



# The four C's (term 1, study 4)

## Personal Preparation

This Sunday John Chapman is visiting mpc. John is going to be presenting the claims of Jesus in his clear, simple and entertaining way. It's a good time to reflect on where we're going as a Church, and to think about what this Sunday might mean for our church and those around us (family, friends and community) who don't yet know Jesus.

At mpc, our motto is **growing followers of Jesus**. What kind of followers are we growing? Lets take a look at our four distinctives. (You might want to do a couple a day to spread it out!)

### Distinctive 1 - Committed to Jesus

Read Colossians 2:6-8.

Qn. What is the starting point for the Christian life according to Paul?

Qn. Where do Christians 'grow' from this starting point?

Qn. What danger does Paul warn the Colossians against? (v.8)

### Distinctive 2 - Connected to each other

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

Qn. How does Paul describe God's people in this passage? (v.12-14 & v.27)

Qn. What does this passage have to say about the purpose of the different parts of the body?

Qn. What comfort is there in being a part of one body like this? (v.24-26)

### Distinctive 3 - Clear-thinking about God's Word

Read Ephesians 4:7-16.

Qn. We see in v.7 that Christ has apportioned grace to all his people. What specific ways does Paul list in v.11? What's common about these gifts?

Qn. And what's the aim in giving these gifts to His people? (v.12-13)

Qn. What are the 2 points people can end up? (v.14-16)

### Distinctive 4 - Compassionate in Thought & Action

Read James 2:14-19.

Qn. What kind of faith does James think is real faith?

Qn. What does a life of true faith look like for James?

Read Romans 10:12-15.

Qn. According to Paul in this passage, what is the great need both the Jews, and all mankind have?

Qn. What would compassion look like in these circumstances?

## Growth Group Discussion

### Distinctive 1 - Committed to Jesus

Everything we believe, teach and do at mpc revolves around one person—Jesus Christ. Our motto says it all – we are 'growing followers **of Jesus.**'

Have someone in the group read Colossians 2:6-8.

1. From your preparation, what did these verses have to say about beginning and continuing as a Christian?
  
2. What would it look like NOT to be committed to Jesus?
  
3. In what ways do you see this commitment at mpc? In what ways do you see it in your own life?

The first and most important step in growing as a follower of Jesus is to be committed to Jesus. 'Receiving Jesus as Lord and Christ' means submitting your life to his rule. It also means placing your trust in him as the one who gave his life as a sacrifice for your sins. While this is the starting point in the Christian life, it's a commitment that continues. Being a committed follower of Jesus means you will keep growing exactly where you were planted!

### Distinctive 2 - Connected to God's People

Why bother meeting together? It's a fair question. And lots of people - even those who say they're committed Christians - have simply given up on meeting with other Christians, and decided to go it alone.

But there are two reasons to think this isn't right. We looked at one in our personal preparation.

1. From what you read in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 this week, what were the implications of seeing Christians as the body of Christ? What does this say for meeting together and being connected to God's people?

One interesting thing to come out of this Corinthians passage (and other similar passages like it—Ephesians 4:1-16) is that the unity & connectedness that Christians have isn't created by them...it already exists because we are in Christ! That means that it would be completely unnatural for the body to be disconnected, or uncaring, or to not have the good of others in mind!

Lets take this a little further. Read Hebrews 10:24-25 to see what it says about Christians meeting together.

2. From this passage, what should Christians be considering when they meet together? (v.24)
  
3. What direction does this passage point us in to make that happen? (v.25)
  
4. Is that your experience of church and meeting together?
  
5. What's the danger of neglecting to regularly meet together?

When we commit ourselves to Jesus, we become part of God's family. Coming to church week by week isn't just about meeting with God – it's about **encouraging one another**. We want people to be enthusiastically connected with their church family through regularly meeting on Sundays, through involvement in a mid-week growth group, and through supporting one another in everyday life. We grow as followers of Jesus as we build up one another!

### Distinctive 3 - Clear-thinking about God's Word

Every church or denomination is defined by a historical "doctrinal standard." Ours is called The Westminster Confession of Faith; **our ministers and elders are required to affirm its teaching. Ordinary church members are not required to be experts on The Confession, but it's good to have some level of familiarity with it.** The great beauty of the Westminster Confession of Faith is that it places the Word of God, the Bible, as the "supreme authority."

The supreme judge by which... all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined... can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking **in the Scripture.**" (WCF 1:10)

In short, we are a church guided and sustained by God's word, the Bible; **and the whole Bible leads us directly and simply to Jesus Christ.** So just as 2 Timothy 3:15-16 says, we teach the Bible so that people can be wise for salvation in Jesus Christ. We use it to teach, rebuke, correct and train everyone in righteousness.

1. Have you seen evidence of the Bible being used in these ways in your experience of mpc?

Read Ephesians 4:7-16.

2. We see in v.7 that Christ has apportioned grace to all his people. What gifts does Paul list in v.11? What's common about these gifts?
3. And what's the aim in giving these gifts to His people? (v.12-13)
4. What are the two places people can end up? (v.14-16)

Mature Christians are clear-thinking Christians, who know and understand what the Bible says, and know how it affects the way they should live and think. Our desire to grow clear-thinking followers of Jesus means we place a high value on clear and Christ-centred bible teaching.

### Distinctive 4 - Compassionate in Thought & Action

Because of what Jesus has done for us, our standing before God doesn't rely on what we do (phew!), but on Jesus himself.

But we are saved for a purpose. We are saved to live transformed lives - lives that reflect the one who has saved us, Jesus Christ. Lives of compassion. Here are two different aspects of compassion.

Read James 2:14-19.

1. From your preparation, what did you learn about the relationship between faith and action?
2. Do you think it's possible to be committed to Jesus and have no compassion for others? What might a compassionate life look like for us today in our church, community and wider world?

We are striving at MPC to be followers of Jesus who characterised by compassion. Compassion for those

within our church, those within our community, and throughout the world. This happens at MPC through the Care Team as well as within Growth Groups.

But while we want to look after people's physical needs, we also know there is a greater problem that all mankind faces.

Read Romans 10:12-15.

1. According to Paul in this passage, what is the great need both the Jews, and all mankind have?
2. What would compassion look like in these circumstances?
3. How do you think we should balance people's physical needs with their spiritual ones?

It's only natural that those committed to following Jesus will grow to be like him - reaching out to the lost, caring for the poor, sick and lonely, supporting & encouraging God's people. Compassion is the heart-response to the needs of others – an attitude that will work in all kinds of creative and loving actions.

### Compassionate

At mpc, we know we're not perfect. And yet, through the death & resurrection of Jesus, we have a new heart with which to live out who we are - God's people.

In the boxes below, write down how you think you're going in growing as a follower of Jesus (It's not a test...it's to help you think through where you're at).

Committed	Connected	Clear-thinking	Compassionate
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Where do you think you need to grow? How can your growth group help with that?

<p><b>For Prayer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pray that we might invite our friends to hear Chappo this week</li> <li>- Pray that we might be committed to growing ourselves and others as followers of Jesus.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coming Up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Series on 1 Corinthians 1-6</li> <li>- Simply Christianity course</li> <li>- Kent &amp; Barbara Hughes (29-30 March)</li> </ul>
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