

FTBC

GROWTH TRACKS


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Welcome to Growth Tracks which is FBC's program designed to set the disciple on the firm foundation spiritual maturity.


In 2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV) Paul writes "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

The key to growth in our spiritual lives is encountering the glory of God through the person of His Son who is His perfect image. The more our hearts are filled with the knowledge of Him the more our characters are moulded, the more our hearts are filled with His love and more our lives will be directed towards the purpose for which we were created....to glorify Him. Each chapter is designed to provide a progressive track to show the face of Christ through selected but key passages in the Bible laying down the bed rock foundations of faith that will form the basis for a life -long learning and growing in to the likeness of Christ. Prayerfully follow these chapters and His Spirit will propel you into a trajectory of robust growth and spiritual transformation. Learn how to read the bible by tackling whole passages of Scripture rather than piece meal verses. See how principles from the passages will be translated to everyday life. For those disciples going into the Gamma program these presentations will help bridge the gap between the Alpha Beta programs and the more in- depth Gamma discipleship program.

For those who prefer to listen and see the contents of this book you can go to our website at [www.fbc.com .my](http://www.fbc.com.my) and each chapter will be presented in a series of slides at the resources section of our site under the title "Growth Tracks"



MODULE 19



THE LORD'S SUPPER

In this study we will be dealing with the Lord's Supper. What is the Lord's Supper and why do we as Christians celebrate it?

For this we will take the understanding in the Lord's Supper from the New Testament, from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthian church.

This is the church which Paul himself have planted and we can read all about it in Acts chapter 18. Paul writes to the church, the year is about AD 55 and he addresses various problems in the church with disunity, members of the church partaking in food offered to idols. In this particular case, he addresses them on the Lord's Supper.

Paul writes,

1 Corinthians 11:17-22 (ESV) But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. 18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, 19 for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. 20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

So here the passage is about divisions and this is arisen from them gathering together and having the Lord's Supper and in this occasion, it is where the disunity and factions come out. Lord's Supper is a celebration, is a meal where members of church come together and celebrate being of one body because of the sacrifice of the body in the blood of Christ. What happens in this particular church, you can find that there are divisions. The divisions are because there are two kinds of classes of people, the richer people who would come earlier and they would partake of the food with gusto, taking up most of the food, so when the poorer people would arrive much later because they had to work in the fields, there wasn't very much to eat at all. In fact, there was so much that some people were overeating and there was so little for those who are left behind. So each one goes ahead with his own meal. They are not sharing the meal together; they are eating up all the food on their own. One goes hungry and the other one gets drunk. It is a sign of disunity and in this way they are despising the church of God and humiliating those who have nothing. Imagine coming to Lord's Supper and the folk who have come two hours ahead of you have eaten everything else and you have got nothing to eat, nothing to celebrate the Lord's Supper with and they have actually gorged themselves with so much that they are actually drunk. So this caused a lot of strife and disunity among the church and it is this background to this particular passage.

The Lord's Supper begins with the bread.

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (ESV) For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Originally, during the Lord's Supper, it is actually a part of a whole meal and bread have to be broken and what Jesus did was, he took the bread and that bread symbolized his own body. After giving thanks he broke it and this is symbol that his body is broken. His body is sacrificed, broken on the cross as payment for our sin. So when we partake of this bread, we are actually partaking in saying to ourselves and saying to God and saying to our neighbor next to us that this is the body of Christ. This is the death of Christ and I accept his death for payment for me for the penalty of my sin, for our sin and because we break this together, we symbolize the unity of the church, the creation of the church by a new humanity brought together by the gift of Jesus Christ sacrifice for us.

The next part of the meal is the cup, which is the cup of wine or grape juice. Paul writes, *1 Corinthians 11:25 (ESV) In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

Here again is the cup. The cup actually symbolizes the blood of Christ, which is the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross and when you partake of this cup, which means when you drink the wine, you are actually appropriating the benefits of Christ's death on the cross when he shed his blood for us in payment of our sin. This cup is also described as a symbol of the new covenant. The old covenant is the one where God gives the people of Israel the Ten Commandments and they are supposed to obey it, but they actually failed many times to obey the law and so therefore with the New Covenant which is a new promise, is a promise which is actually secured to us by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, whereby God will put his Holy Spirit into our hearts and the Holy Spirit will guide us and move us, so that we would obey the law of God in our hearts. So this cup represents Christ death on the cross, which inaugurates this New Covenant. In the old days when they had a covenant, they would actually take the blood of animals and splash it on the altar, in the same way is a sacrifice of the animals. In this case, this New Covenant or new deal is actually confirmed by the partaking of the wine in the cup, which symbolizes Jesus death. Every time we take the cup and we eat the bread we actually remember the sacrifice that Christ has done on the cross, paying for our sins. We remember what Jesus has done for us.

