



# UNLIMITED GROWTH

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A NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN FOR  
CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND GROWTH

MIKE MAZZALONGO

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

bibleTalk<sup>TV</sup>



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# **Unlimited Growth**

## ***A New Testament Pattern for Church Organization and Growth***

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**Mike Mazzalongo**

All churches want growth but never know how to produce it. The Unlimited Growth series sets forth a step-by-step approach to generating church growth which is biblically-based and easily implemented in any congregation regardless of size, age or location.



**[bibletalk.tv/ unlimited-growth](https://bibletalk.tv/unlimited-growth)**

**Teacher Guide created by**

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## Overall Teaching Strategy

It is recommended that teachers use a combination of informal lecture and guided discussion to present these lessons. There are discussion questions associated with each lesson that teachers may use and/or supplement their own questions. A student note guide is also provided for each lesson.

It is recommended that teachers have students view the associated video or read the text for the lesson. This helps students come to the class ready to discuss the lesson and to formulate questions of their own. Teachers should begin the class with a review of key points from the video/text before starting the discussion.

Begin each lesson with appropriate introductory statements that help students focus on the lesson. Teachers should also provide a brief summary of the previous lesson and an overview of key points of the new lesson. This helps students see the ongoing narrative of scripture.

Conclude the lesson by summarizing, or having students summarize, the information from their notes. It is also helpful to ask questions from the lesson to determine that students grasp the concepts. Asking questions in this manner serves as an assessment to ensure objectives are met.

Challenge students with a call to action in applying this information to their lives in order to help them grow spiritually and help others do so as well. This can be accomplished by asking questions as to how this information relates to their spiritual development now and as they move forward.

For more information on teaching adults, please visit:  
<https://bibletalk.tv/101/teaching>

# Lesson #1 - Church Growth

## Questionnaire/Discussion Groups

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The focus of this lesson is on participants sharing thoughts concerning what is necessary to promote church growth. This serves as a foundation for the understanding of concepts related to church growth.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the concepts related to church growth.
- **Feel:** Value the importance of spiritual and numerical growth.
- **Do:** Practice activities that promote spiritual and numerical growth.

### Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, Unlimited Growth – A New Testament Pattern for Church Organization and Growth
- Video/Text – Lesson 1 – Church Growth Questionnaire/Discussion Groups
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 1

### Body of the Lesson

1.0 Church growth questionnaire and discussion

2.0 Wrap-up

### Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson.

There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts.

These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

**1. Divide the class into smaller groups, as many as appropriate to facilitate participation from all attendees. Provide each group with the list of the following questions but assign a specific question to each group for consideration and discussion. Appoint a person in each group to serve as a recorder/reporter to present their group's key points to the other groups. Approximate times for this activity:**

- Breakout time 10 – 15 minutes
- Report time: 30 minutes
- Wrap-up – 10 minutes

Use the questions from the associated text for this lesson:

- What are two major reasons why the church or your congregation is not growing?
- Who do you think is most responsible for church growth and why?
- If you have the authority and resources to change or help the church to grow, what 3 things would you do?
- What would you consider as a good percentage for growth each year: 10, 25, 70, or 90%?

Additional questions for consideration:

- What is the relationship between spiritual growth in the church and numerical growth in the church?
- Which is more important and why?
- What are various reasons why churches, including yours (ours), don't grow, and which do you feel is the most significant reason?

## **2. Wrap-up**

Summarize key points from the discussions. Provide or solicit responses to the following question:

How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

Look for responses that indicate an awareness and commitment to personal spiritual growth as well as numerical growth.





# Lesson #2 - Remembering Who We Are – A Faithful New Testament Church

The focus of this lesson is on reviewing who we are as the Lord's church. Of special note is the importance of faithfulness to God's will as we grow and serve Him. **Note:** Given the amount and complexity of this content, consider dividing the discussion over multiple sessions.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Recognize the key elements that identify a New Testament church.
- **Feel:** Value the importance of following God's will in establishing and growing His Church.
- **Do:** Live and serve faithfully as God's church.

## Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, Unlimited Growth
- Video/Text – Lesson 2 – A Faithful New Testament Church
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 2

## Body of the Lesson

1.0 Who we are

1.1 Historically

1.2 Theologically

1.3 Character

2.0 How to be a faithful New Testament Church – Ephesians 4

3.0 Everyone must change

4.0 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## 1. Who are we? (Refer to the text for further details)

**Historically** – It is important to note that the churches of Christ are not denominational or non-denominational. The churches of Christ are pre-denominational. The church began as recorded in Acts 2. The modern entity known as the Churches of Christ began in Europe as the result of what is called the Restoration Movement. This spread to America in the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It originally began as an effort to remove denominational and man-made teachings and practices from the church. It continues as an ongoing effort to hold true to the teachings of the New Testament concerning church organization and function. A foundational distinction between the churches of Christ and denominations is the idea that all matters of church organization, doctrine and practices must be based on the instructions from the New Testament. Also note that the “restoration movement” has not ended. We continue to seek close adherence to New Testament teachings in all things today and strive to encourage future leaders to adhere to the same principles.

**Theologically** – The church must only follow the Bible, specifically the New Testament as the source for organization, doctrine and conduct. We are committed to following the teachings of Jesus as revealed by Him and the writers of the New Testament. We reject any man-made creeds or standards of faith.

**Character** – Congregations take on distinct characteristics depending on many factors. However, the following identities are the most common:

***A struggling mission church*** – a relatively small congregation with a missionary serving as a preacher/minister. These types of congregations typically have no elders or deacons.

***Urban team mission church*** – This is the result of several mission-oriented congregations or mission teams converging in one location to establish a congregation (church planting).

***Covenant church*** – This type of congregation comes in various sizes. It has reached a plateau in growth with little to no change. This type seeks to maintain a faithful presence in its community and provides ministry to its members and support mission works in other areas.

***Growing church*** – These congregations consistently seek to grow beyond national averages.

***Dying church*** – Congregations going through the motions but lack the drive to grow. They are typically internally focused. However, there may be external issues that challenge these congregations such as population shifts, aging membership or lack of effective leadership.

***Extreme church*** – Congregations known primarily for their doctrinal positions or procedural matters. They are found on all parts of the spectrum from conservative to liberal. These congregations focus on guarding and promoting their positions as a test of faith and fellowship and generally remain small.

***Leadership church*** – These churches are used as models for other churches to follow for growth and ministry.

Potential follow-up Questions:

**Which of these characterize your (our) congregation?**

**What type of congregation do you want to become?**

## **2. How can we become (remain) a faithful New Testament church? (See Ephesians 4)**

We begin by removing any man-made traditions that are contrary to the New Testament church in organization, teaching and conduct. This is a difficult task that requires compassionate and effective leadership as well as a sincere commitment from each member.

## **3. What is the role of faith in a New Testament church?**

Faith guides our actions. Faith is at the heart/core of our initial relationship with God and continued relationship with Him as well (Hebrews 11:6 – And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him). There are three key points in this passage: Faith pleases God. We must believe He exists and He rewards those who follow Him.

## **4. Summarize Paul's message from Ephesians 4:7-10.**

Look for key points related to the following ideas:

- Each of us has been given grace according to the gift of our Lord's sacrifice.
- Jesus leads us from captivity (slavery) of sin.
- He did this not only through His death, but His resurrection from the dead and His ascension into Heaven where He serves on our behalf before God the Father.

## 5. Why is organizing by God's pattern for the church important?

It is His church, not ours. To organize by our will or standards is to violate God's will.

## 6. Give a summary of the following roles within a congregation?

**Evangelist** – Proclaims the gospel, plans and organizes congregations, develops and encourages church leadership (II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:5).

**Elders** – Guard the church against false teachers and teachings, minister to the congregation, lead by example (Acts 20:28-30; I Timothy 3:1-10; Titus 1:6-9).

**Teachers** – Help the congregation understand and apply God's word.

**Deacons** – Provide service and management of various affairs/ministries of a congregation and train others to serve. (Acts 6:1-6; I Timothy 3:8-13).

## **7. How does the change we experience as individuals within the church impact the church as a whole? (Ephesians 4:17-24)**

Although the church is a group, it involves God working through individuals. Individual growth must come first. As we change, we affect the church as a whole. We strive for positive spiritual growth and this individual growth directly impacts the congregation's growth.

## **8. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Jesus came to offer salvation to each of us individually. Our own personal growth directly influences the growth of others. Whether it is to study more deeply the call of the gospel or follow our example into more devoted service to God, our example is always at work guided by the Holy Spirit in order to influence the spiritual lives of others in or out of the body of Christ, the church.

