



Campbelltown Anglican Churches

Mission and Vision

5 Studies on the purpose of life & church

Term 1, 2018



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About Growth Groups

We are about *growing* or *maturing* and doing that alongside one another. Let's describe these as 'coaching' and 'community'.

Coaching

1. **Learn to Read.** The bible is a book and learning how to read it is so important to Christian **maturity**. The Growth Group study material is a tool only and must not overshadow the primary goal of learning to read and listen to God's word.
2. **Learn to Pray.** The primary way of learning how to pray is by listening to others and practising. Sing praises to God in your prayers and learn how to **magnify** God with your prayers together.

Caring

1. **Learn to Care.** Growth Groups provide a close community of people who can be praying, sharing and caring for one another. One reason we encourage groups to be formed from the same congregation is for easier follow-up and strengthening the sense of church **membership**.
2. **Seek to Grow.** Your congregation is the **mission** field for your Growth Group. Remember, there's no such thing as a full Growth Group - only groups that are ready to multiply! A large group of 15, with two leaders added, can become two new groups of 8 or 9.

3. **Work Together.** What **ministry** or initiative could your group do together this year? Sunday morning-tea or supper? Letterbox leafleting for the church? A street party in your area? Gardening at the church? A BBQ at a church event? A dialogue dinner with friends?

People in my Growth Group

Name	If you had tomorrow off, what would you do?

Introduction to this Study Series

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

There are many statements in the bible which could be used to summarise our purpose in life (eg, Micah 6:8; John 17:3; Romans 12:1-2). While none of them on their own provide the complete picture, Matthew 5:16 does a pretty good job. At a quick glance the verse seems to elevate our works as the most important thing in life. Looking again, you might see that God's glory is the end game. All that we do in life is for the glory of God and so that others might also glorify him.

In this five part series, we are going to look at five areas of life for which God has designed us. Although you may see a progression in these areas, as if one leads to the other, they are all of equal importance and ought to be worked on in parallel. These five areas are described in the bible as what should shape us individually and together as a community. In fact, you will see that unless we do these together as a church, we will be failing to do them individually.

These purposes can be remembered with the following 'M' words...

Magnification

We are made to glorify God

Mission

God's mission is our mission

Membership

We are designed for relationship

Maturity

Our goal is to grow in Christ-likeness

Ministry

God saved us to serve

Study 1 – Magnification

Made for God's glory

Key verse

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17

Startup Statements

The bible begins with these words, “In the beginning, God...” Before matter mattered, before time ticked, before any thought was conceived, God was there and ready to create. Why did he do it? Why are we here? The answer is *for his own glory*. Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” Isaiah 43:7 tells us that people are made for God's glory. Psalm 150 exhorts everything that has breath to praise the LORD! And it is right to give glory to God. He made us and he has saved us. Revelation 4:11 says, “You are worthy our LORD and God to receive glory and honour and praise because you created all things and by your will they are sustained and have their being!” So what does it mean to glorify God?

Discuss

How do you glorify God?

Read, Mark, Learn

Read Psalm 8 together.

¹ Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory
in the heavens.

² Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your
enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:

⁷ all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,

⁸ the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

⁹ Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

1. Discuss what this psalm tells us about everything around us.

2. What is the place of humans in the scheme of things?

It's a beautiful picture of a great creator being thanked and worshipped by his great creation. But this is not what we see happening in the world.

Read Romans 1:20-25.

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look

like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

3. What does Paul list as the expected response from mankind?

4. What is the reality that Paul describes?

5. What is your experience of this reality in the world around you?

Read Philippians 2:6-11.

⁶Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to
be used to his own advantage;
⁷rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue acknowledge
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

6. What did God do and what does this teach us about giving glory to God?

Application

Read Colossians 3:16-17.

¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

In smaller groups, brainstorm all the ways that you can glorify God in your life. Try to be specific in your answers and discuss what it might look like in practice.

