



Help Yourself

Growing Up by Pitching In

March 22, 2026



It's good to be back with you guys – cuz I've had enough of *myself* and I'm in dire need of some *better* company! And with all that time to *reflect*, I officially realize how *pointless* I am without *other* people!

And *that* point came to a *climax* last weekend at our youth retreat over in Leavenworth. Cuz, in case you hadn't *heard*, it was *quite* a story. It actually started back in December, when the highway *washed away* and our original *host churches weren't* available for *later* dates. But after my wife and other leaders explored *different* options, the highway *reopened*, a new church offered to host, and we made a day trip to go check it out. On the way *back*, we had *just* decided to go for it with only *two* weeks of *planning* and *signups* when our car died twelve miles from His Place. Nevertheless, our leaders kept *improvising*, *planning*, *adapting*, and *somehow* assembled an incredible *team* and a working *itinerary*. So off we went *Thursday* to prepare for the students' arrival *Friday* – and then this happened. Our buses were just a few minutes *too late* and got turned back *down* the mountain; *but*, **that's when our team turned up the intensity**. They *didn't* panic, they *pivoted* – and after a quick discussion of *new* options, they booked rooms in *Monroe*, divided up *parent contacts*, and shared a *new plan* with our team on the *buses* as they headed back *down* the mountain. So by the time our bus crew *arrived* and begun an awesome, *ad-libbed* night of *games*, *pizza*, and a hotel *pool party*, Plan C was *already* underway for the *next* day. Which, BTW, included waiting for the *power* to come *back on* at our new church, and fixing the *brakes* on my daughter's borrowed car – cuz they *went out* on the way *over*.

But – even though the buses left *early* to be first in line for the pass to *open*, we got word that it would simply be *too late* to matter. So when the kids got *off* the bus to take a *picture*, *pray*, and *turn around* we *officially* called things *off* and announced retreat's time of death: 9:30. And *then while* on the phone to *tell* the buses – word came that the pass had *just opened*. The group erupted in cheers, jumped *back on* the bus, and our leaders had to *rebuild* the *whole* weekend *one more time*. And *somehow*, as the first bus we rolled into town, we were *ready* to go. The *rest* of the retreat was packed with *activities*, *challenges*, *dinner*, *worship*, *games*, and *messages* that moved us *all* closer to Christ. And when it was all *over*, I had *three big takeaways*. First: **God always has a plan**. Second: **God wants us to lend a hand**. And third: **His plans take a lot of hands!** But that's *not* because God is in any way *understaffed*, it's because we're *underprepared*. And every time we *partner* with *His purpose* we *learn* a little – cuz **God doesn't need the help, we need the growth**. And if we're not *actively* participating in *His plan* as part of *His team*, because we're focused on *ourselves*, we should ask, **Are you avoiding what's rewarding?**

I know I can. I've hated all *group* projects since grade school cuz I knew it meant one thing – compromise. And *that's* a dirty word for *us control freaks*. I mean, do you know how *long* it takes to find a version of *my plan* that everyone *agrees* to... and then *explain* to everyone *how* I would do *their* parts? Oh, how I wished *my groups* were just cooperative *clones*... until *Jesus* forced me to confront a *deeper* question: **what if fixing my heart was the real purpose of all my projects?**

Cuz Jesus revealed **the real problem behind human suffering isn't a lack of action – it's a lack of the right action.** And *that* comes from a lack of *wisdom, discernment, and maturity* – which is why down *here*, life **isn't about achieving goals; it's about achieving growth!** Cuz *some* goals can point us the *wrong* direction, but **growth always aims us at improvement.** That's why Scripture says:



It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the *gift* of God— **not by works**, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus **to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do. – Ephesians 2:8-10 NIV



Get it? Paul's leading us to *learn* our *purpose* by *prompting* the *question*: If we were *created* to **“do good works”** but those works *don't* contribute to the cause, *what's the point?* Why are we *invited* to get involved *at all?*



And we only get the *answer* once we're willing to *humble* our heart; **it's because we're God's kids!** And like a good *parent*, He wants to *share* everything with us – *not* for *His* benefit, but *ours*. The way parents let their kids “help” with the *cooking*. Cuz , let's be honest, when your five-year-old *pitches in*, you're *not* gaining *efficiency*. You're *losing time*, losing *control*, and likely losing *ingredients*. And yet, while all *you* gain are some unwanted *eggshells* – your *kid* gains some *experience, knowledge, and trust* in your *leadership and love!* And that *growth* doesn't *just* make them more like a *baker*, **it makes them more like their teacher.**



And the more they *grow* in the image of their *teacher*, the *less mess* they *continue* to make. Cuz **we're meant to outgrow the ignorance of independence.** And God *partners* with *us* and *pairs* us with His *other kids* so *each* activity can help us grow *out* of our *old ways* and *into* our *best selves*.

