

It's Time for Your
Annual Spiritual Check-Up

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

2021.1.3



Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent, action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “Talking Points, Walking Points” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time”, are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Community Group Discussion

- TCC's purpose is to “*transform ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ.*” Describe the most “extraordinary follower of Jesus Christ” you know personally.
- Review Pastor Doug's five questions which we can use to evaluate our spiritual progress (see the [Sermon Summary](#)). Which of these traits did you most observe in that friend?
- What event or person has most helped you become more serious in following Christ?
- Look over the list of **Spiritual Disciplines** listed at the end of the [Sermon Summary](#). Which **one** is **most lacking** in your life **now**?

What **one change** could you make which you think would bring the **most** growth in 2021?

Ready to grow and change in 2021?

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Application-Challenge

In order to grow in 2021, make sure you're cultivating the following spiritual disciplines:

- **Bible Study**—make it regular, personal, and with an emphasis on application
- **Prayer**—just talk with God throughout the day
- **Service**—to others in your family, neighborhood, and church
- **Fellowship**—spend time building up God's people
- **Worship**—express gratitude to God for his greatness, mercy, love and provision



Sermon Summary

The Christian life is meant to be one of progress and growth. 2 Peter 3:18 says: “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” How can we know if we are making real spiritual progress, and not merely deceiving ourselves with spiritual activity? You are growing as a Christian if you are becoming more Christ-like in how you think and in how you behave. Are you making progress in your spiritual walk? As you compare where you are now, with where you were last year this time, have you made any progress? Have you become more like Christ this past year?

1. Is your thirst to know God greater today than it was this time last year? Despite his obvious spiritual maturity, and privileged spiritual experiences, in a letter Paul wrote toward the end of his life, he said: “I want to know Christ...” (Phil. 3:10). What was Paul talking about? Didn't he already know Christ better than most of us ever will? Of course he did! But the more he got to know Jesus, the more he wanted to know him. The more he progressed in his spiritual walk, the thirstier he became! Is that your experience? Do you have a growing desire to know Christ better? Do you yearn to experience more of his grace and love? If so, that is a sure sign that you are growing as a Christian.

2. Are you more loving today than you were a year ago? In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus said that all of our Christian duty can be summed up as: Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Can you point to some specific areas where the love and grace of God are more evident in your life today than they were a year ago? Do you frequently sacrifice your preferences, your plans, your rights, or your expectations, for the benefit of others? Are you consistently gracious toward others?

3. Are you governed more and more by God's Word? It is from the Bible that we develop an accurate portrait of who God is, and what he is like. It is from the Bible that we get an accurate picture of who God created us to be, and how all of that went wrong. It is from the Bible that we discover God's plan to redeem us by sending his Son Jesus into the world to be our Savior. It is from the Bible that we learn how we are to lovingly relate to one another. It is from the Bible that we gain wisdom and direction for living.

4. Are you more and more willing to forgive others? Ephesians 4:32 says: “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Forgiveness is one of the hardest and most unnatural things we could be asked to do. But the more we become like Christ, who forgave even those who nailed him to a cross, the more we will be willing to forgive those who have wronged us. Have you forgiven any longtime hurts during the past year? If so, then you have made a measurable advance in Christian maturity.

5. Are you becoming more and more aware of your sin? Well, when you come to faith in Christ the Holy Spirit comes to live within you, and one of his ministries in your life is to make you more sensitive to sin. And while it is true, that the more you grow as a Christian, the less you sin, it often seems as though you sin more, because your sensitivity to sin is greater. Are you more sensitive to sin today than you were this time last year? How you answer that question will tell you a lot about your spiritual direction.

These questions aren't intended to make you feel guilty, but to help us grow. But growth in Christlikeness doesn't happen automatically. It has to be intentionally pursued (1 Timothy 4:7b-8). As we begin a new year let me encourage you to cultivate spiritual disciplines that will help you grow in Christlikeness.

I'm thinking of **spiritual disciplines** such as:

- **Bible Study**—make it regular, personal, and with an emphasis on application
- **Prayer**—just talk with God throughout the day
- **Service**—to others in your family, neighborhood, and church
- **Fellowship**—spend time building up God's people
- **Worship**—express gratitude to God for his greatness, mercy, love and provision

If you will cultivate these disciplines, you **will** grow spiritually.

