

# Building A Vibrant Spiritual Life

A Soul Care  
Self-Assessment Inventory

This inventory will help you discern **where you are** on your spiritual journey and **identify possible next steps**. It is designed to be used with the **2012 Soul Care Plan** that appears at the end of this inventory.





# Introduction

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) He came to show us how to make our lives all they’re supposed to be.

The earliest followers of Jesus learned this new way of life by spending time with him – listening, observing, imitating. The more time they spent with Jesus, the more they became like him. That is the supreme goal of discipleship – to become like our Master. (Luke 6:40)

What worked for those earliest followers of Jesus will work equally well for us today. Before ascending into Heaven, Jesus promised, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20) We have access to the Spirit of the Risen Christ. And, just like those first disciples, the more time we spend communing with Christ, the more we will become like him.

But how? Throughout the ages, Christians have developed certain common ways of “practicing the presence of Christ.” At LifeJourney Church, we have divided those practices into seven key categories, which we call “**building blocks**” for healthy spiritual living. Each block represents a different way of weaving quality time with Jesus into the fabric of our lives.

**D = Discipleship decision**

**W = Worship**

**C = Connecting to others**

**Q = Quiet time with God**

**G = Generosity**

**S = Service**

**? = Unique ways to draw closer to God**

These Building Blocks are the raw materials from which we can build a vibrant, personal relationship with God through Christ. They provide a menu of options from which each of us can construct our own customized Soul Care Plan.

Before you prepare your Soul Care Plan, we encourage you to prayerfully work through this Soul Care Inventory. Use the questions you find here to fire your spiritual imagination and help you discern the right next steps on your spiritual journey.

Don’t be overwhelmed by this Inventory. Remember, spiritual growth is the work of a lifetime. Don’t try to do too much too fast or you will fail. The key is to discern: (a) what am I doing now that I want to continue; and (b) what are the next steps? There will be certain questions in this Inventory that leap off the page and tug at you. Pay special attention to those questions. Note them and consider whether they are calling you to your next steps.

So go ahead, take charge of your spiritual life. Dig in, set some specific spiritual goals, and move forward – knowing that the Spirit of the Risen Christ will be with you every step of the way!

# D = Discipleship

## Have I decided to follow Jesus?

Spiritual living requires intentional decision making. Everywhere Jesus went, he asked people to decide whether they wanted to follow him. (E.g., Matthew 11:28-30) From the beginning, those who have made this decision have announced it through the rite of Holy Baptism. (Acts 2:38)

For some of us, our “discipleship decision” was quick and clear. We can point to a specific day and time when we consciously decided to become a follower of Jesus. For others of us, our “discipleship decision” was more gradual, the result of a long series of small steps that have led us to a firm conviction to live as followers of Jesus. Regardless how someone gets there, we all have to decide:

### Do I wish to follow Jesus?

For some of us, the honest answer is, “I’m not sure; I need more time and more information.” If that’s where you are, we honor and respect where you find yourself, and invite you to use the building blocks as a way of getting to know Jesus better. If and when the time is right to make a “discipleship decision,” you’ll know that in your heart.

For others of us, the “discipleship decision” has already been made. But that doesn’t mean we’re done with the “D Block.” Each of us needs to periodically pause and ask: “Am I really living my discipleship decision? Am I allowing Jesus’ teachings to guide my thoughts and change my actions? Or have I become distracted and stagnant?”

### D Block: Self-Evaluation Questions

1. Have I already made a decision to live as a follower of Jesus?

Yes  No  Not sure

2. If yes, when? (Your answer might be a specific day and time or perhaps a particular season in your life.)

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3. Have I publically announced my decision through Baptism?

Yes  No  Not sure

4. For those who have not yet decided to follow Jesus: Am I ready to make that decision now?

Yes  No  Not sure (If your answer is yes, we suggest you talk to a pastor about Baptism.)

5. For those who are not yet ready to follow Jesus: Am I interested in getting to know Jesus better?

Yes  No  Not sure (If your answer is yes, we urge you to begin working the building blocks described in this Inventory as a way of getting to know Jesus better.)

6. For all who are followers of Jesus: Do I feel that I'm actively living out my discipleship decision, allowing Jesus' teachings to guide my thoughts and change my actions, or have I become distracted and stagnant?

I'm focused and making forward progress.

I've become distracted and am feeling spiritually stagnant; I want to renew my decision to follow Jesus.

I'm not sure where I stand; I need spiritual counsel to clarify my thinking.

**Notes to Self:**

As I ponder the foregoing questions, what do I feel called to continue, and what do I feel called to change, within my D Block?

