

Agape House

OF WORSHIP

FAMILY OF CHURCHES

2024 ANNUAL RETREAT

The
BLESSED
Life



July
25-27
2024

MY NAME IS

AHOW 2024 ANNUAL RETREAT - THE BLESSED LIFE

Program Outline

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2024

2.00pm - 4.00pm - Soaking & Intercession Prayer

4.00pm - 5.30pm - Room Check-In

5:30pm - 6:30pm—Dinner

OPENING SESSION

6.30pm - 6.40pm - Opening Prayer

6.40pm - 7.05pm - Corporate Worship

7.05pm - 7:10pm - Jide Lawore

7.10pm - 7:20pm - Rules & Regulations

7.20pm - 7.30pm - Testimonies

7.30pm - 8.10pm - Plenary Session 1

8.10pm - 8.20pm - Breakout Announcement and Transition

8.20pm - 9.45pm - Breakout Session 1

9.45pm - 9.50pm - Transition Back to Auditorium

9.50pm - 10.10pm - Breakout Session 1 Round-up

10.10pm - 10.15pm - Theme Song

10.15pm - 10.30pm - Session Closing Charge

AFTERNOON SESSION

3.30pm - 3.40pm - Corporate Worship

3.40pm - 3.45pm - Transition to Breakout Session

3.45pm - 5.10pm - Breakout Session 3

5.10pm - 5.15pm - Transition Back to Auditorium

5.15pm - 5.35pm - Breakout Session 3 Round-up

5.35pm - 7.00pm - Dinner

EVENING SESSION

7.00pm - 7.05pm - Theme Song

7.05pm - 7.30pm - Session Opening Charge

7.30pm - 7.45pm - Holy Communion

7.45pm - 8.25pm - Personal Prayer and Reflection

8.25pm - 8.50pm - Corporate Worship

8.50pm - 9.35pm - Plenary Session 3

9.35pm - 10.35pm - Prayer and Ministrations

FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2024

7.00am - 7.55am - Corporate Morning Devotion

7.55am - 8.00am - Announcements and Transition

8.00am - 9.15am - Breakfast

MORNING SESSION

9.15am - 9.35am - Corporate Worship

9.35am - 10.05am - Plenary Session 2

10.05am - 10.15am - Corporate Prayer Session

10.15am - 10:20am - Transition to Breakout Session

10.20am - 11.45am - Breakout Session 2

11.45am - 11.50am - Transition Back to Auditorium

11.50am - 12.15pm - Breakout Session 2 Round-up

12.15pm - 12.30pm - Session Closing Charge

12.30pm - 3.30pm - Rest/Recreation Break

SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2024

7.00am - 7.50am - Corporate Morning Devotion

7.50am - 8.00am - Announcements and Transition

8.00am - 9.30am - Breakfast and Room Check-out

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

9.30am - 9.35am - Theme Song

9.35am - 10.05am - Personal Prayer and Reflection

10.05am - 10.25am - Corporate Worship

10.25am - 11.05am - Round-up Message

11.05am - 12.00pm - Impartation Session

12.00pm - 12.45pm - Testimonies

12.45pm - 12.55pm - Appreciation and Farewell

12.55pm - 1.00pm - Personal Prayer and Reflection

1.00pm - 2.30pm - Lunch & Departure

Welcome Message

Welcome to the AHOW Annual Retreat 2024. I am excited for another opportunity to gather together as a family to fellowship, worship, pray, study the word, and seek His face together. For those of us attending the retreat first the first time, I want to welcome you. Thank you for taking the leap of faith and responding to our invitation. For those who have been coming for years, please do not take it for granted. No two retreats are the same. Don't confuse similarities in the programming and organization to similarity of experiences. Each retreat is unique. God always has something new, fresh, and unique in stock. "Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23).



What a great theme we have this year—*The Blessed Life*.

A life in Christ cannot be described as other than a blessed life. As believers of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3). A blessed life is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers. (Psalm 1:3). We have come to develop our understanding of blessings and develop faith to walk in the reality of our inheritance.

I encourage you to take every session seriously regardless of what's happening or who is speaking. God is here, and He is in the business of blessing lives. The purpose of the retreat is to focus on God more intently and seek Him much deeper. The goal here is to do more than scratch the surface than we do every Sunday or Wednesday.

Please bear in mind that we are only here for 48 hours; hence, seize every opportunity to seek God passionately and purposefully. Over the years, I have seen God do marvelous things; I have seen lives transformed in ways that I cannot explain, people set free and delivered from long-term bondages. I have seen many God-given dreams and ideas born out of this gathering. I have no doubt that it will be the same this year.

