

## My Next Step

### Big Idea

In this week's message, Pastor Mark shares that next year can be our best year if we'll make it the best year spiritually. The real key to our life being better is to grow spiritually. Spiritual growth for Christians isn't even an option. It's something we must do. We all need to grow. The great news is that growth happens one step at a time. All God looks for from us is to take those steps. Our responsibility isn't to be fully mature in Christ today, but simply to take steps toward growth. The greatest hazard to our growth is when we simply stand still. All of the potential to be all that God says we can be is within us. As long as we're moving the Lord perfects us one step at a time. Once we change our priorities, remove our excuses and take steps, we discover the great benefit of maturing spiritually—becoming like Jesus. Jesus was always growing because he did three things throughout his life. First, Jesus was always pursuing God. He would go away and pray and the Word was important to Him. Secondly, Jesus was always receiving from God. He told his disciples at one point that he had “food to eat that they knew nothing about”. And finally, Jesus was always submitting to God. Because of his level of spiritual maturity, he could submit to God's plan no matter what. The Bible says that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. The great news for us is growth is available to us just like that. All we need to do is take the next steps to live a life of spiritual maturity.

*“Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.” Ephesians 4:14 (NLT)*

### Discussion Questions

- Discuss an area of your life that you've experienced growth. Share what you believe made that change successful.
- Many of us have priorities that need to be changed and excuses that need to end in order to grow spiritually. Share some priorities that need to change in your life and what excuses have you made that need to end.
- Why does God want us to become more and more like Jesus while we're here on the earth? Discuss what could change in our world as more of us grow spiritually.

### Prayer Focus

As you consider your next steps you'd like to take, begin to put together a list that you'd like to pray over during the 21 Days of Prayer. Commit to attend as often as you can and submit your spiritual growth to God.

### Next Step

Spend some time this week contemplating the one area of your life that needs a spiritual renewal. Maybe it's a relationship or a something you've struggled to overcome. Write out what next steps you could take spiritually that would affect that area of your life.

### Leader Tip

Commit to take on one of your participants as your co-leader next semester. Confirm they have completed the Growth Track and Small Group Leader Training.