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# W = Worship

## Am I living a life of worship?

For most of us, “practicing the presence of Christ” begins with attending weekly Sunday worship services. Very few people can sustain a thriving spiritual life without the support of weekly worship. Jesus gathered weekly in the synagogue for worship; his early followers gathered weekly in churches. (E.g., Mark 3:1; Acts 20:7)

If you are serious about following Jesus, getting regular at Sunday worship is critical.

But living a life of worship doesn't stop there. As we grow our souls, more and more of life becomes an extension of our Sunday worship experience. We find ourselves noticing and celebrating God's work all around us, we find ourselves singing to God outside of church, we may even find ourselves worshiping God with our friends in small groups, so that all of life becomes a sanctuary and a spirit of worship begins to permeate our days.

### W Block: Self-Evaluation Questions

1. Am I regular and faithful to worship service each week, with only occasional exceptions?

Yes  No  Sometimes

2. In worship service, do I consciously open myself to what's happening by praying: “God speak to me?”

Yes  No  Sometimes

3. Do I often worship God with my friends in my Oasis Group or other settings?

Yes  No  Sometimes

4. In my daily life, do I regularly notice and celebrate the work of God around me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

5. In my daily life, do I often listen to music that lifts my heart to celebrate God?

Yes  No  Sometimes

6. In my daily life, do I regularly and consciously thank God for good things that happen to me and around me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

7. In my daily life, do I regularly and consciously thank God for the difficult things that happen to me and around me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

8. Do my actions consistently show that God is my highest priority, thereby giving glory to God?

Yes  No  Sometimes

**Notes to Self:**

As I ponder these questions, what do I feel called to continue, and what do I feel called to change, within my W Block?

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# C = Connection

## Am I connecting to people in a deep spiritual way?

When Jesus was here on earth, he drew around him a core of people who served as his spiritual small group. (Luke 8:1-3) In the first Jerusalem Church, this pattern repeated. Believers gathered in the temple for weekly worship, but also met throughout the week in small groups. (Acts 2:41-47)

The example is clear. Connecting to one another on a spiritual level in small groups is essential to our discipleship. For most of us, once we establish a pattern of regular weekly worship, the next step is connecting to a spiritual small group. At LifeJourney Church, we call our small groups “Oasis Groups.” Why are these groups so important?

- You get to practice loving others in an ideal way — like God does.
- You build friendships with people with whom you can talk about deep spiritual things.
- You can be really honest and transparent with one another and find accountability with people who know you well enough to speak truth into your life.
- You find unconditional support in times of crisis.
- You learn from the spiritual insights of a whole group of people, not just your own.
- You discover a deep sense of belonging. Everybody knows your name; and they’re always glad you came!

For all these reasons, spiritual small groups have long been key to Christian living. But the Connection Block doesn’t stop there. The more we practice sharing God’s ideal love in spiritual community, the more we develop new patterns of thought and behavior that begin spilling over into the rest of our lives and affecting how we treat all the people around us — our spouses, our families, our coworkers, even our enemies. With practice, little by little, step by step, we grow in our ability to share God’s love in the world.

Bottom line: the quality of our people connections — and how much of God’s love we express in those relationships — is the ultimate test of our spiritual maturity. (I John 4:7-8) If we don’t get the C Block right, nothing else matters.

### C Block: Self-Evaluation Questions

1. Am I faithful to an Oasis Group that allows me to connect to people on a deep spiritual level?

Yes  No  Sometimes

2. Am I building deep spiritual friendships at church and beyond? (By this we mean, friendships with people who share your faith and support and encourage you in building your faith.)

Yes  No  Sometimes



3. For those who have a spouse: Does my spouse consistently experience the love of God through me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

4. For those who are single and dating: Do I consistently strive to apply spiritual principles to my dating life and to show God's love to those whom I date?

Yes  No  Sometimes

5. Does my extended family consistently experience the love of God through me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

6. In my workplace or school, do I consistently strive to apply spiritual principles and to show God's love to all those impacted by me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

7. Do strangers, and my enemies, consistently experience the love of God through me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

8. Am I generally open and honest with others about who I am and what I am thinking and feeling?

Yes  No  Sometimes

9. Are there unresolved issues or grievances in my relationships with others that I need to address in the spirit of "direct dealing"? (Matthew 18:15-17)

Yes  No  Not sure

**Notes to Self:**

As I ponder these questions, what do I feel called to continue, and what do I feel called to change, within my C Block?