# Lesson #3 - A Biblical Plan for Growth

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The focus of this lesson is on the New Testament plan for organizing and growing a local congregation. Of special note is how we follow God's plan for this core Christian activity. All plans we make for expansion must be based completely on God's plan as revealed in scripture.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand God's pattern for growth.
- **Feel:** Commit to following God's pattern for growth.
- **Do:** Follow God's plan for growth as individuals and congregations.

## Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, Unlimited Growth
- Video/Text – Lesson 3 – A Biblical Plan for Growth
- Student Note Guide for Lesson

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 Unlimited Growth: A New Testament Pattern

- 1.1 Unlimited growth
- 1.2 A New Testament pattern
- 1.3 Church organization and growth

### 2.0 Five biblical ministries of the church

- 2.1 Evangelism
- 2.2 Education
- 2.3 Fellowship
- 2.4 Worship
- 2.5 Service

### 3.0 Application



## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

### 1. What needs to be done to grow a local congregation?

Often the obvious answer is that we want to grow. The reality is that if we truly wanted to grow then we would take the necessary actions as the leadership of the congregation and members to make growth happen. When we begin to look at growth, it is common to focus on the process of growth and ignore the internal analysis of the present situation as a first step. Here are some things to consider before setting into motion any process for growth.

- Begin with a specific commitment to spiritual growth.
- Decide if the congregation truly wants to grow and in what ways.
- Seek God’s wisdom and will through prayer and Bible study.
- Try to involve every member.

### 2. What is the church built upon and what does this mean?

We are built upon the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 16:18). This means that growth is not only unlimited but is also unstoppable. Every congregation has the potential for unlimited growth if they are true to the teachings of Jesus.

### **3. Discuss God's plan for the church's organization and leadership.**

Congregational membership – Membership in a congregations is made up of baptized believers who have been added to the church by our Lord (Acts 2:37-47).

Congregational autonomy – There is no teaching in scripture for a “hierarchy” type model where leadership at some headquarters governs numerous congregations. In the New Testament, each congregation is independent as it serves the Lord, its members and the community where it is located. There are some who feel that congregations cannot work together in efforts to further the gospel. However, in the New Testament there are many examples of congregations coming together to work on the behalf of other congregations.

Leadership – The only example and teaching concerning leadership is that of elders, deacons, evangelists and teachers. Each congregation is lead by a plurality of elders guided by God's word and Spirit. These men oversee the congregation's efforts to serve faithfully and to implement the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. They hold no authority beyond the congregations in which they serve. (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3; Acts 20; Philippians 1:1)

### **4. How can church growth also damage the integrity of our stewardship of God's word?**

We must be careful to not judge success on numbers alone. Although numbers are one form of measurement, we should judge true success in how we remain true to our Lord's will and teachings. This is not to excuse poor numerical growth, but rather to ensure that congregations do not lose sight of our true purpose as Christians which is being the light and salt to the world as we proclaim Jesus and the salvation He offers.

## **5. What is Pattern Theology and what is its value to us?**

Pattern Theology is the idea that the Bible has a pattern or instructions that guide us in spiritual and moral living as well as church organization.

This system is valuable in that it reveals and keeps believers true to God's word. God is not a God of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33), He created and embedded patterns for carrying out His will in every part of the Bible. The pattern for organizing and functioning as the church belonging to Jesus Christ is contained in the New Testament and His intent is that we should use it to establish the New Testament church in every generation.

## **6. How does Pattern Theology help us maintain and grow the Church?**

This approach helps us establish and grow according to God's plan and not man's. Every concept or idea that members have about the organization, teaching and function of the church can be determined for its accuracy by being judged against the standard of God's word contained in the New Testament. In this way we can work for growth while remaining faithful to scripture.

## **7. How does the way we're organized impact our rate of growth?**

God has always and continues to give us detailed instructions for how He wants us to be organized. If we ignore or fail to determine God's plan for how we are to organize and function, then we will fail. There continues to be a warning to us as well that we must continue to ensure that what and why we do what we do is always judged by God's plan.

Paul said in Romans 8:31 that if God is for us, who can be against us? The corollary of this is true as well. If God is not for us, then we cannot succeed.

## **8. What is meant by "Kingdom growth?"**

We take on the responsibility to spread God's Kingdom where there is none and to strengthen the Kingdom where it exists. Both of these are important. It is not an, "either/or" situation.