And this time next year, you **will** see marked progress in godliness.

In his second epistle, Peter tells us how to be confident and fruitful in the Christian life—great goals for 2021!

Monday—Read 2 Peter 1:1-4

- In v. 1, how does Peter describe himself? Are those two titles of similar social status to each other? Which one is higher? Which one did he mention first? Does that surprise you? Why or why not? What do you learn from that?
- Write out how Peter describes the recipients of this letter (v. 1): _____
- Peter was the leader of Jesus' twelve Apostles. According to v. 1, does he see his faith as superior to theirs?
- If you have believed in Christ, then Peter's faith isn't superior to yours either! What should you learn from this?
- Peter wants the recipients of this letter to get more and more grace and peace. How do you think we get more of those?

Tuesday—Read 2 Peter 1:1-4

- How does v. 2 say that more and more grace and peace will come to the recipients of this letter? How much knowledge of God and of Jesus do you have?
- Since experiencing more grace and peace depends on more knowledge of God and Jesus, what must you do in 2021?
- How does v. 3 say that everything necessary for life and godliness will come to the recipients of this letter? How much of God's life and his godliness is evident in your life?
- Since developing more God-life and godliness depends on true knowledge God, what must you do in 2021?
- According to v. 3, do you currently have sufficient power from God to live a godly life?

Wednesday—Read 2 Peter 1:1-7

- How does v. 4 describe God's promises to you? Define "precious" and "magnificent" (or "great" and "precious", NIV).
- In what does v. 4 say God's promises enable us to partake (or "participate", NIV)?
- How much evidence of "the divine nature" do you see in your life?
- What are some examples of "corrupt, worldly desires" from which you've escaped (v. 4)?
- Who is responsible for accomplishing most of the things mentioned in v. 1-4, you or God? What change do you see in v. 5-7?

Thursday—Read 2 Peter 1:5-8

- From a dictionary, define the following words: (v. 5) "diligence" ("effort", NIV), "moral excellence" ("goodness", NIV), "knowledge", (v. 6) "self-control", "perseverance", "godliness", "brotherly kindness", and "love".
- Of those eight qualities, which one or two are you doing best in? Which one or two are you weakest in?
- What promise does v. 8 make? _____
How "useful and fruitful" ("effective and productive", NIV) are you for the Savior?
- The promise of v. 8 is conditional. What must we do first? _____
- Write a specific, measurable goal for becoming more diligent to supply these qualities in your faith in 2021 (v. 5).

Friday—Read 2 Peter 1:5-9


- V. 8 shows the positive outcome achieved by diligence in the Christian faith. Of what negative possibility does v. 9 warn?
- Do you ever wonder if all of your sins are forgiven? What does v. 9 say uncertainty of salvation results from?
- Did the person in v. 9 (who lacks the qualities listed in v. 5-7) also receive "everything pertaining to life and godliness" (v. 3)?
- V. 2 speaks of grace, v. 5 speaks of diligent effort. God's part, our part. How do these two things fit together?

Saturday—Read 2 Peter 1:8-11

- What does v. 10 say we can do to be certain ("sure", NIV) of our salvation?
- Is there any contradiction between salvation being by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), not by works, but fruitfulness (v. 8) and confidence (v. 10) depending at least in part on diligent obedience (Ephesians 2:10)? Explain.
- What help do you need from your pastors to be more useful and fruitful (v. 8), confident (v. 10), and to not stumble (v. 10, "fall", NIV) in 2021? Please let us know how we can help. E-mail Dan.Clement.tcc@gmail.com

Men—

Don't miss this opportunity for spiritual growth in 2021!



JOHN

JESUS—THE WORD, THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD

Men's Bible Study

- Gospel of John
- 13 weeks, beginning January 11
- Open to all men
- Just \$10 (for materials)
- Choose the time that fits you best...

Life is best lived
in circles not
rows.

MEN'S
GROUPS
TCC.org/Men

Mornings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mondays• 7-8:30am• begins January 11 (ends early April)• zoom only	Evenings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mondays• 7-8:30pm• begins January 11 (ends early April)• zoom or face-to-face option (at <u>TCC</u>)
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- **Go to:** tcc.org **Keyword:** **PointMan**