

Membership Class Session 1

By Jeff Noblit

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Preached on: Sunday, October 25, 2015

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I'm so glad you're here. I really struggled with what I was going to do because there is so much I'd like to say, but they put me on a time limit and so I've got to be careful with what I do tonight.

If you'll look in your booklets to page 3. As I was thinking about Brother Matt being up here, when I first put a pen to paper and began to write out our purpose and strategy statements as a church, he probably was in grade school and it's been a long time, yet Matt can articulate and embodies the truths as much as me or anybody else does because it's not about me. It's not about me, it's about God. It's about his word and striving to be a church that so walks in his word that God proves himself strong. In other words, it wouldn't work if God doesn't bless it. We don't want to just be weird and different, we just want to be right with God the best we can. Now, if being right with God makes you weird and different, that's okay, but we don't want to be those kinds of Christians that just try to be weird, okay? We're actually pretty normal in most ways. But the Psalmist said, "Come unto me all of you who fear the Lord and I will tell what he has done for my soul," and I wrestled with this and I think I'm just going to share a little bit of my personal conversion testimony because it really is the backdrop for why our church has its motive.

I grew up in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee in a non-Christian home. Mom took us to church a little when I was real small but I remember both of my parents having statements along about, "Is there really a God?" I don't know about my dad's part. I believe my mom may have done that more in frustration at times, but there wasn't really any spiritual nurturing or encouragement in that direction at all and so I sometimes say I come from a quasi-agnostic home life and my life could have been summed up I guess by, "It's just all about me." Isn't that true? I mean, if God hasn't changed you, your life is really about you. If God hasn't changed you, you find a church that's about you where you can do something or you can be noticed or you can feel special or you can do your ministry, get a little tickled about that. Church isn't about your ministry, it's not about my ministry, it's about God and what he wants to happen for his glory.

But anyway, backing up, I'm in high school at this time and my life pretty much revolved around two or three things. Number 1 was being popular, whatever would promote or make Jeff Noblit popular, that was what I lived for. Connected closely to that would be pleasure. You can imagine a teenage kid growing up. Fortunately there wasn't just a

whole lot of bad stuff to get involved in in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee in the 70s but there was enough and I indulged in what I could, but whatever I could find to give me pleasure, of course, alcohol and things of that nature were commonplace in my life as a high school student.

So popularity and pleasure but also getting into the high school years having no real biblical or strong Christian background, I became very open minded. I thought that was so intellectual and so smart to be about all the new waves of thought that was flooding the land in those days, whether it was pro-abortion or pro whatever. Every liberal policy in the world, I was kind of open to that and I would try to articulate that. I remember in a history class, history or geography, I can't remember, in high school that I took the position to debate that the Bible was not the word of God and that just sort of summed up what my life was.

But my parents were divorced when I was in the fifth grade and I was raised by a man who wasn't my biological father and I didn't know why there was such a huge gap of love and care there, but I found out later why and I wasn't his. So that just built a lot, I guess, insecurities in my life and I kept trying to fill those with everything the world could possibly give me or offer to me. By the time I was a senior in high school, I had some success in athletics and thought I might play a little college ball but that didn't turn out and it's like everything in my life that I put my hope in I see now as God crushed it, God took it away. The things that I lived for pleasure just kind of ran out. Have you ever realized in this world when you finally get what you want it's not all you thought it was going to be?

Well, that's my story. I mean, the pleasurable things began to run out and it was funny, when I got into all this liberal thinking and progressive thinking, I would finally meet some people who were really trained and educated in those areas and after I had met them and talked to them, I thought, "They're crazy. I mean, they're not morally superior or more upright. They're just fallen and weak people like me and everybody else." I really wanted these elitist people that I could really look to. So things started crumbling all around me and by the time I graduated high school, I had long since given up on family life giving me the love and the comfort and the welcome that maybe some of my friends had in their homes.

So really God had just caused me to surrender one thing after another as far as having any hope in it and it's a whole lot like Abraham in Genesis 12. God called a man, Abram is what he went by in those days, and God called to Abram and he said, "I want you to leave your friends and your family and I want you to go to a land that I'm going to show you." But God didn't tell him where he was going, he just said, "Trust me." And Abram said, "Yes, I'll do that," and so Abram takes off and he doesn't completely yield to God and he takes Lot and he wasn't supposed to take any of his family or friends. He was supposed to leave and go without them. So he takes Lot and God had to bring Abram to a surrender point. When Lot's tribesmen and Abram's tribesmen begin to feud and argue with one another, he had to surrender that and give it up.