[John the Baptist says it simply:] He must increase, but I must decrease. – John 3:30 NKJ

It's the ultimate *addition* by *subtraction* cuz **growing like Jesus doesn't mean losing ourselves, just our selfishness.** And when the *pride* of the present *shrinks*, our *potential* for the future *grows!* Cuz when we finally look *beyond* ourself, we start to see something *bigger*. We see how we can become an actual *extension* of *God's* work! Cuz the more we *emulate* Dad, the more our *cooking* skills *improve* – and at *some* point, *we'll* be able to serve people an edible *recreation* of *His recipe*.

[That's why Jesus says] Whoever loses *their* life for *My* sake will find it. – Matthew 10:39 NIV

Because **our ultimate purpose and potential doesn't mean more of us, it means more of God –** and it means surrendering *who we are* to make room for *who we'll be*. It means forgetting our *ways* and adopting *Dad's directions*; it means growing godly by serving *His will* over *ours*.

And honestly, *that's* what made the retreat so powerful. It wasn't just that it *worked out*; it was watching a whole *team* of people *handle* everything this world could throw at them and *still serve*. *Drivers* pushing us over the pass; *directors* pivoting the plans; *moms* feeding the masses, and *leaders* *loving* and *lifting* every kid's spirit in *so many* different ways. It wasn't *one person* trying to follow *God's* recipe – it was a *group* of us, each *growing individually* and *sharing* our improvement *collectively*. And when we got to see *all* the *different dimensions* of godly growth in our *group*, we got an incredible glimpse of what we're growing *into*. Like Paul says:



Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ – 1 Corinthians 12:12 NIV

[And we can see our *future* in our *group*, cuz right] Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. – 1 Corinthians 12:27 NIV



So if you see *yourself* as one of *His* kids, you're *already* invited to be a part of what *Dad's* cooking up! And **you don't need to bring anything to the table except yourself!** Cuz *church* isn't supposed to be a place where a *few* people *do ministry* while everyone else *watches*. It's a place where we *all watch Jesus* so we can *all do ministry*. And *therefore*, it's an *extension* of *Jesus Himself!* It's a *living body* that's learning *to do what Dad does*.



So, *that's* our aim here at His Place! **We want to be a place where we all come to grow into God's image by partnering with His plan.** We want to provide opportunities to *practice* recreating God's recipe so every kid in the kingdom *gets a taste*. We want everyone to see the *huge potential* in our *little lives* – cuz *ultimately* we want *everyone* to grow into their *true identity*.



And that's why volunteering is so important! It *isn't* just filling a slot cuz God needs more *staff* – it's stepping into *our identity* as *God's child* and making a *mess* while learning the recipe to *true love*. It's discovering that *less of us* can mean *more of life*. Because serving doesn't just *help* the *church* – **serving shapes the servant.** It connects the *true you* to your *present life* and satisfies your soul; cuz we finally *feel fulfilled* when we actually *find our fit*.

And because you're *God's* creation, **your role isn't random. Your gifts aren't accidental.** Somewhere in the life of *this church*, there's a *need* that lines up with the way God made you. There's a team that *you can join* that will *bless you with growth* without feeling like another *burden to bear*. So, **are you avoiding what's rewarding?** If so, *today's* the day to *step up!*

Cuz all of our ministries *here* at His Place have set up *booths* for you to *peruse* with all the opportunities we have to get *cookin' with the Lord!* It's our annual "Ministry Fair" and it's designed to help *you* plug into your created *purpose* and *grow* into your full *potential!* And just like *God*, we don't need *experts* to help, just *kids* willing to *pitch in!* So *don't worry* about how *qualified* you are, just take a look at the tables on the map on the back of your transcript and see what *looks like something* you could see *yourself cooking* – and then simply go *ask for details* to see if there's a potential *fit*. Cuz **once you know where to show up, God's just waiting to help you grow up!**

HIS PLACE MINISTRY FAIR

FIND YOUR FIT TO SERVE YOUR PURPOSE

