

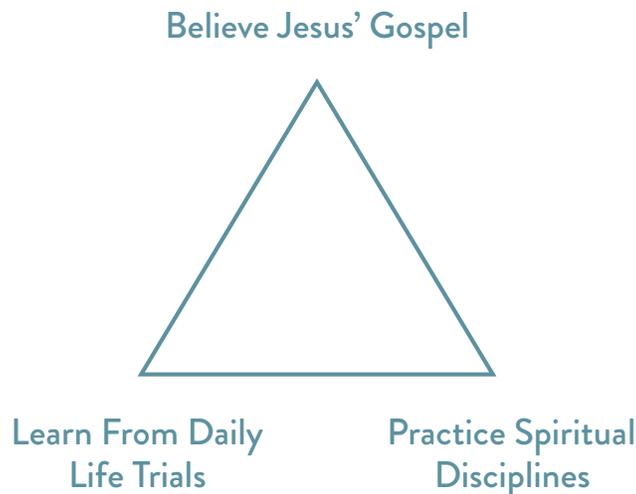
## Three Ways to Grow

Adapted from Chapter 1 of *Your Best Life in Jesus' Easy Yoke* by Bill Gaultiere

The Bible teaches us to “grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) and to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1). How do we do this? How can we grow in the grace of Christ?

The Easy Yoke Triangle (below) summarizes three key ways of interacting with God’s grace to be transformed to become more like Jesus. The ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the beauty of creation, and the Body of Christ (or “Christ’s ambassadors” in 2 Corinthians 5:20) are four ways that God’s grace comes to us in our environment. Then it’s up to us to respond. We cannot make change happen on our own, nor can we be passive and expect the Lord or someone else to do it for us. Our opportunity is to interact with God’s grace through trusting Jesus and training with him to grow in his *holiness* and *wholeness*.

### Easy Yoke Triangle



#### 1. Believe Jesus' Gospel (Be Captivated!)

Our Master Jesus is magnificent! If we behold his beauty and goodness in our hearts like Mary then we'll be captivated by Rabboni (John 20:16). We'll *delight* to submit to Jesus and his Abba and follow the Spirit in all things, day-by-day. To do this requires replacing our false personal narratives (or lies) with

the wonderful truths of Scripture. This is Jesus' Gospel: "Re-think your strategy for life because God's Kingdom is open to you *now*" (Matthew 4:17, par.). Reading Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the New Testament is a great way to renew your mind and life. It's especially powerful if you read (or listen to) a Gospel straight through, which you can do with Mark in just over one hour.

## 2. Learn from Daily Life Trials

It's easy to make the mistake of throwing our trials away. No one wants to go through pain, disappointment, or hardships! But not only are the difficulties of life inevitable, they are also *tremendous learning opportunities*. Trials are tests of how we're doing with actually becoming more patient, kind, and forgiving like Jesus. At these times we tend to see our sins, emotional struggles, and weaknesses of character for what they are. Then we can engage in soul talk with a friend to ask for empathy, feedback, and prayer to help us to rely more on our Shepherd Jesus (John 16:33, James 1:2-6).

## 3. Practice Spiritual Disciplines (To Love Others)

To grow spiritually we need to practice a variety of spiritual disciplines, including some to "put off the old self" and others to "put on the new self" (Ephesians 4:22-24). Disciplines work by *indirection*: they are activities that we can do (like fasting from food for a meal) that enable us to do things that we have not yet been able to do (like remain pleasant and kind when we don't get what we want). We do a discipline *experimentally*, looking to see how God meets us and shapes us. We're training with Jesus as his apprentice, applying his Gospel to our life and learning to obey him from our heart (Matthew 6:1-18, 1 Timothy 4:7). The purpose of disciplines like reading the Gospels, soul talks, meditating on Scripture, prayer, solitude, Sabbath, or serving others is to learn to *better love God and our neighbors* (Mark 12:30-31).

### It's a "Golden Triangle"

This triangle is "golden" in that its three priorities integrate to work together: you can't do one well without also doing the other two, as each feeds into the others. It's best to begin at the top with the Gospel, but in practice you can "start" anywhere on the triangle and move in any direction as long as you keep the three priorities together and balanced. For instance, our confidence in Christ and his Gospel (top corner) is tested in trials which motivate us to seek empathy and prayer from other people (left corner). To overcome our sin and stress and to be more loving we need to practice disciplines for life in the Spirit (right corner). These learning experiences lead us to worship the the Lord and re-think our faith-strategy for life (top corner).



To learn more about how to grow in God's grace and peace, pick up a copy of [Your Best Life in Jesus' Easy Yoke](#) by Bill Gaultiere.