

MODULE 1: THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE

SESSION 2: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Key Ideas for This Session:

- Maturity and personal growth are measured based on a combination of things that make up the whole person.
- We cannot control or stop the unexpected things that disrupt our lives. However, with wisdom and maturity we can manage how we respond to them.
- Seeking wisdom, includes asking for help from good, trusted community members, family, and friends.
- Key verse: Proverbs 12:18:
The tongue of the wise brings healing

Seeking Wisdom Against All Odds:

As we grow from childhood to adulthood, much is happening mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We are continuously making choices for the good or not, ignoring or listening to outside influences and creating impressions towards others that they in turn project back. Unexpected events that are out of our control can disrupt us both positively and negatively.

Growing into Maturity:

Jesus grew up as part of a family, and His early years are described as a time of growing and becoming mature as a person.

Read Luke 2:52

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

In what four ways does this short verse above describe Jesus as growing into maturity?

“Stature” means both physical height and reputation. Why do you think this word is chosen to describe Jesus’ development?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:11

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Read Proverbs 8:32-35

Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. ³³ Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it. ³⁴ Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. ³⁵ For those who find me find life and receive favour from the Lord.

How do you grow in wisdom?

Personal Growth:

People change. Change and growth are part of life. We see this in plants and animals and even more in people. Generally, we think of people as being made up of different aspects: **physical, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual**. Our development as a whole person involves each of these five areas and they are connected. Our natural physical growth takes care of itself if we are fueling ourselves properly—a healthy diet, exercise, avoiding harmful substances, etc.

If you are comfortable, try describing how you have grown in the following areas since childhood.

...Socially

...Emotionally

...Spiritually

Overall, how do you see yourself?

Please refer to these verses in your Bible to answer the next few questions:

1 John 3:1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Psalm 139:14

I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

What do you think God’s relationship is with people?

Overall, how do you think God sees you?

How can you see yourself the way God sees you?

Personal Change:

Growth and change go hand in hand. Sometimes we experience unexpected and disruptive things that also cause us to change. Trauma and stress have a deep impact on a person that leave mental, emotional, psychological, and physical wounds. For example, a serious car accident can leave a person physically disabled and chronically anxious. Traumatic experiences, especially during childhood, can have a big influence on a person’s development.

If you are comfortable answering this question, can you think of any experiences, that have caused you to change in a significant way? (Explain.)

Sometimes the experience of being in prison/jail changes people for better or worse. How do you think the “experience of prison/jail” has changed you?

Comfort Along the Way:

Today’s session may have been difficult for you. It is important to speak to a mental health professional if you think you are dealing with the effects of trauma and/or depression. It is also important to pray and settle your soul with Scripture. Find out from your chaplain if there are programs available that will help you.

The following passage contains many soothing promises from God:

Psalm 123: 1-6

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, ³ He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name’s sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

What are three promises in these verses that stand out to you?

These verses provide beautiful images of God and how He is. What is your favourite one and why?

Break into small groups and discuss the following if there is time, or think about these topics this week:

- *Memorize Psalm 34:18. "The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Meditate on these words, daily.*
- *Do you see this verse as hopeful? If so, why? Isaiah 42:16 "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them, I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." Write it out in your own words.*