## **9. Review Acts 2:42-47 and summarize the 5 biblical ministries of the church and how the early church met these ministries.**

**Evangelism** – Evangelism is the preaching of the gospel to the lost with the goal of helping them respond in faith and obedience. As the church grew the people reached out into the community sharing the gospel of Christ. This is also in keeping with our Lord’s instructions to the apostles about the spread of the gospel in Acts 1:8, (from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth.)

**Education** – Teaching in the church is focused on Jesus and His commands for our citizenship in His Kingdom. It begins with how to enter the Kingdom and continues with instructions on how to grow the Kingdom.

**Fellowship** – Fellowship means to share. We practice this by integrating each member into the body and into all elements of body life as each is ready. We saw this in the first century church as they shared all they had together. This went beyond physical sharing to include the encouragement to live faithfully.

**Worship** – Worship is our actions of adoration and devotion to God. We worship in formal ways on the first day of each week and in informal ways as we live faithful lives.

**Service** – This is the pooling of our resources together to meet the needs of fellow disciples and the community at large. Service is an outgrowth of fellowship.

**Note:** The outcome of these five areas in the first century church and in our congregations today is found in Acts 2:47, “And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

# Lesson #4 – The 5 Biblical Ministries

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The focus of this lesson is on the five primary New Testament ministries of the church as practiced by the first century church. This includes how these ministries are interrelated with individual and congregational growth.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Comprehend how growth is sustained through the development of church ministries.
- **Feel:** Value the importance of active involvement in each of these ministries.
- **Do:** Become involved in church ministry as able.

## Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, Unlimited Growth
- Video/Text – Lesson 4 – The 5 Biblical Ministries
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 4

## Body of the Lesson

1.0 Review of unlimited growth

2.0 The Five biblical ministries

2.1 Evangelism

2.2 Education

2.3 Fellowship

2.4 Worship

2.5 Service

3.0 Application

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## 1. How does church organization support unlimited growth in number and individual spiritual growth?

**Number** – When a congregation is organized and serves according to God’s pattern in the New Testament, we are then serving as God wills and in return He blesses us with both spiritual and numerical growth.

**Individual** – Seeking and doing God’s will in the area of church growth or other areas for that matter will always draw us near to Him.

**NOTE:** These two are interrelated in that as we commit to following God’s will, His blessings will be received and applied in both our personal spiritual growth and congregational growth as well.

## 2. Explain the 5 ministry areas found in Acts 2:1-47.

**Evangelism ministry** (Acts 2:41-41) – This was the first proclamation of the gospel. This activity not only marked the establishment of the church, it also taught how God added believers to His Kingdom. This not only presented God’s plan for our salvation but was the basis for all teaching and evangelistic efforts to follow. Follow-up Question: Explain each of the various types of evangelism (see text) and, how we as individuals can practice these?

**Education ministry** (Acts 2:42a) – The baptized believers (Citizens in God’s Kingdom) continued to learn the teachings of Jesus from the apostles (Matthew 28:20). This discipling activity continues today through personal and organized Bible study.

**Fellowship ministry** (Acts 2:42b) – The early Christians recognized the need and value of sharing with each other. It served not only the practical element of meeting physical needs, but further, and perhaps more importantly met spiritual and emotional needs. This gospel and their realization of it was a significant change in

their lives (Acts 2:37). This created the need for fellowship as well as the satisfaction from sharing their joy of a new life in Christ.

**Worship ministry** (Acts 2:42) – The early church as well as the church today continue to worship God both publicly and privately.

- Publicly – We continue to gather on the first day of the week according to scripture in order to praise God, pray, hear God’s word preached, share the Lord’s supper, care for the needs of the church and enjoy the blessings of Christian fellowship.
- Privately – We continually grow in Christ as we cultivate daily habits of prayer, praise, service and Christian fellowship in our families and among our Christian brethren in the communities where we live.

**Service ministry** (Acts 2:45-47) – We are called to be servants to those who are in or out of the Body of Christ (Galatians 6:10). We see in this a natural cycle (see text). Service is a natural outcome of the love we develop as faithful followers of Christ.



### **3. What is the anticipated result of a congregation that consistently practices the 5 areas of ministry simultaneously?**

It is anticipated that individuals will experience growth and the congregation will grow. We will become a strong and positive influence in our community.

