



# connect to reflect

## INTRODUCTION

growing together **07**  
reflecting Jesus is not designed to be done alone



### the challenge to believe

How strong are you? Do you feel you can do the Christian life alone? What challenges would you face in sharing your spiritual journey with another person, either being mentored or mentoring another?



### deepening dependence

Pray for someone that can grow with you in your journey to reflect the character of Jesus.



### steps to re-connecting our hearts to God

1. Ask the Holy Spirit what he wants you to learn from this lesson. What do you sense the Holy Spirit teaching you?
2. This week, what practical steps do you need to take to apply what the Holy Spirit is teaching you?
3. What evidence will you see that indicates that you are successfully applying what the Holy Spirit is teaching you?



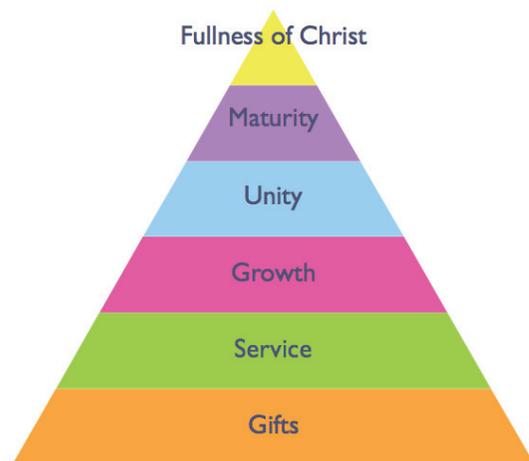
### passing it on

- INTERCESSION** For whom can you pray, that they can find someone to encourage them on their spiritual journey?
- WORDS** Who can you talk to about the need to grow in community?
- CHARACTER** How will growing in community be visible in your own life?



In Paul's mind, experiencing the fullness of Christ was not simply a private matter, but happened in the context of community—a community where the gifts of the Holy Spirit were being used. Without these gifts in operation, there would be no service, growth, unity or the revelation of the fullness of Jesus.

In Ephesians 4:11-13, Paul writes, "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (ESV). In the pyramid, you can see this order and how all things build up to revealing the "fullness of Christ".



notice especially that the revelation of the fullness of Jesus is accomplished in the context of the whole church community, each one using their gifts to nurture each other.

This is important to remember, because while Jesus works with us individually, we will always encounter some serious challenges.

The first challenge is ourselves. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, each of us are born into the world with a natural tendency to live in opposition to God and the ways of his kingdom. As David laments, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5) So by the time we begin to choose to follow Christ, we already have many sinful habits which are deeply engrained within us that are difficult to undo all at once.

The second challenge is our supernatural enemy. As Paul clearly identifies, "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12) We cannot compete against such a supernatural enemy who has supernatural power by ourselves. We are continually in need of supernatural power from outside of ourselves that only God provides.

So how do we deal with these challenges as we pursue our discipleship to Jesus? Solomon gives some very helpful and practical counsel and writes from his long experience,

*Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)*

While having support from others is important in all areas of life, it is particularly important in our spiritual lives. This is why God created us to live as Christians in the community of the church, so that we will be continually surrounded by others to encourage and support us. This encouragement and support is also why Jesus sent the disciples out to minister two by two.

And what about you? As you pursue a life dedicated to reflecting the character of Jesus can you afford to do it alone? I would suggest that you find someone who can journey along with you, so you can encourage and support each other, and particularly to pray for each other.

If you feel you don't know much about the Christian life and want someone to help you grow, such a person is often called a spiritual mentor.

In finding someone that you could help you connect to Jesus in this way, spend some time asking God for his direction. Then consider the following questions:

1. Who can be a spiritual encouragement and support to me?
2. Do I want a more mature Christian to mentor me, or someone at the same level as I am?
3. Who do I feel comfortable with? Who I can trust?
4. Who could I spiritually encourage and support?

If you get stuck finding someone, maybe you could talk to your church pastor or someone else at church. As you pray, God will guide you in this.