In church	
In my thoughts	
While doing my work	
Driving in the car	
Watching TV	
Talking with friends	
Online	

Prayer for the Week

Almighty Father, maker of heaven and earth, we praise you and give you thanks for all you have made, all you have promised and everything you have fulfilled for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Please give us lives that are filled with joy for knowing you. May all we do be done for your glory and in the name of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Study 2 - Mission

God's mission is our mission

Key Verse

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

1 Peter 3:15-16

Startup Statements

The above verses instruct us to keep our faith evident to all. Firstly, we hold Christ dearly in our hearts as our Lord. Secondly, this faith ought to be seen by others who may then enquire about it, whether kindly or with hostility. Thirdly, our place is to be meek and mild so that no matter what the outcome, we will not be ashamed for our actions even if others may be.

The topic of mission is about telling people the gospel, talking about Jesus, showing people gospel love, opening our church up for outsiders to investigate, going out into our world to share our faith and sending others to share the good news. Just as Peter told the church to always be prepared, our church is to always be ready and active in mission.

Discuss

What is a topic that you find easy to talk about? What makes it easy?

Read, Mark, Learn

Read John 3:16-18.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

1. What do these verses teach us about:

a. God?

b. Jesus?

c. The world?

d. Judgment?

2. What is the default position of people who have not come to believe in Jesus as God's gift for salvation?

Read Matthew 28:18-20.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

3. How did Jesus describe himself to his disciples?

4. What were his basic instruction to his disciples?

5. What were the disciples of the disciples suppose to do?

Application

One way of sharing the good news of Jesus is to tell a story about Jesus. Every gospel story contains a mini-gospel message! You can introduce a story of Jesus into many conversations when you notice that his story fits!

Pick one of these gospel stories, read it a few times, then close your bible and retell the story to the person next to you as closely as you can. Try to recount the *event* as close as you can, rather than memorising the *words*.

Mark 2:1-12 - How forgiveness is more important than comfort or health. And how miracles were a surprise to people in Jesus day too!

Luke 7:36-50 - How no sinner is too far gone for Jesus.

Mark 4:1-20 or **Luke 8:4-15** - Teaching how the world and the devil can interfere with someone growing in faith.

Mark 4:26-29 - How Christianity has continued to grow and will continue until Christ returns.

Mark 4:35-41 - How Jesus commanded nature or how we underestimate the power and significance of Jesus.

Mark 5:21-43 - Jesus has power over death.

Mark 8:34-38 - Jesus says bluntly that if you deny him in this life, then he will deny you in the next.

Mark 10:17-27 - How the commandments will not save you. How the commandments are harder than they sound. How people love money more than God.

Do you have another favourite story about Jesus? What question does that story tell you about Jesus, God, the world? How can you use the story in a conversation?

Prayer for the Week

Father, you sent your Son into the world to save sinners. May we go in response to your command to make disciples of others. Help us in our weakness and teach us to have confidence in the good news we have learned and believed. Amen.

Study 3 - Membership

We are designed for relationship

Key Verse

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10

Startup Statements

In Study 1, we looked at the purpose of creation and how Jesus' death on the cross paid for a crucial short-fall of ours, that we fail to give thanks and praise to our God in all that we do. While we certainly praise God through music and praying in church, we ought to continue to do it in all of our life as we replace our desire to be number one with a desire to make God number one.

1 Peter 2 reminds us that we were once living in darkness but because we heard the good news of Jesus Christ and responded in repentance and faith, we now belong to the people of God! We have experienced God's mercy and are part of his church. In this study, we focus our attention on our new family in Christ. We look at membership in the church.

Discuss

What does it mean to belong? Is there a difference between belonging to a sports club or community group and belonging to a church?

Read, Mark, Learn

Read Ephesians 2:11-22.

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸

For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

- 1. In Verses 11-12, how does Paul describe the status of people before they come to Christ?**
- 2. How do Verses 13-18 teach us about the difference that Christ has made?**

3. Discuss how Verses 19-22 help us to understand 'church' and belonging together.

We belong to God (1 Peter 2:9-10) and we belong to one another (Ephesians 2:11-22; see also Romans 12:5). Let's look at Romans 12 now to see how we can put this teaching into practice.