Then later, Sarah, Abraham's wife, is old. Abraham is old. She can't have children, has a barren womb, and so Sarah decides, "I'm going to make sure he has the child of the promise because he's supposed to be the father of a great nation, so I'm going to give my maidservant, Hagar, to him and my husband, Abraham, can have a child through her and that will be the child of promise." Well, Ishmael was born. Abraham thought, "This is it. This is wonderful. I've finally got this son and like God promised me when he first called me, 'I'm going to make you the father of a great nation. Your descendants will be like the sand on the seashore.'" Years went by. His heart just bonded with Ishmael and then one day God spoke and said, "No, you've got to surrender Ishmael. That's not my way. You had him through somebody other than your wife Sarah. Sarah in her old age is going to conceive and bear a child for you." The Scriptures literally said that Abraham and Sarah laughed. They just laughed, "What do you mean? I had a barren womb when I was a young lady, much less as an old lady and I'm going to have this child?" Well, sure enough, God blessed her and she has this little boy and his name is Isaac. If you think Abraham loved Ishmael, he greatly loved Isaac. He put all of his hope in his heart in Isaac.

Then we come to Genesis 22. God speaks to Abraham one day and says, "Abraham, here's what I want you to do. Take your son," in the Hebrew it literally means, "Take your one and only son." Have you heard that phrase lately like this morning? "Abraham, take your one and this is your only true son you've got. Ishmael wasn't a real son because he wasn't the son of the lineage I promised. This is the miraculous born son I gave you, Isaac. Take your one and only unique son and go up on the mountains of Moriah and I want you to sacrifice him up there." Abraham didn't debate, didn't negotiate, didn't compromise. Abraham takes Isaac and here they go up the mountain. Abraham has a knife in one hand. Isaac is carrying the wood for the burnt offering himself and they start marching up the mountain. As a matter of fact, Isaac looks at his daddy and says, "Daddy, you've got everything for the sacrifice but where's the lamb?" Abraham said, "Son, God will provide for himself the lamb." They got up on the mountain and Abraham lays Isaac up on the altar, he raises that knife up and he's about to plunge that knife into the chest of his son and God spoke and said, "Stop." A little bit later in Genesis 22, in effect God says, "Abraham, now I know you really trust me. Now I know you've really surrendered to me. Now," he said, "I'm going to bless you. I'm going to multiply you and I'm going to make you a great nation and make you a great influence for my glory."

You see, that's the story of every true Christian. You're on a pilgrimage where God brings you to the place where you really learn to trust God. Now, there is a point where you trust in God to save you and forgive you of your sin, but for many of us, that's certainly not the end point and that's the testimony of Grace Life Church of the Shoals.

Let me go back to my story a little bit. I got in my car in February of 1979, 72 Cutlass Oldsmobile and began driving back to Middle Tennessee State University. Most people who knew me would probably say he's got the world by the tail. He's doing great, but I was dying on the inside. All the emptiness and the pain and the hurt. And I turned on the radio that night and I think I was on WSM out of Nashville, Tennessee and in those days they had religious broadcasting on Sunday night. I would have never turned on religious

broadcasting but it happened to be on there and for some reason, I heard these great choirs singing. They just had some choir music on for a while and I just really liked what I was hearing. I was just drawn to it. That's what some of you are, you're not yet converted but there is something in you that keeps being drawn. You keep being, "I know this is right," and that's kind of where I was in my car. I just felt better listening to that.

