

Spiritual Life

We are often prideful people, caught up in our own strength, thinking we know best. After all, mankind continues to abandon the worship of God, attributing their achievements to themselves and to other idols. But God never abandoned them, and in His grand plan sent His Son to achieve what we could never do, which is to save us from the ultimate consequences of our sin. The Gospel shows us that God is here with us, to strengthen and empower us to do things that we could not do on our own. We are weak, but in Christ we are strong, and this was something that took me a long time to fully grasp.

Much of my life I never had close friends to share and discuss deeper and more personal topics. Because of this, I was a very independent and stubborn person, refusing to seek help with problems I faced. In entering university, I came in with expectations of forming close, life-long friends. Instead, I struggled in furthering friendships that I had, and with the additional difficulties of learning in university, it was a time of loneliness and isolation. At that time, I was helpless. But, God used this in a way for me to reflect, both on my own weaknesses, my unmet expectations of others, and His grace that covers it all. I realised that I could fully rely on Him as my comfort and shepherd and that it is by His power my weaknesses may be overcome. These weaknesses are not something that I need to be ashamed of, but something that can be used to glorify God in His work. I know that where I am right now, and the friendships I have found, is not through my own work, but by what Christ has done in me and through other people.

In my support outside of CCF, I am currently attending a small group in Chinese Gospel Church, the church I currently attend, where I have found accountability and direction from those older and more mature than me. Aside from that, I also keep up with my youth pastor back home in Calgary, who I know I can also lean upon when I need spiritual guidance or clarity.

Candidacy

The purpose of UTCCF is ultimately to provide a community of student believers to be able to walk in their faith together. I, and I'm sure many others too, have formed many

friendships with people in CCF, and it is through these relationships that I have been spurred, encouraged, and directed in my walk with Christ. As a committee, it would be their job to help oversee/facilitate this community, whether that is in the building up of leaders, the planning in the logistics of the fellowship, or just in their daily interactions with other participants. Though they may be in a similar stage of faith with the rest of the CCF participants, they do have a greater responsibility for the fellowship, and must closely partner with the Spirit to know and implement where He is leading the fellowship for the year.

It was over the past few months that I started thinking about my role in CCF for the next year. In reflecting on my past role of leading Freezer to Men's Min this year, I felt that God was calling me to committee as the next natural step. I knew that God had given me a desire to serve here; it has always been something I've found a lot of joy in, and joining committee is a place that God has been leading me to. I originally struggled in deciding on which would be the best role for me and for the fellowship. This dilemma took a good amount of time, but after several conversations with people, I came to the conclusion of Vice-Chair. This decision was made as I came to the realisation that no matter the position that I was in, I would find great joy in supporting various leaders within CCF, and especially in the implementation of the Chair's/committee's vision for this fellowship as well. In this, I finally felt at peace after wrestling with the thought about different positions, and overall is something I can do well in the capacity of a supporting role. Even if I am not elected, I don't think much will change. I can serve as an IG or ministry leader, or even just as a friend to those around me in CCF, and still hope to speak with and support those around me.

Vision - Joy in God's Glory

This year we have seen a revival of the community within CCF. After a time in which many people struggled with maintaining social interaction, we have seen a place where people are much more willing to meet up outside of CCF or continue to hang out after the regular Friday programs are over. In this sense, a space has been created in which people can become more comfortable with each other, but how can our conversations with one another grow deeper than just a familiarity with other people? After all, as brothers and

sisters in Christ, we know that there is something more that brings us together than just enjoying each other's company. It is only through the work of Christ done in each and every one of us that we gather each week, and so we must keep that centred within our interactions with each other. Forming close friendships and knowing people's preferences, hobbies, etc. are great, but as each of us are in the family of Christ we need to go beyond that. To spur each other on, we need to have a greater spiritual familiarity and closeness with each other, to truly be able to say that we are walking in our faith together.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

Proverbs 9:10

Through the death and resurrection of Christ, we are called to be in a relationship with God, and to know Him. Before we turn our focus onto one another in the fellowship, we first must set our eyes on our Father. Who is God? What is He to us as we go through our daily lives? As Christians, we need to grow in our understanding of God's character. As we begin to truly fear Him, recognizing His grace, love, sovereignty, judgement, all the characters of God, that is the beginning of wisdom. In this humility of recognizing our place next to Him, we can shift our perspective in our current place as students, to see where God is calling us to serve and glorify Him.

"For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. How great are your works, Lord, how profound are your thoughts!"

Psalms 92:4-5

As we begin to grow in our understanding of God, so too will we be able to see how He is working among us. When we are able to better identify just how involved God is in our lives. It is my hope that as the members of this fellowship grow, there will be a natural joy that flows from this, one where we willingly can share in the works of God in individuals and within this fellowship together. This of course can be encouraged within the fellowship,

but hopefully with practice these sharings can happen unprompted in the daily casual settings, and even to our non-Christian friends.

Implementations:

Greater communication between leaders:

- Encouraging a space to consistently reflect and share about how God is moving in each other's lives, their serving, and within CCF, either during individual planning sessions with co-leaders or a dedicated time or space to share with other IG or ministry leaders.
- General updates between leaders as a way to better equip each other overall in strategies and methods of leading

Forming a foundation of familiarity and comfortability within IGs:

- As this is a group of people you are with for the whole school year, it would be expected that a lot of the spiritual conversations and sharings within the fellowship would take place here. To build the comfort and trust for people to actually do so, Friday programs should give a little more time (1 extra program), in which members can actually get to know each other more before diving into Bible studies and deeper topics.

Personal Evaluation

A gift I have that many people have mentioned to me is that I am very approachable and easygoing. Because of this nature, it is pretty easy for me to get along with people, and make them more comfortable around me. This I think is something God has used in being able to at least help some people feel a bit more at home within CCF. I would hope that as a leader God would also place me in positions where I would be able to provide support to others because of this gift, whether it be just as someone to lend a listening ear, or as someone who would be able to provide advice from my own few experiences as a very young adult.

One of my biggest weaknesses is my indecisiveness. This mainly stems from my need to fully contemplate all possible options in order to figure out what would be best for me, and

if others are involved, for them as well. My struggle in making a decision is always apparent, even in the smallest things like figuring out what I want to eat, but in the more important choices, it has been apparent that I desire to stay in control and to attempt to fully know the outcome of whatever my decision may possibly be. In this, I am prayerful, each day asking God to teach me how to surrender wanting control, and to let Him use me. I've been reminded by my youth pastor that oftentimes, there is no right or best decision, and that I should fully know that in whatever choice I make, God is greater and more powerful, and ultimately He will work all things out for my good, and for His glory.

3 point summary

- We should strive to understand God's character, and how that applies to our lives
- As we grow in this understanding, we will easily reflect and see God working in us and within the fellowship
- From our recognition of God's work shall flow a joy and passion to share with others, that we may celebrate and glorify Him together