To conclude, let me give a brief word of caution; the retreat is not just about manifestations, even though they are a wonderful part of it, and there will be a lot of it. It is about transformation; leaving here knowing that your life will never be the same, having encountered Jesus in a different way. It is about leaving here with a blessing that will define your life God going forward. I pray that the next 48 hours will be the most consequential 48 hours of your life.

~ Pastor Jide Lawore

1. Every meeting is an appointment with God; please arrive at the auditorium early. Set your alarm device to wake you up early.
2. Keep yourself alert while you pray by constantly moving around. Don't get stuck in one position or your body's lethargy will affect your mental alertness.
3. Please turn your phone off or put on vibration mode during the sessions. Remember this time has been dedicated to God, please refrain from or limit phone calls.
4. Baby-sitting is available throughout the program. Please drop your children at the children's room before each session.
5. All areas are to be quiet by 11:00pm. Music or any loud instrument should not be played after this hour.
6. Do not bring food into the Chapel, and please pick up after yourself to ensure clean accommodations.
7. Please note that cooking is not permitted in rooms.
8. Spruce Lake Retreat requires a "high standard of modesty in your choice of attire." Please keep your shirts on while in public areas.
9. Swimming and other fun activities should be restricted to break and rest time only.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Our breakout session is an essential part of the retreat. Breakout sessions are small group discussion sessions lead by a facilitator. The discussion material has been provided in this booklet. Each participant has been assigned a group number which can be found on your name tag. Please use the list below and the map on next page to locate your facilitator and location. The retreat facilitator will be available to guide you if you need help.

The grouping has been assigned equitably so that no group is too large or too small. We strongly believe your assignment group is also part of God's way of working during the retreat. Believe you are in your group for a reason and make sure you attend your assigned group and stick to it. If for any reason you have to change your group, please consult one of the retreat coordinators for permission.

Thank you and have a wonderful session!

BREAKOUT SESSION GROUPINGS AND LOCATIONS

Breakout Group	Facilitator	Room and Location
Group 1	Ade Adedeji	Cedar Hall 1
Group 2	Bolajoko Fapohunda	Cedar Hall 2
Group 3	Dolapo Adedeji	Chestnut Meeting (3rd Floor)
Group 4	Genevieve Kumapley	Hemlock Hall (Basement)
Group 5	Hephzibah Akintobi	Hemlock Lounge (1st fFloor)
Group 6	Hubie Berrios	Hemlock Basement Snack Area
Group 7	John Ohakim	Sycamore (Founders Lodge)
Group 8	Joshua Dada	North Lawn
Group 9	Nike Akoh	Birch Lounge
Group 10	Nneoma Ewurum	Carol Lounge
Group 11	Olumide Adekanye	Sycamore (Founders Lodge)
Group 12	Patrick Ahiadzipe	Evergreen Room (2nd Fl)
Group 13	Paul Akoh	Walnut (Founders Lounge)
Group 14	Richard Oyebade	Lakeview Program Center 1
Group 15	Stella Jeran	Lakeview Program Center 2
Group 16	Tomi Adebari	Nature Center (Behind Lakeview)
Group 17	Tunde Odeyemi	Oak Room
Group 18	Mayowa Adedeji	TBD
Group 19	Sunday Dosunmu	TBD

Group Y1	Eri Ajao	Lilac room (4th Floor)
Group Y2	Olamide David	Lilac room (4th Floor)
Group Y3	Joel Lawore	Sunroom

Spruce Lake

Pointing People Toward Christ

Retreat Center Detail



Campground Key

- Sites per night
electric/water
- Sites per night
electric/water/sewer
- Seasonal Sites
electric/water/sewer

The Lesser Life



SESSION ONE

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLESSED?

I. What Does it Mean to be Blessed?

The word blessing or other variations of it get thrown around a lot in our society today. It is part of our casual Christian greetings. How are you? I am blessed. When someone sneezes, we say “bless you” or “God bless you.” Yet many people, even believers, don’t truly know what it means to be blessed. According to some scholars, the word blessing (and its various forms) occurs over 600 times in the Old Testament and over 100 times in the New Testament. Yet many of us do not know what it really means to us.

Question: What do you think is the meaning of being blessed?