Then a Gospel program came on and I'm convinced to this day it was M. R. DeHaan and his son and they were just talking about conversion and about the Gospel. Here I am driving my car and I'm going to Columbia, Tennessee and he begins to tell this story. He said God was in heaven one day and God looked down on the whole face of the earth and God found the very best man on the whole earth, a man who worked harder at pleasing God than anyone else and God sent an angel down to that man. He said, "When you get to him, you tell him, 'You've worked harder at doing right and doing good than any other person on the earth so you get to come to heaven for one day and visit with God just as a reward for working so hard.'" The man was just beside himself with joy and excitement and so the angels take him, they fly up into the first heaven, through the second heaven, and then to the third heaven where God dwells, and they get out to the outside gate and I'm listening to this driving down the road, and they get to the outside gate of heaven and the man grabs the angel and says, "Stop! Wait." The angel said, "Well, what's wrong?" The man gazed up into heaven and there sitting on his throne in heaven is God and going out from God was holiness and pureness and goodness and righteousness and love and joy and peace. The man put his head down outside of heaven and he just wept. The angel said, "What's wrong?" He said, "I could never deserve to be in his presence. I could never be in his presence." So the man just wept outside of heaven, separated from God who was up in heaven. At about that time, Jesus Christ came over to that man and put his arm around him and he said, "Father, this one is mine." And after Jesus said that about the man, he rushed into heaven and enjoyed oneness with God and joy with God and closeness with God.

Now, I'm driving in my car down the road. I didn't plan this or predict this, but it was as if a beam of light came out of heaven, went through the top of that 72 Cutlass Oldsmobile and just God's love flooded my soul. I just knew he loved me. I knew he loved me. I was overwhelmed with the love of God. I don't know if at that moment my conversion took place. I knew something amazing had happened in my heart. I just felt a nearness to God. I felt a love from him like I had never sensed from anybody or anything in my life, but one thing I did learn and it was something somebody taught me later was the next couple of weeks I grew deeply aware of my deep, deep unworthiness just like that man did outside of heaven. I was deeply aware of how sinful and how wicked I was before this holy God, so much so I had Christians in church saying, "Quit talking so bad about yourself." I thought, "You don't know the half of it." But what was happening was the Spirit of God was convicting me of what I was compared to God. That's a healthy and good thing to happen. But at the same time that I felt the great sense of my sin and need and guilt, I felt great joy that Jesus had forgiven me and cleansed me.

Now, I didn't know anything about Abraham. I didn't know anything about the Bible. I didn't know the Old Testament from the New Testament. I didn't know anything. You

couldn't have been more ignorant than I was but I knew Christ had changed me and I began visiting churches. I went to a Church of Christ church. I went to a Methodist church. I went to a Baptist church and I did have some friends there but what I liked about that church, not that necessarily it was the perfect or great church, but the pastor there preached the Bible and I was just drawn to that and I just grew in that. But it was as if God was telling me at that time what he told Abraham, "Okay, now that you're really surrendered to me, now I can use you to be a blessing. I can use you to impact others for my glory."

Well, I didn't know that my pilgrimage would take me to a local church because at that time I didn't know what a church was or why church existed or what it was really for but I just knew I was supposed to go to one so I started going to a church and eventually was baptized at First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. And I wasn't in church life very long when I began to think, "I don't think a lot of these people have experienced what I've experienced." I tried not to be judgmental, but I think I was. I tried not to be proud and demeaning toward others, I think I was sometimes. But I do think I was accurate in the understanding that the church was in a mess and there was just something in my heart, I mean, the first few weeks after my conversion when I was attending church, that said, "This has got to change. Can we not just be biblical in the church and just follow what the Scriptures say?" I teasingly say to people that I always thought people would love me for wanting to change the churches like this and I found out through the years a lot of people didn't love you for changing the church when you were trying to change it.

To make a long story short, I had some good friends who were believers already who were at the University of North Alabama and they said, "Look, you don't need to be in an environment with lost guys, sharing an apartment up there. Come down here and be our roommate and we'll find a church down here." I said, "That's great," so I transferred to the University of North Alabama and I spoke to someone at the Baptist Student Union, that's where Pam and I first saw each other. She was crazy about me. I couldn't get her away from me. She said that's news to her. It probably was the other way around, but me and two of my college buddies stumbled into a church over here in Muscle Shoals. At that time it was called First Baptist Church. It was one metal building with a gravel parking lot. We came in on, it must have been a Sunday night. I think the pews only went halfway back. Maybe 100 or so in attendance. We'd sit in the back and listen to a guy preach the Bible verse-by-verse. Never heard that. It was just powerful to hear that.