The Lord's Supper is celebrated as a memorial, remembering the time of his death, because that is the pivotal event that has won us salvation and this has given us hope. Therefore, the Lord's supper also looks forward. The Lord Supper is a proclamation,

1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The Lord's Supper taken as a body together is a proclamation or declaration of our confidence and of our hope that Christ will come back again one day and one day we will be celebrating the Lord's Supper in heaven with Christ together. So therefore as we take it, we declare our faith in this coming event. We declare our hope.

Finally, the Lord's Supper is a very serious event. So therefore we need to approach it in a certain manner and if we look at the Corinthian church, Paul writes,

1 Corinthians 11:27-32 (ESV) Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Here you have a situation where as Christians we are taking the Lord's Supper we need to examine ourselves, to make sure that we do not take of it in an unworthy manner, otherwise the consequences are just as the Corinthian church there will be judgment and the judgment may involve people falling sick or even dying as in that time.

What does Paul mean by taking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner? What must we do when we examine ourselves and basically this goes back to the context of the meal.

The context in the passage was a great division within the church. They were each going ahead with their own

meals, eating and drinking and not caring about each other. So in a way what they were doing that they were despising the church by humiliating those who didn't have very much to eat. So therefore when we come together in a worthy manner, we need to understand that we are coming together, the Lord's Supper is not done alone. You don't sit in your own house and have the Lord's Supper alone, because the meal together celebrates solidarity as a body of Christ together. So therefore when we actually sit together in Lord's Supper and we have disunity and fights and factions with each other, the way these Corinthians have treated each other, it actually destroys the meaning of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper was that marvelous sacrifice on the cross whereby everyone sins and penalty of sins were canceled, so therefore God brings together a whole new humanity, whoever you are, wherever you come from, you all belong to one body in Christ. So therefore unity would be the hallmark, because there is one Lord's Supper celebrated anywhere in the world brings every race, every person together in one new humanity. The supper is supposed to represent that spiritual reality. So therefore when we take of it in the spirit of disunity and hatred with each other, we actually destroy the meaning of the meal.

Hence this is what Paul writes to them,

1 Corinthians 11:33-34 (ESV) 33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— 34 if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

So therefore when we take of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, we take of it in consideration or we are taking together as a church with one another, together. To memorialize the fact that he has died for us on the cross and with his death on this cross, he releases the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts and it binds all together. We celebrate our solidarity, our unity because of this one event. That is how we partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner.

So let's end the presentation with some practical questions.

Who can take the Lord's Supper?

Anyone for which Lord's Supper is a spiritual reality. Anyone who can say when I take this bread and I take this wine, I actually accept Jesus death on the cross for myself. He is my Lord and he is my savior. There are some churches where only the baptize can take it, those who have church membership. Well, these are unnecessary restrictions, we don't see any of those restrictions in scripture at all. So anyone who is a believer can take it. Children, well they may not have come to situation where they actually understand it, so perhaps it would be better for children to not take the Lord's Supper.

How often do you take the Lord's Supper?

You can take it as often as you like. There are churches who take it once a month, some take it once a week.

What about the elements of the Lord's Supper?

It is basically bread and wine and bread and grape juice, because these elements are actually symbols. It doesn't actually have to be a wine; it could be a juice. It actually doesn't have to be unleavened bread, which is the traditional bread which they use to use because the antecedent to the Lord's Supper is actually the Passover meal where leavened or the yeast is a sign or sin. so therefore the people of Israel when they left Egypt, took unleavened bread, so therefore our supper is actually the Passover meal. So therefore to be as historically accurate as ever some churches will take unleavened bread, but since this is just symbols we can be very particular about symbols or not. Important thing is that, for a Baptist church when we take bread and wine, they are symbols. They are symbols

of the Lord's body and Lord's blood. In other churches like catholic churches, they actually have a doctrine called transubstantiation where they actually believe when the priest holds the cup up and he breaks the bread, that the bread magically becomes the actual physical body of Christ. We don't actually believe that because it is very clear in scripture where Jesus says, take this bread in remembrance of me. He doesn't tell you that this has turned into his literal body. Taking Lord Supper doesn't confer healing or extra benefits in terms of blessing to people as if it is a magical meal, these are not the reasons we take the Lord's Supper.

Questions

1. Why do we take the Lord's Supper?
2. What does the bread symbolize? What does the wine symbolize?
3. Why is the blood or the wine the symbol of a new covenant? What is this new covenant?
4. When we take the Lords Supper we are to examine ourselves, what are we examining ourselves for?
5. What does it mean to take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner?
6. Should we take the Lord's Supper at home alone? Why not?
7. Is the bread and wine the actual body and blood of Jesus?
8. Does the taking the Lord's Supper confer to us healing and blessing or result in more of our prayers being answered?
9. If you have been sinful during the week and let the Lord down can you take the Lord's Supper? Is your qualification to taking the Lord's supper based on your performance or His?
10. Do you have to be baptized to take the Lord's Supper? Why do some church's insist that you do? What is the problem if you insist on this and exclude unbaptized but saved people from the Lord's Supper?