watch your life and your teaching"

1 Thessalonians 2:13 God's Word works in us

2 Timothy 2:15 "rightly handling the Word of Truth" (see text note bottom of page 2083)

Law and Gospel

The Law: **Shows Our Sins**, tell us what to do / what not to do, focuses on our works, accuses and condemns, terrifies the heart, curses the sinner, points toward self, cannot save

The Gospel: **Shows Our Savior**, reveals what God did/does/will do, focuses on God's works, shows mercy and frees, comforts the heart, cures the sinner, points toward Jesus, saves

Purpose of the Law: 1. Curb 2. Mirror 3. Guide

Purpose of the Gospel: 1. Salvation 2. Empowerment to love God and love one another (justification and sanctification)

Which do we emphasize more, Law or Gospel? Why?