The two words often translated as “blessed” in the Bibles are “Makarios” and “Eulogeo”. They both mean “fortunate,” “happy,” “enlarged,” or “lengthy.” Makarios is used in the Septuagint (a translation of the Old Testament into the Greek language) and the New Testament to define the kind of happiness that comes from receiving favor from God. Consequently, the word can also be translated “favored.” In the New Testament, it usually carries the meaning of being “blessed by God.” For example, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was called “*blessed among women*” (Luke 1:42–45, 48). It was the Lord God who had blessed and favored her.

Another meaning of the word “blessed” is derived from the Hebrew word “Bārak”. Its meaning includes to be empowered by God to be what He created us to be. We see this in the account of creation in Genesis 1:27-28 “*So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”*”

The word blessed here is a verb (an action word) which implies to be empowered with strength and grace. So, when God blessed mankind here, he empowered them and released upon them the grace to fulfill their intended purpose. This account gives us a deeper, powerful and refreshing understanding of the phrase “being blessed”. In the study of the bible (called exegesis), knowing where a word was first used in the bible is important in order to get the purest understanding of it.

Many times, when we talk about **ble^ssing**, we often talk about it as the opposite of a curse. This is usually judging from the later use of the word in the Pentateuch that often contrasts blessing and curse (Examples: Genesis 12:3, Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Deuteronomy 30:19). However, Genesis 1:27-28 shows us blessing is not necessarily a response to a curse or something to nullify a curse. God’s original purpose of blessing is to release upon mankind, the power to succeed and fulfill their purpose.

Hence, we can define blessing as God’s invisible powerful force through His pronouncement in order to empower the man to succeed in his endeavor and fulfill his purpose of creation.

Question: What has been your view of the word blessing before now?

SESSION ONE

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLESSED?

The Purpose of Blessing in Creation:

1. **The Blessing of God Makes Us Fruitful:** To be fruitful is to produce good or helpful results; it is to be productive. When someone is fruitful, it means their effort produces results. Blessings release the power to cause us to be fruitful and effective. Deuteronomy 15:10
2. **The Blessing of God Makes Us Multiply:** To multiply is to increase or cause to increase greatly in number or quantity. When the blessing of God is upon a man, it causes one to increase at a greater rate than usual. Proverbs 10:22
3. **The Blessing of God Makes Us Overcome:** To overcome is to get the better of in a struggle or conflict. It is to conquer or defeat. We see an example of this when Israel defeated a stronger army with a smaller one or even without fighting at all. That is what blessing does, it causes you to overcome even with little strength.
4. **The Blessing of God Makes Us Take Over:** Some translations use the word dominate. To dominate is to rule over, be on top. Notice this is not to dominate other people but other members of the creation. The blessing of God enables us to be the head in what we do.

Question: Do you agree that every believer can be the head in what they do? What does that mean?

II. Sin led to the fall of man and brought us under Judgement

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17), they were brought under judgement. Most people interpret this as, "they were cursed" even though the Bible did not explicitly say that God cursed Adam and Eve. We see God cursed the serpent (in verse 14) and also cursed the ground for the sake of Adam (in verse 17). But for Adam and Eve, he told them the consequences of their disobedience.

Genesis 3:14-18 *"So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

16 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." (NKJV)

SESSION ONE

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLESSED?

God also drove Adam and Eve out of the garden and placed a cherub to guard the entrance. This was so that Adam and Eve could not return and possibly eat from the tree of life and live forever (Genesis 3:23–24). Hence since the fall, mankind has continued to live under a cursed system. They were forced to find their own food and shelter under a cursed system. Adam had to fight weeds and thistles to eke out an existence from the ground, while Eve had to suffer in childbirth. Suffering and toil are part of the curse God put upon this world because of sin.

Romans 5:12 *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned”*

Question: *What is your thought on whether Adam and Eve were cursed?*

III. Jesus Came to Restore the Blessing

One of the key elements of redemption is the restoration of God’s blessing upon his mankind through Jesus Christ (which is the original intent of God). While sin hindered us and prevented from truly being free and to be what God created us to be, redemption (the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) frees us and allows us to succeed in spite of the curse.

1 Corinthians 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

When Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life,”* what He meant was that He had come to empower us to overcome the curse. Jesus came to bear *“our sins in his body on the tree that we might live to righteousness”* (1 Peter 2:24). *“The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

It’s important to know, however, that some of the benefits of redemption we will enjoy in this age while others we will enjoy in the age to come (Acts 3:21, NKJV). When Jesus comes for all those who have trusted in Him, God will restore all things (Acts 3:21). He will create a new heaven and a new earth to replace that which sin destroyed (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:12–13; Revelation 21:1). Mankind will no longer be “fallen” but restored and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God (Revelation 7:14).