A couple of weeks later, the pastor said, "We're building our building and our men are doing the work and anybody who would like to come and show up and work, the men," I don't know if he said if anybody would like to, I think he said, "You need to come and show up and work." We thought, "Well, let's just go and help." So me and a roommate showed up on a Tuesday night. The pastor didn't know who we were. We had not met. I'll never forget, he said, "Who do y'all work for?" He thought we were with a contractor. I said, "We work for the Lord." He said, "Well, good. Carry that sheet rock up the steps." It was double sheet rock. Have you ever carried double sheet rock? I'm talking about the 12 foot long ones. That was my first job at Grace Life Church of the Shoals 36, right at 36

years ago. That was my first job and loved doing it. I didn't realize what God was going to do as I later became the youth pastor, then the associate pastor and some of you go back that far and you'll remember the passion I had, still have to, "Let's make the church biblically sound." Not that people were just maliciously evil in their attending church but there was so much lacking in being a biblical church.

I discovered as time went on and I began to look at the Scripture, I found out there were a lot of people talking about church life along the lines of what's cool. What is attractive to this generation. What is this next generation looking for. I kept being troubled by that. I thought, "Why does that matter? What is God looking for? What do the Scriptures say?" So some time, it had to be approaching 30+ years ago, I began to write out a purpose statement from the Bible and three biblical strategies that support the purpose statement and now, what, 30+ years later, we're still using the same purpose and strategy statements. Now, we have adjusted some of the teaching because we keep maturing, but the cool thing is and the neat thing is the Bible doesn't change. You get the Bible right, it works today, it works tomorrow, it works 100 years from now.

Now, we may disagree on a number of things that really don't matter, but there are some foundational things that we just don't disagree on here and so that's why I like to tell folks I've raised my kids here. I can't even tell you the value of seeing my girls grow up in an environment where so many other families are like minded and have the same convictions and the same encouragements. It's such a valuable and wonderful thing and I realize what God told to Abraham and that's the same for all of us in some form or fashion that, "If you will surrender to me," in other words, "Trust me and do it my way, then I'll bless." Because it wasn't until Abraham was willing to take Isaac up there and sacrifice him, that's what God wanted, that God then said to him, "Now I know you trust me so now, Abraham, I'm going to make you a great nation." The last I checked there are Jews everywhere so God did bless that.

I think that's our testimony here and this first session and I'll make sure that you guys get a copy of the exhaustive, if you will, teaching on this session, but this first session is about here at Grace Life Church, it's not a cliché, it's not a nice thing that you're supposed to say and go on to other stuff: we strive to maintain a heartfelt passion for the glory of God in this church. That this church must be about him. Now, here's how that works. If we do church God's way, by God's purposes, by God's patterns, if you will, depending on God's power and then if he gives that power, then it shows the world he's wise, not us. It illustrates to the world: look what God can do, not what we can do. I mean, would it not be, I mean, I'll celebrate 35 years here in May. I can tell you, I ran out of neat ideas a long time ago. I ran out of creative clever stuff to keep people interested a long time ago, but if you can get people in love with Christ and if they can become glory of God focused to where they say, "It's not about me, it's not about my ministry, it's not about being blessed, it's not about being fulfilled in church, it's about God getting glory. It's about people seeing God in this church." Then do you know what happens? You're more fulfilled and blessed when you start that way than if you try to be fulfilled and blessed. I get a little frustrated sometimes when I hear preachers talking about, "You'll be blessed." I thought, "What do you mean by that?" I'm blessed, I was going to say when Tennessee

wins a football game. That doesn't happen a whole lot, but, I mean, you can be blessed by a thousand different things that just pass and don't matter but once you get plugged into a purpose that God must be glorified.

So when we wrote out our purpose statement, the purpose of Grace Life Church is to glorify God, that's always first, by obediently making and equipping disciples of Christ in the Shoals and throughout the world by the power of the Spirit. When we wrote that out, it would not be an exaggeration that I have 100 hours in that statement; 100 hours of biblical study in that statement. The statement is not essential but the truths of the statement are because they're biblical.

Then we have three purposes: congregational worship that is thoroughly biblical; every member of ministry through small group, that's biblical; then, of course, personalized and strategic world missions for the glory of God. And we have just found that if we would dedicate ourselves to live those things out, now listen, by God's power. Your power can't do it. You will run out. You won't last. You say, "Lord, if you'll give me the strength to stay anchored to this truth and see you glorified," then that never runs out. That fuel never ends.

