

Hope City

Discussion Guide

October 4, 2026

Put Another Mark On The Wall

Growth Chart: Week 1

Pastor Daniel Groves

Main Idea

Spiritual growth happens intentionally. Salvation is the beginning of our life with Jesus, and God calls us to keep becoming more like Him. Samuel's story shows that we can grow from needing help to recognize God's voice into people who listen, obey, and faithfully carry what God entrusts to us. Another "mark on the wall" is visible when Scripture changes our responses, our faith deepens under pressure, and generosity becomes part of our worship.

Anchor Verse: *"So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God."*
(Hebrews 6:1, NLT).

Read: 1 Samuel 2:26; 1 Samuel 3:1–20

1. LEARN TO HEAR AND OBEY GOD FOR YOURSELF

Samuel served in God's house before he recognized God's voice. Eli helped him learn to respond, "Speak, LORD, your servant is listening." Mentors and spiritual leaders are important, but they are meant to help us develop our own relationship with Jesus. We grow as we make room to pray, open Scripture, listen, and follow what God says. Hearing must lead to obedience; maturity becomes visible in the truth we actually live out.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:7–10; John 10:27; James 1:22

Discussion:

1. How has a pastor, mentor, or group helped you grow in your own relationship with Jesus?
2. What noise or distraction makes it difficult for you to give God your attention?
3. What is one truth from Scripture you understand but still need to put into practice?

2. GROW IN WHAT YOU CAN CARRY

Pastor Daniel described growth as being able to carry today what would have crushed you yesterday. Growing in Christ does not mean that pressure disappears or difficult days stop hurting. It can mean that we respond differently: we pray before reacting, keep showing up through disappointment, and trust God while we wait. God's past faithfulness gives us perspective for today's challenges.

Greater responsibility sometimes reveals the capacity God has developed in us. Jesus connects faithfulness in little things with faithfulness in large ones. Instead of only asking for more opportunity or influence, we can ask how to faithfully steward what is already in our hands. We still need God's help and the support of His people as we grow.

Scripture: Luke 16:10; 1 Corinthians 13:11

Discussion:

1. What situation do you handle differently today because of the growth God has worked in you?
2. When something becomes heavy, what helps you respond with faith instead of reacting out of fear?
3. What small responsibility is God asking you to steward faithfully right now?
4. What attitude, habit, or reaction no longer fits the person you are becoming in Christ?

3. PUT ANOTHER MARK ON THE WALL

Samuel kept growing. The boy who initially needed Eli's guidance became a prophet recognized throughout Israel. His story reminds us that maturity develops over time as we continue listening and obeying. We can thank God for progress without pretending that His work in us is finished. Philippians 1:6 gives us confidence that He will continue the good work He began.

Growth also becomes visible in how we use what God has given us. Jesus teaches that our treasure reveals the direction of our hearts. As generosity becomes worship, we learn to trust God as our source and loosen the grip of selfishness. A new mark might be quicker obedience, a changed response, forgiveness, or a deliberate act of generosity. The goal is to become more like Jesus, not to compare our progress with someone else's.

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:45–46; Isaiah 40:31

Discussion:

1. Where can you already see a new "mark on the wall" in your relationship with Jesus?
2. How do your choices with money, time, and resources reflect what your heart treasures?
3. What specific area of growth would you like to look back on at the end of this season?

SUMMARY

Knowing church routines and growing in Christ are different things. God calls us to move toward maturity through a personal relationship with Him and obedience to His Word. Samuel's growth chart began with learning to recognize God's voice and continued as God developed him into a faithful messenger. Our growth can also be seen in how we respond to pressure, steward responsibility, and give generously.

God is still working in us. We do not have to deny the areas that need change or overlook the progress He has already made. We can honestly identify where we are, thank Him for His faithfulness, and take the next step of obedience.

CALL TO ACTION

Choose one area where you want to put another mark on the wall this week: listening to God, responding under pressure, faithful stewardship, or generosity.

Name your next step: Write one concrete action and when you will do it. Examples include setting aside ten quiet minutes to read Scripture and pray, pausing to pray before a difficult conversation, completing a responsibility you have avoided, or giving intentionally to meet a need.

Invite accountability: Share your step with a trusted person in your group. Ask them to check in with you before your next meeting.

Look for growth: At the end of the week, record what you practiced, what you learned, and where you still need God's help.

Prayer: *Lord, thank You for beginning Your work in me. Teach me to recognize Your voice and obey Your Word. Strengthen me to be faithful with what You have entrusted to me. Show me my next step, and help me take it. Amen.*

GROUP LEADER RESOURCE

MY GROWTH CHART

Purpose: Help participants recognize God's work in their lives and choose a specific next step without comparing themselves with others.

What You Need: Paper or index cards and pens. Allow about 8–10 minutes.

How to Play: Ask each person to draw two marks on a simple vertical line. Beside the first, write “Then” and describe an old response, habit, or area of dependence. Beside the second, write “Now” and note one way God has helped them grow. Allow volunteers to share. Then add a third mark labeled “Next” and write one action they will take this week.

Transition: Samuel grew from needing help recognizing God’s voice to faithfully speaking His message. We can celebrate where God has brought us and still respond to His invitation to keep growing.

Leader Closing Question: What will your next mark look like in everyday life, and how can this group support you?

**Leader Note: Allow people to pass. If someone cannot identify progress yet, help them name one small next step. Do not treat ongoing pain or needing support as evidence of spiritual failure.*