But for now, every believer through Christ Jesus is blessed and has God's favor and supernatural backing to overcome the effect of the curse to the degree of their faith and the quality of their walk with God and fulfill God’s plan for their lives.

Galatians 3:13-14 *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”* (NKJV)

Ephesian 1:3 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”*

SESSION TWO

WALKING IN THE BLESSING

One of the most important truths of the scripture every believer must know is the difference between receiving a truth and walking in it. In bible terms, it is one thing to receive something but another to walk in it. Let's look at a few examples of this fundamental truth.

Colossians 2:6 tell us: *“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”* This implies receiving Christ and walking in Christ are two totally different things. And in fact, it is possible for someone to have received Christ and not walk in Christ.

Also in Romans 5:5, we learn that through the Holy Spirit, the love of God has been poured out into the heart of every believer: *“And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (NIV)”*

However, in Ephesians 5:2 we are also told to walk in love: *“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. (NKJV).”* This of course implies, having the love of God in our heart is different from walking in love.

I hope you are getting the understanding now. In Bible terms, “having or receiving something” is totally different from “walking in them”. In the spiritual term, receiving can imply having mental assent, where someone agrees with the Bible or God intellectually as true – admiring it and agreeing with it-but not allowing it to have an impact on them. Unfortunately, this kind of acceptance doesn't do any good in your life. In essence, mental assent agrees with God but does not have faith in God.

To walk in something, however, means to allow your way of life (your thoughts, reasoning, decisions, actions etc.) to reflect your belief. It is to take steps to enjoy the truth experientially. This is the real definition of faith. Hence, just because we have received the blessing of God does not mean you are walking in it. (Hebrews 4:2).

Walking is Done by Faith Not Just Mental Assent

True faith leads to experience. *James 2:17 “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (NIV)”*

2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we live by faith, not by sight.”

So, it is one thing to mentally accept that you are blessed and another to walk in the blessing. Walking in the blessing is living your life with the full consciousness of being blessed and allowing your actions and decisions to reflect that truth even in the face of contradicting experiences.

Romans 4:19-20 “And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God”

This must start with having your mind saturated with the truth, your mouth in agreement and then the experiential blessing will follow.

Joshua 1:8 *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (NKJV)”*

SESSION TWO

WALKING IN THE BLESSING

Let's look at what the Psalmist tells us in our theme passage:

Psalm 1:1-3 *“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the **scornful**; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

Psalm 1:1-3 can be described as the habits and evidence of a blessed life. If you want to walk in God's blessings, there are some things you don't do and there are some things you must do. The passage can be broken down into three sections.

1. The don'ts of a blessed life
2. The dos of a blessed life
3. The fruits of a blessed life

1. The Don'ts of a Blessed Person

I. A blessed person does not take counsel from wicked people: What does this passage really mean to us today? More simply, do you take counsel from those who do not bear godly fruit?

I know it is tempting to say, “Well, I'm not asking advice about the Bible, but about practical matters and they are good at those.” Well...to a point. But if they are living in rebellion to God's Word or have never submitted to it before, why do you need to seek their counsel?

II. A blessed person does not stand in the way of sinners: Sinners in this context are those who hate the way of God and embrace everything that God hates.

The blessed person does not always hang out with sinners; instead, he surrounds himself with those who love God and those who stir him on in his walk with God. That's not to say the blessed man avoids the lost and the dying; no, we know from Jesus that we need to go into the world and preach and make disciples. However, we also know we aren't to be unequally yoked.

It simply means we need to guard our hearts and use wisdom in our relationships. We are to avoid partnership with the enemy camp which can lead to a compromise of the truth of the glorious gospel of God. Just as Jesus chose His inner circle well, we need to do the same. *1 Corinthians 15:33 says “Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”* Believers who hang out with sinners all the time will end up picking up their bad manners and miss out on blessings that come from the fellowship with believers. Christian community is important and should never be neglected.

III. A blessed person does not sit in the seat of scornful: A scorner is one who expresses contempt and ridicule towards others, openly mocks truth and godliness. Scorners in the Bible include the boys who mocked Elisha in 2 Kings 2:23: Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem in Nehemiah 2:19.

One of the marks of our time is the mocking of God and mocking of others. It's becoming easy these days to mock people, especially in this age of social media. But according to the psalmist, if I want God's blessings then I need to refrain from mocking. The upright person who follows God's leading doesn't mock political leaders but accepts that God's sovereignty has allowed them to take office. The blessed man prays...desperately...for the depravity around him but sees it through eyes that grieve it instead of standing above it.