So that's what we're about. Everything we're about. Now, here's what I say to folks all the time: if you see something that you don't think is right, I can promise you with genuine humility, we will receive your suggestion. We want to hear it, but not just because you have a personal preference. I mean, we'll listen to that too but you see, I've got a thousand personal preferences out here. But if you see something that's not biblical, help us be more biblical. The elders here, again, some of these guys have been with me 30 years. We're not about us getting our way. We're about God getting his way. I don't know how many times I have had to, needed to and it's the right thing to do, go to the pulpit and basically say, "I have been wrong here." I've had to be humbled. I've had to readjust. I've had to repent. I've had to rethink some things. That's one of the ways I've experienced what Abraham experienced because I took off like Abraham and I took Lot with me sometimes as a pastor. God said, "No, you don't understand. If you're successful the way you're doing it right now, people will give Jeff Noblit credit so you're going to have to die to some things. You have to let Lot go." Then I'd figure some other way out and God had to say, "No, we've got to surrender that too."

We want to just continue to strive to be thoroughly biblical for the glory of God so that he will get the glory, he will be thought much of and when the community looks at Grace Life Church, we want them to say, "We're not sure how that works. We're not sure why it works. God must be doing that." I mean, you're not here because we have the most amusing or entertaining whatever. You're here hopefully because the Spirit of God has drawn you to the preaching of the word, hopefully to doctrine and to God-centeredness that's driving us.

I can tell you one thing for sure, this church family is a deeply, genuinely loving church family. One of the things when I talk about glorifying God that's probably quite new to many of you is a community that ministers one to another. We don't view the senior

pastor or even the pastoral staff as a group of priests that when we show up, God shows up. No, we teach the principle of every member ministering through small groups. There is an abundance of more care in ministry than any group of men could possibly do by themselves.

Now, what's so neat about that? What's neat about that is when we minister that way and we are faithful year in and year out, the community has to look at that kind of caring ministry and say, "Only God can do that." The pastor is paid to do that, but when people really care for each other that way, only God can do that. You see, then he gets the glory. When they look at, I think, Brother Steve, I'm correct in saying we've had seven million dollars that we have given to missions above and beyond our other gifts. I think when people look at our commitment to world missions and all that we strive to do there, I think they would have to look at that and say, "You know, that kind of long term striving would have to be God in their hearts." Men don't do that. I wouldn't do that, but God's glory deserves everything we've got and the best that we've got.

So our motive is the glory God. The purpose of Grace Life Church is to glorify God. How? By obediently making and equipping disciples of Christ in the Shoals and throughout the world by the power of the Spirit and you can be confident if indeed God leads you to be a member here, that what we are is what we've been and what we are is what we're going to be. You won't anchor your life here and then two years later we're on a different tangent, we're going in a different direction. Now we found out this was the cool thing to do. I'm not saying all creative stuff that church's do is necessarily wrong but what I do believe happens is this wave of new modern...

I thought this morning and I know this hasn't been the kind of session, maybe I used to do, but I just wanted to share my testimony. My heart moved me tonight. But I was in a church one time, a good pastor, his heart is right, but they had started the church several years ago and they had really put a lot, a lot of emphasis on the lights being down, colored lights flashing during the song service and smoke every now and then and when I sat there in that service, though I loved the people, I thought, "This feels just like the nightclubs I used to go to when I was lost." As I was pulling into church this morning I thought, "If I was a lost man and had been at a club last night but God was tugging on my heart and I needed to know more about God, the last thing I'd want to do is walk into a church that reminded of the nightclub I just left." So I think we need to be careful is what I'm saying. So while we do fun stuff, especially with our kids, we're not stick-in-the-mud, but nevertheless we want to be careful that the attraction here is Christ and Christ's word and not stuff we can create that very often, to be honest, can distract from the beauty and the purity and the glories of Christ.

I said a little bit about every member of ministry through small groups is one of the ways we want to see God glorified, the way the Scripture teaches God will be glorified, the other would be congregational worship that is centered on the preaching of the word and the power of the Spirit. God has just ordained that he will do most of his most effective work through the preaching of the word and I don't know how you can explain people

being drawn to the preaching of the word other than God giving men and women the heart to want to hear it. That Christ reveals himself through the preaching of the word.