Read Romans 12:9-16.

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Application

Make a list of all the ideas mentioned by Paul in Romans 12:9-16. Write them down using your own words. Choose one you might try to work on yourself and one you can work on with your Growth Group.

Prayer for the Week

Father God, we thank you for adopting us as your children and for instructing us to love one another as our own body. We pray that you would strengthen the bond between us and help us all to make every effort to keep one another bound to Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.

Study 4 - Maturity

Our goal is to grow in Christ-likeness

Key Verse:

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

Colossians 1:28

Startup Statements

Have you ever wondered what it means to grow up? Does a child become an adult because of the years they've lived or because they demonstrate adult behaviour? Haven't you seen a grown man or woman and thought that they ought to grow up?!

The bible talks about maturity as the way we grow up in Christ. Notice in Colossians 1:28 how maturity in Christ is a learning process? It is more than knowledge about Christ. It is wisdom in being transformed by the knowledge of Christ.

Discuss

"Christian maturity can be measured by how quickly one is prepared to change their mind to accord with what God says." John Chapman

Read, Mark, Learn

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³ You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

- 1. What words are used in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 to describe immaturity?**
- 2. What is Paul's hope for his Christians readers? Does this raise any questions for you?**

Read Hebrews 5:11-14.

¹¹ We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

3. How is a mature Christian described in this passage?

4. How are the immature described?

5. What does this passage tell us about solid food?

Read Colossians 1:9-14.

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,^t ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

6. Share in your own words the things that Paul prays for?

Application

In smaller groups, talk about how you will grow in this area.

- a. Discuss what a Christian moving forward in maturity looks like.
- b. Think about your own maturity and growth. How is your training in Christian maturity going?
- c. What is lacking? What could you change or continue to do?
- d. What action plan can you create for this week to work towards Christian maturity?

Prayer for the Week

Our Heavenly Father, just as Jesus showed us to put our trust in your word, teach us to read your word, to understand what it says, to know when and how to apply it to our lives. Please help us to have the courage and strength, by your Spirit, to put it into practice. Help us to live every day on your word. Amen.

Study 5 - Ministry

God calls us to serve

Key Verse

⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:5-7

Startup Statements

We learned in Study 1 that we are created to glorify God and in Study 2 that God's mission to glorify Jesus is our mission. In Study 3 we found that Christians are made members of the one body. The previous study taught us to grow up in the knowledge of God through his word and learn to apply it with wisdom. We belong to God. We belong to one another. We learn how to live with the wisdom and knowledge of God. If membership is about loving one another in Christ and seeing the local church as your family, then ministry is about how we contribute to family life while growing in maturity. Ministry is about serving one another with the gifts that God has given us.

Discuss

What types of ministry do you notice happening in the body of Christ?

Read, Mark, Learn

Read Mark 10:42-45.

⁴² Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- 1. How is the kingdom of God different to the way this world operates? How is this amplified in the ministry of Jesus? You may like to look at Philippians 2:5-11 to expand on this teaching.**

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or

free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that

its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

2. Use the message in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 to discuss the following statements.

- A. It's not important for members of the church to do anything.
- B. There are only so many jobs in the church to do, once they are filled, what more can you do?
- C. The person at church who is gifted at making others feel welcome and does that is just as necessary to the preacher who spoke a great sermon.
- D. Although we can all exercise our gifts at church it is important to work together.
- E. If God has blessed you in some way, it is up to you whether you use that gift or not.

Application

Take a moment to write down your skills, and things you enjoy doing or even for which you have a passion. Then share with the people next to you. Discuss how any or all of those things could be used to assist and build up the body of Christ.

Prayer for the Week

LORD God, you have blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. You have bought your church with your blood and we are here now wanting to serve. Open our eyes to see how you want us to serve. Humble our hearts to serve in a way that honours you and benefits others. For your glory and name. Amen.