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# Q = Quiet Time

## Am I making time for regular personal communion with God?

In the Gospels, Jesus makes time in his busy days to step away from all the clamor to commune with God. (E.g., Luke 6:12-13; 9:18-20; 9:28-32; 11:1-4; 22:39-46) During these times, Jesus prays, listens, worships, gives thanks, pours out his heart to God, and reflects on the Scriptures. (E.g., Matthew 4:1-11) These “quiet times” seem to be the anchor that holds Jesus to his center.

If Jesus needed quite time to stay centered, how much more do we?

It’s hard to imagine someone can love God without wanting to build a strong personal relationship that involves regular two-way communication. For some of us, the thought of personal communion with God may be intimidating, especially if we’ve been taught to cower in fear. But that’s not what God wants.

God loves you as fiercely as a good parent loves her child, as deeply as a good shepherd loves his sheep. (Matthew 7:7-11; Isaiah 66:13; John 10:11-16) You are loved with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3). Given how much God loves you, imagine how deeply God longs for close personal communion with you.

### Q Block: Self-Evaluation Questions

1. There are 1440 minutes in every day. Am I regularly carving out at least 15 minutes for focused, two-way conversation with God through some combination of prayer, reading the scriptures, song, and meditation?

Yes  No  Sometimes

2. When I read scripture, do I regularly hear God speaking to me through it?

Yes  No  Sometimes

3. When I pray, am I able to pour myself out to God and feel the relief of sharing my burdens with God?

Yes  No  Sometimes

4. When I quiet myself and listen, do I regularly hear the voice of God’s Spirit speaking inside me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

5. As I move through each day, am I carrying on a running conversation with God? Do I regularly take moments to share with God – through a brief prayer, a quiet thought, a look upward, a listening heart?

Yes  No  Sometimes

6. As I move through each day, am I listening for the voice of God in all that is happening around me?

Yes  No  Sometimes

7. Is my personal relationship with God growing closer?

Growing closer  Holding steady  Drifting apart

8. Is my personal relationship with God changing the way I see and interact with the world?

Yes  No  Not sure

**Notes to Self:**

As I ponder these questions, what do I feel called to continue, and what do I feel called to change, within my Q Block?

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# G = Generosity

Am I living a generous life?

Jesus taught about money more than any other subject. (E.g., Matthew 6:24-34) Why? Because our money is powerful. Money is one of the greatest resources God entrusts to us. We can use it for great good or for selfish over-indulgence. Someone once said, “Show me a person’s check book, and I’ll tell you what that person values.”

Someone else once said, “Money is the closest earthly substitute for God.” In fact, money is so powerful, we are sometimes tempted to think it can buy happiness, friends, health, security, etc. If we’re not careful, we can end up trusting and serving money more than God.

For all these reasons, how we manage our money is critical to our discipleship. Jesus challenges us to practice exceptional generosity. (Luke 6:38; Luke 21:1-4)

## G Block: Self-Evaluation Questions

1. Am I giving a regular weekly or monthly amount of my income to God’s work in this world?

Yes  No  Sometimes

2. Jesus encourages us to give at a level that stretches our comfort zone. (Luke 21:1-4) Is the amount I’m giving relatively easy for me or does it stretch me a bit?

It stretches me  It’s relatively easy  Not sure

3. Throughout the scriptures, tithing is often mentioned as a benchmark for generosity. (E.g., Malachi 3:8-12) “Tithing” means giving 10% of my income. Many people find tithing to be a worthy goal because, on the one hand, it stretches us, but on the other hand, it is achievable if we build-up to it over time. Question: Do I feel called to work toward the goal of tithing?

- I am working toward tithing; right now I’m giving \_\_\_\_% of my income
- I have reached the goal of tithing.
- I am moving above tithing by giving \_\_\_\_% of my income
- I do not feel called to tithe.

4. Have I bought into our culture’s obsession with always acquiring more and better stuff?

Yes  No  Sometimes

5. Is my life becoming more or less cluttered with material possessions?

More  Less  Holding steady

6. Do I regard all my personal possessions and money as being at God’s disposal?

Yes  No  Not sure

7. Jesus said, "It is better to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) Does giving to God and others give me genuine joy?

Yes  No  Sometimes

8. Is God more important to me than my career or material success?

Yes  No  Not sure

9. Living a generous life can be difficult if we are under financial stress. Here are some questions that can help us evaluate how well we are managing our finances:

- Am I living comfortably within my income?
- Am I allowing room for meaningful financial giving to God?
- Am I allowing room to save for the future?
- Is my total debt growing or shrinking?
- Am I letting others take advantage of me financially?
- Am I spending too much in any particular area of my life?

