

Future Grace at FPCR

Part Two: What We Intend To Be

Five “Measures” of Maturity

- Knowledge
- Perspective
- Conviction
- Skills
- Character

Knowledge of the "WORLD"

- Two Questions: What do I know and *what else* do I need to know? Must ask this at any and every point in the process. Or... "What is our business?" and "How's business?"
- WORLD: *Wonder* about it (ask questions); *Observe* it (answer questions); *Reflect* upon it (consider the meaning); *Learn* it (apply it to life); *Do* it (carry it out).
- Five Core books of the Bible: *Genesis, John, Romans, Ephesians, James*

Perspective

- Beyond knowledge are *understanding, wisdom, discernment, prudence*, etc. These are all functions of perspective. This is the difference between knowing how and knowing why.
- A lack of perspective is a sign of spiritual immaturity. Four benefits:
 - Causes us to love God more
 - Helps us resist temptation
 - Helps us handle trials and affliction
 - Protects us from error:
 - Concerning money, work, pleasure, suffering, good & evil, relationships in family, home, business, etc.
- Perspective produces stability in believers' lives.

Conviction

- Includes your values, commitments, and motivations.
- Knowing *what* to do (knowledge), *why* to do it (perspective), and *how* to do it (skill), are all useless without conviction that it should be done and the motivation to get it done.
- FPCR must have clear strong convictions or the membership will never attain the level of commitment necessary to “turn the world upside down.”
- FPCR must teach biblical convictions in order to counter the secular values to which believers are constantly being exposed.

Conviction (Cont'd)

- Conviction helps us to maintain diligence in continuing to grow spiritually. Growth requires time and effort and without conviction, people become discouraged and give up.
- Conviction keeps us from being distracted by the agenda of others.
- Conviction spreads best through relationships. We acquire convictions by being around other people who have them. This will come primarily through mentoring and being mentored.

Skills

- Skill is the ability to do something with ease and accuracy. Skills are the “how to steps” of Christian growth. Our actions are what prove we belong to God’s family.
- In the Christian life there are certain skills we must develop in order to mature:
 - Bible study skills
 - Ministry skills
 - Witnessing skills
 - Relationship skills
 - Time management skills
- *“If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.”*
Ecclesiastes 10:10
- Or, as another version puts it, *“but skill will bring success.”*

Skills (Cont'd)

- Many Christians today are frustrated at their inability to live the Christian life. They have been taught what to do, but not how to do it. They know studying the Bible is important, but do not know how to study the Bible. A weak prayer life makes them feel guilty, but no has taken the time to teach them how to make a prayer list, how to praise God by using his names, how to intercede for others, etc.
- Exhortation without explanation leads to frustration.
- We shall begin teaching skills such as these in half-day seminars for all those who make a commitment to growth in grace to maturity. Growth is a process with maturity as its goal.

Character

- Christlike character is the ultimate goal of spiritual maturity – of all Christian education.
- The objective of all our teaching must therefore be not merely to impart information, but to change lives.
- “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5).
- Character *per se* is not built in a classroom, but in the circumstances of life. It is the result of using Christ’s methods and skills to respond to the situations of life in Christ’s way.
 - Classroom study identifies those character qualities of Christ and learns how character is developed.

Character (Cont'd)

- God generally produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives by putting us in the exact opposite circumstances so we must choose between the flesh and the spirit.
 - He teaches us how to love by putting us around unlovable people.
 - He teaches us joy in sorrow.
 - He teaches us peace by placing us in the midst of chaos.
- God is more interested in our character than our comfort.

A Logical Order:

- Foundation is knowledge of the Word
- The better we know God's Word the more we will see the world from God's perspective.
- Once we see things from God's viewpoint we begin to develop biblical convictions.
- Conviction then gives us motivation to maintain spiritual habits. Through repetition the habits become skills.
- When we put knowledge, perspective, conviction, and skill together the result is character.

Back to our question of measurements:

- Are people learning the content and meaning of the Bible? (Knowledge)
- Are people seeing themselves, life, and other people from God's perspective?
- Are people's values becoming more like Christ's values?
- Are people becoming more skilled in serving God?
- Are people becoming more and more indistinguishable from Christ himself?

A 2020 Vision For FPCR

- Do we envision a church where God is glorified in every area of our church? FPCR will strive to do everything with excellence in order to bring glory to God.
- Do we envision a church that has a “God-sized” vision that will take God-glorifying faith and God-glorifying obedience to accomplish that vision? We will attempt something so great for God that it is doomed to failure unless God is in it.
- Do we envision a church that is true to the Scriptures, faithful to the Reformation, and obedient to God? We will not only know and believe the Scriptures; we will seek to live them out in our lives more and more.

A 2020 Vision For FPCR, Cont'd:

- Do we envision a church that has a foundational commitment to both the Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)? We will *love the Lord* in worship, *love our neighbors* in ministry, *go and make disciples* in evangelism, *baptize converts* and their children into the body of Christ, and *teach them to obey* all Christ's commandments in the ongoing discipleship of his people.
- Do we envision a church that is healthy and therefore committed to the pursuit of holiness in the fear of God? FPCR will be a place where the hurting, the depressed, the disappointed, the lonely, the confused, the guilty, and the sinful can find forgiveness, love, and righteousness in Christ.
- Do we envision a church where every person in our community has an opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel? FPCR will reach out to this community through evangelism and trained witnesses.

A 2020 Vision For FPCR, Cont'd:

- Do we envision a church where hundreds of people gather each week to worship the triune God in a manner that is biblical, historical, and enthusiastic? FPCR will be a place where the Word of God is preached each week systematically, discursively, and experimentally (i.e. analytically, antithetically, and with application).
- Do we envision a church that welcomes hundreds of members into the fellowship of our church family? FPCR will be a church where we love, learn, and live in harmony with each other.

A 2020 Vision For FPCR, Cont'd:

- Do we envision a church that brings believers to spiritual maturity? FPCR will grow disciples of Christ through regular preaching, Bible studies, seminars, conferences, retreats, and a planned discipleship development process (E5: Evangelize, Establish, Equip, Extend, and Empower).
 - FPCR will be a church that evangelizes with the gospel of sovereign free grace and the power of the Holy Spirit into the entire community.
 - FPCR will be a church that establishes converts by teaching the practical duties of the Christian life and then living what we have taught.

A 2020 Vision For FPCR, Cont'd:

- FPCR will be a church that equips every established disciple for service by helping him learn to make disciples of others.
- FPCR will be a church that extends its borders by raising up leaders in the broader Christian community.
- FPCR will train scores of believers for leadership in God's kingdom.
- FPCR will be a church that empowers every believer to know his life mission in God's kingdom.
- Do we envision a church that sends out believers on short-term and career mission projects and ministry? FPCR has already sent out 21 short-term mission-team members and by 2020 will send scores more.

A 2020 Vision For FPCR, Cont'd:

- Do we envision a church that will plant several daughter churches by 2020? FPCR will plant daughter churches by training planting groups and pastors. After 2020 FPCR will continue to plant a daughter church every year until the Lord returns.
- Do we envision a church that has outstanding facilities that meet our entire ministry needs? FPCR facilities will, by 2020, include a sanctuary seating at least 400 persons not counting daughter churches and a sufficient number of various sized classrooms for its numerous training and missions objectives. God has graciously led us and we have followed what he has called us to be and to do as a church.