

Why Do We Challenge People to Take Next Steps?

Message 2 of 5 in the series: "Why Do We Do That?"

A. God wants you to become like Jesus, and so do we.

"Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that **we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ**. 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. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, **growing in every way more and more like Christ**, who is the head of his body, the church." Ephesians 4:11-15 (NLT)

"Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue **until Christ is fully developed in your lives**." Galatians 4:19 (NLT)

Life Application: Do we want what God wants for us more than what we want from God?

"For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them **to become like his Son**, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." Romans 8:29 (NLT)

B. Becoming like Jesus is an on-going process that always requires next steps.

"...And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us **more and more like him** as we are changed into his glorious image." 2 Corinthians 3:18b (NLT)

"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. But we must hold on to the progress we have already made."
Philippians 3:12-16 (NLT)

1. Next steps are inevitable.

"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection... No, dear brothers and sisters, **I have not achieved it...**" Philippians 3:12a & 13a (NLT)

Life Application: We must develop an eternal perspective and resist "destination disease."

2. Next steps are intentional.

"...But **I press on** to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me... **I focus** on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, **I press on** to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us."

Philippians 3:12b & 13b-14 (NLT)

Life Application: Plan to grow intentionally rather than accidentally. **RightNow Media** is one of the many tools we want to provide for your daily growth.

3. Next steps are incremental.

"Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. **But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.**"

Philippians 3:15-16 (NLT)

Life Application: Get moving so you can keep moving.

C. Next Steps are challenging because they force us out of our comfort zones.

1. We probably won't take our next step without a challenge.

"We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.... Brothers and sisters, we urge

you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.” 1 Thessalonians 2:12 & 5:14 (NLT)

“And let us consider how we may **spur** one another on toward love and good deeds...”

Hebrews 10:24a (NIV)

Note: The word translated as “spur” is the Greek word *paroxysmos*, meaning provoke, incite, or irritate.

Life Application: Build relationships with people who love you enough to tell you the truth.

“We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, **growing in every way more and more like Christ...**”

Ephesians 4:14b-15a (NLT)

2. Our comfort is found in God and not the circumstances surrounding our next step.

“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.” Hebrews 4:16 (NLT)

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” John 14:26 (NKJV)

Life Application: “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NASB)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. Read Galatians 4:19. What do you think it means for Christ to be fully developed in your life?
2. According to Philippians 3:12-16, becoming like Jesus is an on-going process in this life. Why is it important for you to know that you will never “arrive” or achieve complete Christ-likeness in this life? Does that encourage you or discourage you from making progress?
3. Since we never “arrive,” next steps are always inevitable and necessary. Here are some possible next steps:

-Receiving Christ and baptism

-Growing in spiritual disciplines (i.e. prayer, reading Bible, etc.)

-Joining Centerpoint Fellowship

-Serving in a ministry area

-Growing in financial stewardship

-Sharing my faith with others

-Leading others in ministry

-Going on a mission trip

Which one might be an intentional next step you need to take in your relationship with Christ? Are there other steps you might need to take? Why?

4. John Maxwell says that people have different zones:

- Coasting Zone- “I don’t even do what I’ve done before.”
- Comfort Zone- “I do what I already know I can do.”
- Challenge Zone- “I attempt to do what I haven’t done before.”

Which zone most represents your spiritual life and why?

5. Share an experience from your life when someone spoke “truth in love” that helped you to take a difficult next step. What did you learn from that experience?
6. God promises to comfort/help us when we are out of our comfort zones. 1 John 4:16 says, “We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in His love.” What do you know about God and his love that will help you to walk by faith and step out of your comfort zones?