**Notes to Self:**

As I ponder these questions, what do I feel called to continue, and what do I feel called to change, within my G Block?

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# S = Service

## Am I living a life of service?

Jesus was all about serving. It was his mission statement – his reason for coming to earth. “The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.” (Matthew 20:28) Jesus expects us to reflect the same attitude. We are never so close to Christ, never so fully in his presence, as when we serve with an open heart.

And when we serve, we offer the world a compelling example of genuine faith. We are the hands and feet of Christ in this world. (I Corinthians 12:12-27) Our service is literally God’s love in action. As Jesus said, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:15)

### S Block: Self-Evaluation Questions

1. Am I a faithful and regular participant in a service activity at church or in some other setting?  
 Yes    No    Sometimes
2. Am I feeling called to increase the time and energy I devote to service activities?  
 Yes    No    Not sure
3. Do I see my job as a “spiritual vocation”? (In other words, do I see my job, whatever it is, as an opportunity to serve God by serving people, directly or indirectly, and making God’s world work better?)  
 Yes    No    Sometimes
4. When random opportunities for service arise – at home, at work, at church, and beyond — do I typically respond by pitching in?  
 Yes    No    Sometimes
5. When I serve, do I do so joyfully?  
 Yes    No    Sometimes
6. When I serve, do I do so with an attitude that allows others to experience the Spirit of Christ through me?  
 Yes    No    Sometimes

7. In conversations with other people, do I take opportunities to share my excitement about my faith in ways that are natural and gracious?

Yes  No  Sometimes

8. When I encounter someone who could really be blessed by my church, do I invite them?

Yes  No  Sometimes

**Notes to Self:**

As I ponder these questions, what do I feel called to continue, and what do I feel called to change, within my S Block?

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# ? = Mystery Block

## What else am I called to do to further my spiritual growth?

Because God has created each one of us unique, no set of spiritual building blocks could be complete without a “Mystery Block.” The Mystery Block represents unique practices that allow each of us to draw closer to God. For example, if you’re a visual artist, drawing may be a profound connection point for you with God.

The Mystery Block also represents specific initiatives that God may be calling us to undertake. For example, many of us may feel called to take better care of our bodies as the temple of God.

(I Corinthians 6:19)

The Mystery Block is wide open, and invites us to think creatively about our spiritual growth. It can include anything God lays on our hearts. The questions below target several areas that people often address in their Mystery Block.

### ? Block: Self-Evaluation Questions

1. Are there particular practices (not covered under the other building blocks) that draw me closer to God? If so, list them here:

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2. Should I be doing more of any of the activities I just identified in Question 1? If so, which ones?

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3. Am I doing a good job of taking care of the physical body God has given me?

Yes    No    Sometimes

4. If I need to improve my care for my body, in what area(s)?

Eating healthier    Eating less  
 Sleeping more    Exercising more  
 Reducing stress    Regular physical exams  
 Being more faithful to medical instructions  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there any addictions that I need to address, or continue to address, to be spiritually and emotionally healthy? Common addictions include:

Alcohol    Drugs (legal or illegal)  
 Food    Sex  
 Work/success    Codependency  
 Spending/acquiring things  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_



6. Even if my behavior is not addictive, would my overall spiritual and emotional health be improved if I better managed any of the following areas of my life?

Alcohol

Drugs (legal or illegal)

Food

Sex

Work/success

Spending/acquiring things

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Am I carving out enough 'down time' to renew and refresh my spirit through play, recreation, and socializing?

Yes  No  Sometimes

8. Are there any personality traits that I should work on to become more like Christ? Here's a check list found in Galatians 5:22-26.

**Positive Traits**

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Generosity

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-Control

**Opposite Traits**

Selfishness

Despair

Anxiety/Stress

Anger

Rudeness

Stingy

Fickle/Run Hot and Cold

Aggressiveness

Overly Impulsive

9. Is there anything else God is calling me to address to further my spiritual growth? If so, list that here:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Notes to Self:**

As I ponder these questions, what do I feel called to continue, and what do I feel called to change, within my Mystery Block?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Final Thoughts

Once you've completed this Inventory, we suggest you set it aside. Pray about it, and let the questions ruminate for a few days. Don't take on too much; don't try to change too much at once. Really try to sense:

- those things you're now doing that you want to continue; and
- the most important next step in your growth.

When you feel ready, use the attached Soul Care Plan template to create your own personal 2012 Soul Care Plan.

Once you've completed your Soul Care Plan, we invite you to share a copy with the pastoral staff of LifeJourney Church. Just put a copy of your Plan in the basket at the info kiosk. We are committed to praying for you, and loving and supporting you as you work on your Plan. We will send you notes of encouragement as you move through the year.