### **4. Defend the following statement:**

**“When the church is active in ministry, the Lord will cause it to grow.”**

This was seen in the first century church (Acts 2:47b). We grow when we reach out to the lost with the gospel and teaching them about Jesus. If we express our love for them and fellowship with each other, it will compel others to want to be a part of the Kingdom. Note, the focus is on active involvement in ministry and not simply increasing in number. If we practice what our Lord teaches us, then we will grow in all areas.

### **5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Citizenship in God’s Kingdom involves spiritual growth. The more active we become according to God’s will, the more we will continue to grow and help others to grow which, in turn, will cause the church to grow.

# Lesson #5 - Implementing the New Testament Plan for Growth

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The focus of this lesson is on implementing the biblical based plan for church organization and growth. Additional focus is on ensuring our plans are subordinate to God's plan.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the steps for implementing the biblically based plan for church organization and growth.
- **Feel:** Recognize the value of following God's plan for church organization and growth.
- **Do:** Use the template provided with the text or another such instrument to develop and implement a plan for church organization and growth based upon God's plan.

## Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, Unlimited Growth
- Video/Text – Lesson 5 – Implementing the New Testament Plan for Growth
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 5
- Example and blank flow chart

## Body of the Lesson

- 1.0 Review of unlimited growth
- 2.0 Implementing
- 3.0 Application (Developing the flow chart)

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

## **1. Answer the following questions as a review:**

### **What is the goal of church growth?**

Although answers will vary, the short answer is unlimited growth both individual spiritual growth and congregational numerical growth.

### **What does unlimited growth mean?**

The church is ready and able to receive as many as the Lord adds.

### **Defend the following statement: "Organization precedes growth."**

There needs to be organization and in the context of the church, one patterned as God wills. When we organize as God wills, we will grow.

### **List the five areas of ministry within a congregation.**

Evangelism (Acts 2:1-41)

Education (Acts 2:42a)

Fellowship (Acts 2:42b)

Worship (Acts 2:42c)

Service (Acts 2:43-47)

## 2. Why is a plan important to manage ministry?

Without a plan there is no direction or basis to determine success or failure, or a need for improvement. A plan allows leaders to analyze strengths and weaknesses, and to assign areas of responsibilities.

## 3. Summarize the steps for an effective plan for church growth.

**Identify** – This step involves identifying the five areas of biblical ministry and how the congregation is active in each. This also involves identifying leadership and goals for these areas. (NOTE: The text includes a sample and blank flow chart to assist in this area.

**Educate** – This step involves training the congregation to use and refer to the developed system so everyone understands and communicates the plan and elements of the plan.

**Manage** – The action of ensuring all resources dedicated to the initiative are used as planned and to make decisions to redirect resources as necessary. This involves:

- Ministry meetings - The assigned leadership team, including those responsible for various ministry areas meet to plan and organize areas of their ministry.
- Elder's meetings – Redirecting the decision process down to those responsible for a ministry area. The elders' focus should be on discussing ministry matters with the responsible ministry leaders. It also involves shepherding the congregation (the primary duty of our elders).

#### **4. Explain the three elements that make a church organization and growth plan work.**

**Commitment** – The entire congregation should be committed to making a plan work. This is the New Testament plan. It begins with the leadership but must involve all members.

**Continuity** – All areas of the plans must flow out of the model. This involves all resources such as budget and personnel assignments.

**Christ** – We are of Christ therefore all we do is based on His teachings. Furthermore, we give Him all glory as we validate the successes stemming from following His plan.

#### **5. Use the flow chart associated with this lesson to develop a plan for organization and growth.**

**Unlimited Growth**  
**A N.T. Pattern for Church Org. & Growth**  
**Flow Chart**  
**Unit #5**

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<b>EVANGELISM</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>FELLOWSHIP</b>	<b>WORSHIP</b>	<b>SERVICE</b>

# Ponca City Church of Christ

## Flow Chart

### Evangelism

- Local Outreach:**
- Hispanic Mission
  - Friday Night Class
  - Gospel Meeting

### Education

- Local Outreach:**
- Bible School Classes:
  - Adult Program—Classes
  - Bible Chairs—Support
  - Children Bible Classes
  - Jr. & Sr. High Classes
  - Leadership Development
  - Library & Tracts
  - Primary Education
  - VBS

### Worship

- AV Operation
- Deaf Ministry
- Greeter Ministry
- Prepare Lord's Supper
- Coordinate Services

### Benevolence

- Food & Clothing Program
- Children's Home Support
- Singing for Weddings & Funerals

### **Domestic Outreach:**

- Jail Ministry

### Maintenance

- Custodial Work
- Building Maintenance
- Grounds Keeping
- Bus & Van Maintenance

### **International Outreach:**

- Cuban Ministry
- Jamaica Mission

### Fellowship

- Monthly Fellowship Meals
  - Ladies Min. (Wings)
  - New Member Packet & Visits
  - Visitation
  - Young Married Program
- Advertising & Promotion
  - Insurance
  - Church Finances
  - 5 Year Growth Plan
  - Printing & Office Admin.

