

Beyond 20/20 Vision 5 - GROWING

→ *What does 'growing' mean to you? Are you currently growing? What should be happening in a growing church?*

THE PREMISES

1. It's God's PLAN for HIS church to GROW (Matt 16:18, 28:18-19, Col 1:6)

* If God is IN IT, it will GROW.

→ *What aspects of the Holy Spirit's nature and ministry will be constantly sparking growth?*

→ *"There's a plan and we're it!" Discuss!*

2. EVERYTHING we do SHOULD be GROWING

* If a spiritual organism is ALIVE it will be MATURING, INCREASING, MULTIPLYING.

→ *Should everything be growing? What are some of the reasons it doesn't? What, in particular, would you love to see growing?*

3. HEALTHY things GROW (Col 2:19, 1 Cor 3:6)

* Growth is GOD'S JOB; ours is to make sure we're HEALTHY.

→ *What are the conditions necessary for growth: for your personal growth and for growth in the church? Why do unhealthy things fail to grow?*

→ *"Our job is to co-operate with Him as He makes us healthy." Discuss!*

Growth takes place in multiple directions: If we want to go where God wants to take us, we will need to grow:

A. Growing DEEPER in CHARACTER (1 Pet 2:2, 2 Thess 1:3, Phil 2:12-13)

→ *"Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional." Discuss!*

As God works in our hearts, we should be:

- a) Growing BOLDER
- b) Growing SOFTER
- c) Growing WISER
- d) Growing TOGETHER

→ *Do you agree that these four are good measures of maturity, both for individual Christians and for the church as a whole? Over the last 12 months, have you grown bolder or more timid? Softer or harder? Wiser or more opinionated? Together or more critical & divisive?*

B. Growing STRONGER in RESOURCES (Matt 16:18)

* God is the MASTER BUILDER and we are the LIVING STONES with which He is building.

* The resources we're talking about = US!

* Ongoing prayer: Lord, FILL US UP so we can OVERFLOW.

→ *Have you ever been in a church that has always seemed to struggle to make it over that tipping-point or to muster the critical mass needed to go to the next level? What resources did they lack / desperately need? What additional resources do you reckon we need at theBarn?*

C. Growing LARGER in SIZE (Matt 28:19, Acts 2:47)

→ *"As a church. If we're healthy, we will be reaching out. As an individual Christian, if you're healthy, you will be reaching out." Do you agree? How does the Holy Spirit lead / prompt / underpin that?*

How do we play our part in helping us grow?

- i) Build RELATIONSHIPS
- ii) SOW SEED
- iii) Be LED by the SPIRIT
- iv) PRAY
- v) Extend an INVITATION

→ *Which of those are you currently working on? Any lacking? What do you think the Lord might be calling you to concentrate on?*

D. Growing WIDER in REACH (1 Corinthians 9:19-22)

Key words:

- a) REPUTATION is about ATTRACTING people
- b) INFLUENCE is about LEADING people
- c) IMPACT is about HELPING people

Paul was prepared to EXTEND an ARM or BUILD whatever BRIDGE was necessary to reach as many as he could.

* Our growing character will be LONGING to HELP.

* The RESOURCES God has given us are there to HELP.

→ *How do we reach wider? Why? To whom? What would you love to do if you could or what ministries would you love to see birthed if we could?*

FINAL PROPOSITION

It would be great to see accelerated growth in all those directions, but there is an ORDER: First, DEEPER, then STRONGER, leading to LARGER and finally WIDER.

* Larger & wider are the FRUIT of deeper & stronger.

* It's not going to be our MIGHT or POWER, but the work of His SPIRIT.

* We can't FORCE growth or MAKE IT grow, however much we want to. Our job is to concentrate on HEALTH and growth will come, because God makes HEALTHY things GROW.

→ *Why is the order so important here? What happens if we try to circumvent it? What aspect of all the above do you feel led to look at, press into, pray about heading into the next season?*