Now, I don't know where you are. Are you listening to me? It's likely you're going to be offended first under the preaching of the word. It's likely you're pushed away some first and you kind of think, "I don't think that's the right way to do this." You have questions about it. That's very normal. As a matter of fact, I would say that's almost 100% normal, but behind that, when you're saying, "I don't know if this is what I need or want," behind that is something in you that says, "I think this is God." That's why the Bible says faith comes by hearing, present tense and that means hearing, hearing, hearing and hearing. You keep hearing the preaching of Christ and then faith blossoms in your heart and that's true with all of God's truth, but obviously it starts with coming to know Christ and then you build on that.

So the ministry of the word and I would hope that when people maybe on a really, really good day we'll approach 1,000 in attendance here, I would hope that the community would say, "There is nothing there spectacular except they preach the word of God and those people just like it." And I know people that have been liking it and loving it for 10, 20, 30, 35 years now. You see, it takes God to do that. Only God can give you a heart that loves the truth and you don't have to be entertained into loving God. Now, when you're really little, when you're a little child, sometimes you have to be kind of manipulated and coaxed into doing the right thing, but as you grow up, you hope the child will choose to do the right thing from the heart. Well, that's the way we want Christianity to be. We want to not have to be coaxed and manipulated into honoring and serving God, but God so impacted our hearts through his word that we want to do that.

Then finally, not only congregational worship and every member ministry through small groups but personalized strategic world missions and we have a passion that God gets the glory he deserves among all peoples, tongues, tribes and nations and that centers on preaching the word and starting churches. There are 100 other things you may do to help people but the one thing we must do is plant churches for the glory of God. That's what Jesus did. That's what the Apostle Paul did. The New Testament is thorough on starting churches and mission work. There is nothing in there about other kinds of mission work but the local church is what God's word is clearly about and so God has now blessed us to have, if you count our work with Barry King, I suppose we have 35 or so church plants that we help sponsor around the world. A number of them came right out of our ministry here that God just began to bless and as things have evolved through the years, Brother Steve spends a chunk of his time, of course, in missions and most of my energies outside the pulpit is spent mentoring and discipling pastors and a whole lot of that is on the telephone as they look to us now to help them develop churches that are what we call glory of God focused and Christ honoring and Bible saturated and local church centered in evangelism and missions impassioned and spiritually empowered local churches. It's a mouthful, isn't it?

Well, I've rattled around. It's not what I planned to do, but I hope you sense in my heart that we want to be a church that brings glory to God by doing God's work, God's way, by

God's power and that it can't be explained by human wisdom or human ingenuity. That's what a church is. Now, have we arrived? No, we're still repenting and learning and growing and we will be until we all go to heaven but it would be a great, great joy if you would feel like, "I want to be a part of that."

Here's what I'd like to tell you: it will take a long time for you to grasp the ministries we've got going on. I mean, the missions part alone is just a lot to it. We do a lot of ministry for a church our size. A whole lot. A whole lot more than average and so don't feel like, "Will I grasp it all? I get it all?" That's not going to happen, but what we do want you to discern is do you sense God's Holy Spirit is drawing you to be a part of that. And we're not looking for perfect folks. We're not looking for folks who have arrived and have all their "i's" dotted and their "t's" crossed and understanding of the Bible or doctrine. I'm still growing and learning myself but we are looking for folks who are sincere, who say, "I want to go in there and I want to love and I want to be loved and I want to grow with these people and see God impact my family and my life so I get to be a part of what they're doing for God's glory in the Shoals and literally to the ends of the earth." As long as a person has a genuine heart to grow and serve God, I'm telling you, you'll be loved and welcomed and happy here. No doubt about that.

The purpose of Grace Life Church is to glorify God by obedience, making and equipping disciples of Christ both in the Shoals and throughout the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let me pray for us.

Lord, I thank you for these dear folks that you have brought our way and, Lord, having met several of them and been praying for all of them and hearing testimonies of other folks who have met them, I believe that all the folks I know that you have led this way, it is your will that they are here at least for now. And, O God, I would pray you would continue to confirm in their hearts that though there are some things they won't understand and some things they won't grasp, yet they will know that, "God wants me here and he wants me to grow here and serve here and these people will be loving and compassionate to me and patient with me and I, in return, will be loving and compassionate and patient toward them," and we can be a body of Christ that, O God, you use to bring great glory to your name. God, bless the remainder of our evening and thank you for giving us this special time together. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.