# Lesson #6 - 8 Universal Principles for Natural Church Growth

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The focus of this lesson is on applying the concept of natural church growth to the New Testament ministry system. Emphasis is on how this was demonstrated by the first century church and applies to us today.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the principles of natural church growth and how it relates to the New Testament plan revealed beginning in Acts 2.
- **Feel:** Recognize the value of following God's plan for church organization and growth.
- **Do:** Apply the concepts of natural church growth to personal and congregational growth.

## Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, Unlimited Growth
- Video/Text – Lesson 6– Implementing the New Testament Plan for Growth
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 6

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 Characteristics of growing churches

- 1.1 Empowering leadership
- 1.2 Gift-oriented ministry
- 1.3 Passionate spirituality
- 1.4 Functional structure
- 1.5 Inspiring worship service
- 1.6 Holistic small groups
- 1.7 Need-oriented evangelism
- 1.8 Loving relationships

### 2.0 Application



## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

### **1. Explain why one model for church growth does not fit all, especially small churches.**

There are many reasons. Rarely does one size fits all in any situation, especially those that involve human endeavors. Issues such as economic circumstances, location, people and leadership are just some reasons why. Rather than copy another church’s model, look to God’s model shown in the first century church found in the Book of Acts. Also analyze the circumstances, resources and issues within your own congregation to develop a plan.

### **2. What is the difference between a model and a principle and how should we view them in church growth?**

A model is a system that is copied in other places to replicate and experience that same result.

A principle is something that applies to all situations. It is generic and universal in its application.

In discussing church growth, we should focus on the principles of growth. Natural church growth is about biblical principles, not models. The concept of natural communicates something that occurs without having to be forced. The only successful model for church growth is based on the principles of growth from scripture. These include each individual following God’s plan for salvation, fellowship, worship, education, ministry, and service. Each member, upon being added by our Lord to His Kingdom following their repentance and baptism, seeks to submit to God’s will in actively applying the gifts granted to him by God. In doing so, the individual and the congregation grows.

### 3. Explain each of the following principles of natural church growth.

**Empowering leadership** – The means congregational leadership empowering members for ministry. It involves giving Christians opportunities to apply their gifts in order to achieve numerical and spiritual growth. Leaders provide support and resources for ministry leaders and members to facilitate their success.

**Gift oriented ministry** – People serving and participating in areas where they are gifted. This enables them to bring their strengths to the ministry. Leaders assist in further developing their member's gifts.

**Passionate spirituality** – Members care deeply about spiritual things. Their passion is in serving the Lord. Passionate spirituality is a proper balance of spirit and truth. In other words, it involves applying God's will in our actions and attitudes as we serve Him.

**Functional structure** – It is structure that promotes growth, life, effective ministry (meets needs and goals) and clear communication. The structure of the church must be Bible based not man's.

**Inspiring worship service** – Focus is less on style, rather it is on worship where God's Spirit works in the worshipper's life. This begins by knowing and following God's will for worship but goes beyond this. It includes internalizing God's will where one is changed and grows in their relationship with God.

**Holistic small groups** – This is a structure designed to help members use their gifts, share lives, minister and pray with each other. Focus is on sharing Christ as well as personal encouragement for each member.

**Need oriented evangelism** – We are all responsible for sharing our faith but not all are gifted as evangelists. Members are aware of opportunities to share faith. This type of evangelism involves providing for people's needs as we share the gospel with them.

**Loving relationships** – A truly loving church is powerful! Focus is on developing and demonstrating God's love in our relationship with each other and those with whom we share the gospel. We take people as they are and lovingly guide them to Jesus.

#### **4. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

As faithful Christians, we focus on following our Lord's teaching and will for us. Chief among these is spiritual growth, meaning becoming more Christ like and helping others do the same. We shouldn't force a structure or relationship. Rather, we allow these to grow naturally from learning about and following Jesus and showing His love to others.