Question: *What do you think are the implications of these don't rules? Read Exodus 32:26*

SESSION TWO

WALKING IN THE BLESSING

2. The Dos of a Blessed Life

I. A blessed life delights in God’s law: Psalm 119 is basically a love letter to the Word of God. We read over and over in Scripture that godly men and women delight in it and obey it.

In Deuteronomy 6 we read God’s plan for the nation of Israel to surround themselves with His Word and to teach it to their children. The Bible is important to every believer, and God’s blessings often come through God’s Word.

Taking delight in His Word means letting it bring you joy, looking forward to reading it, and soaking yourself in it. It means hearing it and letting it change you. The blessed man is one who abides and cherishes the Bible.

II. A blessed life meditates on the Word of God all the time.

Meditation takes it beyond just reading it. Meditating on the Word of God means contemplating it, memorizing it, focusing on it. That’s what our delight and desire for the Word of God should be like.

How amazing it is when I’m in a situation and I get overwhelmed and a promise from Scripture shouts more loudly in my heart and mind than the fear or frustration I had started to feel!

Question: What do you think are the implications of these do rules? Read Exodus 32:26

3. The Evidence of a Blessed Life

I. A blessed life bears fruit constantly: According to Psalm 1:3, the people who do all of these things bear fruit and have leaves that don’t wither. This implies that a blessed person continues to radiate the presence, favor and blessing of God in every situation they find themselves.

They are planted by streams of water. Jesus is the Living Water, and we are to be established in Him. When we are, we bear fruit. According to Paul in Galatians, that fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

II. A blessed person prospers in whatever they do.

This verse is extraordinary. It declares that everything you do shall prosper... that you succeed at anything you do. A blessed person continues to advance, progress, and fulfill their purpose in season and out of season, regardless of circumstances that surround them. A blessed man is unstoppable, there is an unusual force around them that cannot be stopped by opposition, persecution, and lack of money. Even in dry ground, a blessed man still succeeds.

SESSION THREE

MATURITY AND BLESSING

When many people hear the phrase spiritual maturity, they think of something laborious, burdensome and boring. They see it as another Christian buzzword that connotes lots of religious obligation and routine. However, in Galatians 4:1-2, Apostle Paul gives us the most inspiring and positive reason for a believer to pursue spiritual maturity. Let's read the words of Apostle Paul:

Galatians 4:1-3 *“What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.”*

Though in a different context, this passage presents spiritual maturity as a necessary step to enjoying our inheritance. While it is true that spiritual maturity comes with a lot of responsibilities, a wise person will quickly realize that the benefits far outweigh the cost. This passage employs the principle of the Jewish inheritance process to teach us about an important spiritual principle. In the Jewish culture and also most societies today, when the parents die and leave an inheritance to an underage child, the child must wait until he or she reaches the age of maturity to be able to lay hold of the inheritance.

In the same way, many believers don't walk in the blessing that God has already given to them (by inheritance) due to their immaturity. It takes spiritual maturity to walk in God's blessings experientially even though the blessing has already been given to us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:3 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”*

Even though we have been blessed through our association with Christ, our maturity is needed to be able to walk in the position God has placed us.

Unfortunately, many believers today do not pursue discipleship and spiritual maturity. They are content with a version of Christianity that does not place any demand on them; they are content with the religious routine of Sunday service attendance that does not involve any spiritual discipline.

Question: *How do you think we can make spiritual maturity desirable again for today's believers?*

SESSION THREE

MATURITY AND BLESSING

Five Keys to Spiritual Maturity

With everything we have said, spiritual growth should be a top priority of every believer. When we make it a point to grow in the spirit, we also make it a point to grow in every aspect. That's because our spiritual status affects every other area of our life - whether it be psychological, mental, emotional, economical, or relational. Above all, it also affects our ability to truly lay hold on our inheritance and walk in the blessing that God has for us.

Let's look at five keys to spiritual maturity.

1. Staying in the Word: In 1st Peter 2:2, we are told that we grow in our faith by drinking the “pure milk of God’s word.” The analogy is clear and one I’ve witnessed with my own eyes. Infants are nourished with milk, and the result is tremendous transformation! Those tiny fingers and toes and legs and limbs begin to grow, stretch, and develop from simply drinking milk! Then an infant graduates from drinking milk to eating solid food.