Together we can move forward to new heights of spiritual living!

# My 2012 Soul Care Plan

Do you want to be more intentional about nurturing your soul? We invite you to take some time to prayerfully prepare your own customized Soul Care Plan, using the following steps:

**Step 1:** Complete the Soul Care Self-Assessment Inventory, then read through both sides of this document before marking any responses.

**Step 2:** Answer the three questions below, referencing the building block descriptions on the back of this page as needed.

**Step 3:** Fill in the details on the back of this sheet for the blocks you've decided to include in your Plan.

**Step 4:** Complete the covenant form as a promise to yourself. We invite you to return a copy of this document in the basket at the info kiosk or in the offering next Sunday.

## Where am I now?

In this space mark the letters of the building blocks that you are now practicing as a part of your life. Only reflect here what you are *already doing regularly*.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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## What am I ready to add (or upgrade) now?

In this space, mark the letters of any building blocks that you feel ready to add to your life rhythm right now, or any blocks you are already practicing but feel ready to "upgrade". Please don't over-commit! Be realistic. It's much better to add or upgrade one block, and do it intentionally and well, than to add or upgrade many blocks and burn out attempting to keep up.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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## What might I want to add in the future?

In this space, mark the letters of any building blocks that you hope to add or upgrade at some point *in the future*. This does not affect your current Soul Care Plan. It's just a chance to do some forward thinking.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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## My Covenant

With God's help, I promise myself that I will faithfully implement this Plan throughout the year, knowing that because of it, I will grow stronger, my life will be better, and others will be blessed because of me!

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please include both mailing address *and* email if possible.

We invite you to bring a copy of your Plan to church next Sunday. You can place it in the basket at the info kiosk or in the offering plate. If you do so, here is what will happen:

- Pastoral staff will regularly pray for you by name, that God will help you succeed in your Soul Care Plan.
- You'll receive occasional notes of encouragement from pastoral staff.
- We will *not* keep track of whether you are following through with your Plan or badger you in any way. It's up to you to monitor your progress.
- We will *not* share your Plan; confidentiality will be respected.

If you have questions, please feel free to discuss this with the pastoral staff or any of the SoulShift teachers.



**D is for Discipleship: Have I decided to follow Jesus?**

**Foundation:** Am I committed to following Jesus as a disciple? Do I want to become like him?

Yes  No

I need more time to consider

**Enhancement:**

I want to renew my focus on following Jesus because I've become distracted and stagnant.

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**W is for Worship: Am I living a life of worship?**

**Foundation:** Do I feel led to make a commitment to regular worship service attendance?

Yes  No  Maybe next year

**Enhancement:** List here any other ways you feel called to deepen your worship life.

**C is for Connection: Am I connecting to people in a deep spiritual way?**

**Foundation:** Do I feel led to participate in an Oasis Group?

Yes  No  Maybe next year

**Enhancement:** List any other ways you feel called to deepen your spiritual connection to people.

**Q is for Quiet Time: Am I making time for regular communion with God?**

**Foundation:** Do I feel led to practice a regular quiet time (daily or at least most days)?

Yes  No  Maybe next year

If yes, what form will my quiet time take?

*Check out Be Still and Know at [LifeJourneyChurch.cc/bestill](http://LifeJourneyChurch.cc/bestill)*

**Enhancement:** List here any other ways you feel called to deepen your communion with God.

**G is for Generosity: Am I living a generous life?**

**Foundation:** Do I feel led to practice regular giving to God's work?

Yes  No  Maybe next year

If yes, what form will my giving take?

I am going to tithe on my income.

I am going to go beyond tithing by giving

\_\_\_\_\_ % of my income.

I am not in a position to tithe now, but

I'm going to get serious about getting

there by giving:

2.5% of income

5.0% of income

7.5% of income

I don't feel led to tithe. For me, at this time,

generosity means giving:

\$\_\_\_\_\_ per week or \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month

*For your convenience, you can enroll in electronic giving at*

*[LifeJourneyChurch.cc/donate](http://LifeJourneyChurch.cc/donate)*

**Enhancement:** List here any other ways you feel called to deepen your generosity.

**S is for Service: Am I living a life of service?**

**Foundation:** Do I feel led to invest regular time serving God?

Yes  No  Maybe next year

If yes, what form will my service take?

I will participate on a church Ministry Team:

I will serve God by donating time to:

**Enhancement:** List here any other ways you feel called to deepen your service life.

**? is for Mystery Block: What else am I called to do to further my spiritual growth?**