Hebrews 5:13-14 “For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

For a believer to mature in her faith, she must feed herself the Word of God on a daily basis. It is not enough to go to church or Bible study once a week. That would be like eating a meal on Sunday and then starving for the remainder of the week. We must daily feed ourselves the Word of God if we expect to grow and mature in our faith.

2. Christ-centered Community: There is probably nothing in the world that fosters spiritual maturity in a Christian more than surrounding yourself with other Christ-followers who love Jesus, fear God, and desire to live for His glory.

Having a Christ centered community is different from just belonging to a church. It means surrounding yourself with a Christ-centered small group of people that pursue spiritual growth together. As we invite accountability, we are challenged to know God more, and we have relationships with people who will pray for us when trials or temptations occur.

Question: Do you have a Christ-centered Community? How can a believer develop one?

3. Walk in the Holy Spirit: Jesus called the Holy Spirit our “Helper.” He is the one who comes alongside us and helps us in our weaknesses. The Holy Spirit is the one who transforms us from the inside out to act, think, and love like Jesus. As we keep in step with God’s Spirit, He matures us and produces the Christ-like qualities in us. We must daily ask the Spirit of God to lead, guide, and direct our paths and to conform us into the image of Christ.

4. Surrender. In the Kingdom of God, victory comes through surrender. Only when we surrender to God’s will and walk in His ways, do we begin to experience the abundant life Jesus promised. As we yield our will to God’s will, then we begin to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. Obedience is merely surrendering to God. Through these moments of surrender, we grow and mature.

SESSION THREE

MATURITY AND BLESSING

5. Humility. The most significant hindrance to spiritual maturity is pride. Pride lies to us and tells us that we are doing just fine. Pride compares itself to someone else instead of looking at the perfection of Jesus. Pride blinds us to our areas of weakness. On the other hand, humility is the key to maturity because it keeps us daily living in desperation for Jesus and clinging tightly to Him for everything. The mature person is one who recognizes “apart from Jesus I can do nothing.”

Question: Discuss how pride can prevent a believer from walking in God’s blessings?

In conclusion, it is important to note that believers who refuse to pursue and walk in spiritual maturity will walk as though they were not blessed. Solomon alluded to this truth in Ecclesiastes 10:5-7,

“There is an evil I have seen under the sun, As an error proceeding from the ruler: 6 Folly is set in great dignity, While the rich sit in a lowly place. 7 I have seen servants on horses, While princes walk on the ground like servants.

Unfortunately, many believers, though blessed in Christ Jesus still live as though they were not due to their lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6), lack of faith (Hebrews 4:2) and lack of deliberate effort to put appropriate actions behind their faith (James 2:26).

The goal of this retreat is to open our understanding, unlock our faith and walk as blessed which we really are.

For the Sake of the World - Bethel Music and Brian Johnson

I'm laying down my life, I'm giving up control
I'm never looking back, I surrender all
I'm living for Your glory on the earth

This passion in my heart, this stirring in my soul
To see the nations bow, for all the world to know
I'm living for Your glory on the earth

For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me
Light a flame in my soul for every eye to see
For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me

This passion in my heart, this stirring in my soul
To see the nations bow, for all the world to know
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For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me
Light a flame in my soul for every eye to see
For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me
Like a fire in me

For every knee to bow down, for every heart to believe
For every voice to cry out, burn like a fire in me
For every tongue to confess that You alone are the King
You are the hope of the earth
Burn like a fire in me

For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me
Light a flame in my soul for every eye to see
For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me

For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me
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Personal Prayer Points

1. Father, thank you for the privilege to attend 2024 retreat and to be part of what you are doing in this season.
2. Lord, I ask you to do something new in my life during this retreat; touch me and speak to me, let me experience you this year like never before.
3. Lord, create in me a genuine hunger for you, help me to seek your face with all my heart during this retreat. Help me to be sensitive to what you are doing and to respond appropriately. Revelation 2:29
4. I pray that during this retreat, I will have a unique divine encounter with you that will transform me and take me to a higher level than I have never been before.
5. Lord, give me the spirit of consecration so I can focus on you wholly. Help me to overcome every distraction the enemy may bring my way. Psalm 16:8
6. As your servants speak, I don't want a generic word, I want a specific Rhema Word tailored to me and my situations. Psalm 62:11
7. Lord, I pray for everyone attending this year's retreat that no one will leave this place empty handed. Everyone will experience a divine touch and no one will leave the way they came.

Agape House
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2025

ALLOW

Retreat



THUR, JULY 24 TO SAT, JULY 26

SAVE THE

Date