

TWO CONVERSATIONS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

LIFESIGNS[®]

HOW ARE YOU? REALLY.

YOUR CUSTOMIZED GROWTH PLAN

WITH RECOMMENDED RESOURCES AND SCRIPTURES

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Welcome!

Dear Family:

Congratulations on completing the first part of LifeSigns!

You've had a one-on-one conversation with your Heavenly Father, allowing Him to search, know, see and lead you to the next step in your spiritual journey. So, how was your conversation with Him? My prayer is that it has proved to be rich and illuminating.

Remember that the LifeSigns process is completely confidential. You do NOT have to show your results to anyone, unless you choose to share it.

At Bent Tree, we exist to be used by God as He transforms people into maturing disciples of Jesus Christ, here and around the world. We want to create an environment for you to encounter Christ, experience Him in day to day living, and grow in your relationship with Him. Around Bent Tree we call that experiencing Life.

Part of experiencing Life is the act of surrendering to what God wants to do in and through you. However, we all face two struggles. First, we get distracted from our relationship with Jesus. And second, we become isolated from others.

The LifeSigns process helps to address both of these issues. I believe LifeSigns has the potential to give you at specific steps of faith so you can experience the abundant life Jesus intends for you (John 10:10).

This Personal Growth Plan includes insights from your "vertical conversation" with the Lord, organized according to the categories. For each category, your self-selected top priority is listed. Then for each priority, applicable Scripture is given as well as several ideas for growth.

Make time to discuss your results with someone you trust in a "horizontal conversation" so that person can listen to what the Lord told you, love you where you are, and then point you to Jesus and a potential next steps.

Taking the next step with you,



Pete Briscoe
Senior Pastor, Bent Tree

How to use your LifeSigns profile

You don't have to discuss every section. Pray first! Then pick any section, such as Relationships, and take turns sharing...

- 1) Joys and/or challenges you face in each area. Be specific.
- 2) What you selected as the area where you'd like to grow the most. (turn the page)
- 3) Discuss the Scripture provided. What does God say about this area of your life?
- 4) Next Steps: We've included some recommended resources and options. What practical steps can you take to grow in your self-selected priority area?



Start Here: The Big Picture

When you step back and look at the big picture of your life, what do you see? There are both joys and struggles, strengths and concerns. When you look at the Big Picture graph (below), where is there cause for celebration? Which areas of your life need some pruning, watering, and fertilizing?

The apostle Paul said,

"I planted the seed, Apolos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3:6-7



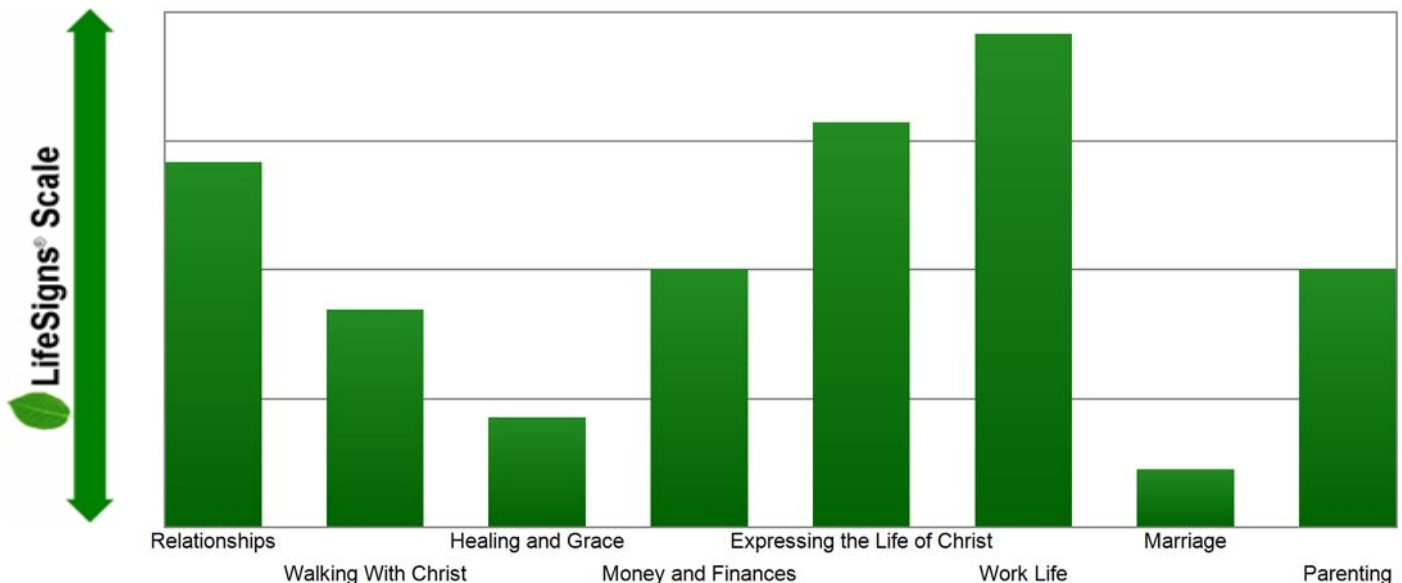
Don't approach your LifeSigns as a self-improvement program. It's Christ, living in you that causes the growth!

The First Question: **Have you reached a point in your life where you're certain you have a RELATIONSHIP with Jesus Christ - where you're 100% forgiven and accepted by Him?**

Your Response: I'm 100% certain I have that kind of relationship

LifeSigns Scale: We asked "How often do you _____?" on a five-point scale from "Almost Always" to "Almost Never" in order to help you be more objective and specific when evaluating your current LifeSigns.

The Big Picture: LifeSigns by Category



LifeSigns Categories



Your Self-Selected Priorities for Growth

What is important to you?

As you completed each section of your LifeSigns, you selected one area where you want to GROW the most. Each of your selected priorities are shown below along with the pages to find them in the profile. use this as a starting point for LifeSigns conversations with someone you trust.

LifeSigns Question: "What is your top growth priority?"

LifeSigns Categories	Your Self-Selected #1 Priorities	Page
Relationships	Connecting: Developing deep relationships and taking the initiative to find a best friend (i.e., someone you can call at midnight, who asks you tough questions, laughs at your jokes, pays for lunch, and would tell you about a blind spot, etc.).	pp. 5-6
Walking With Christ	Intimacy with Christ: On any given day, having an INTIMATE encounter with God (being fully aware of His presence, hearing His voice, experiencing Him in a fresh way).	pp. 7-8
Healing and Grace	Strength: Trusting Christ as your PRIMARY source of hope and power (relying on His grace to deal with disappointments, face daily struggles – rather than doing it yourself).	pp. 9-10
Money and Finances	Discipline: Learning to MANAGE God's money well (so it's not a source of anxiety, distraction, conflict with family).	pp. 11-12
Expressing the Life of Christ	Serving: Using your GIFTS and PASSIONS to serve wherever God lead you (across the street or across the globe, inside the church or out in the community).	pp. 13-14
Work Life	Stress: Handling PRESSURE at work in a healthy way (trusting God when you're anxious or frustrated, relying on His grace and guidance).	pp. 15-16
Marriage	Your Priorities: Learning to truly CONNECT with your spouse on a DAILY basis (not just talking about the schedule or juggling errands, but intimately engaging with one another).	pp. 17-18
Parenting	Being an Example: Learning to more consistently MODEL living by faith with your kids (when you struggle, they see you trusting Jesus, freely forgiving).	pp. 19-20

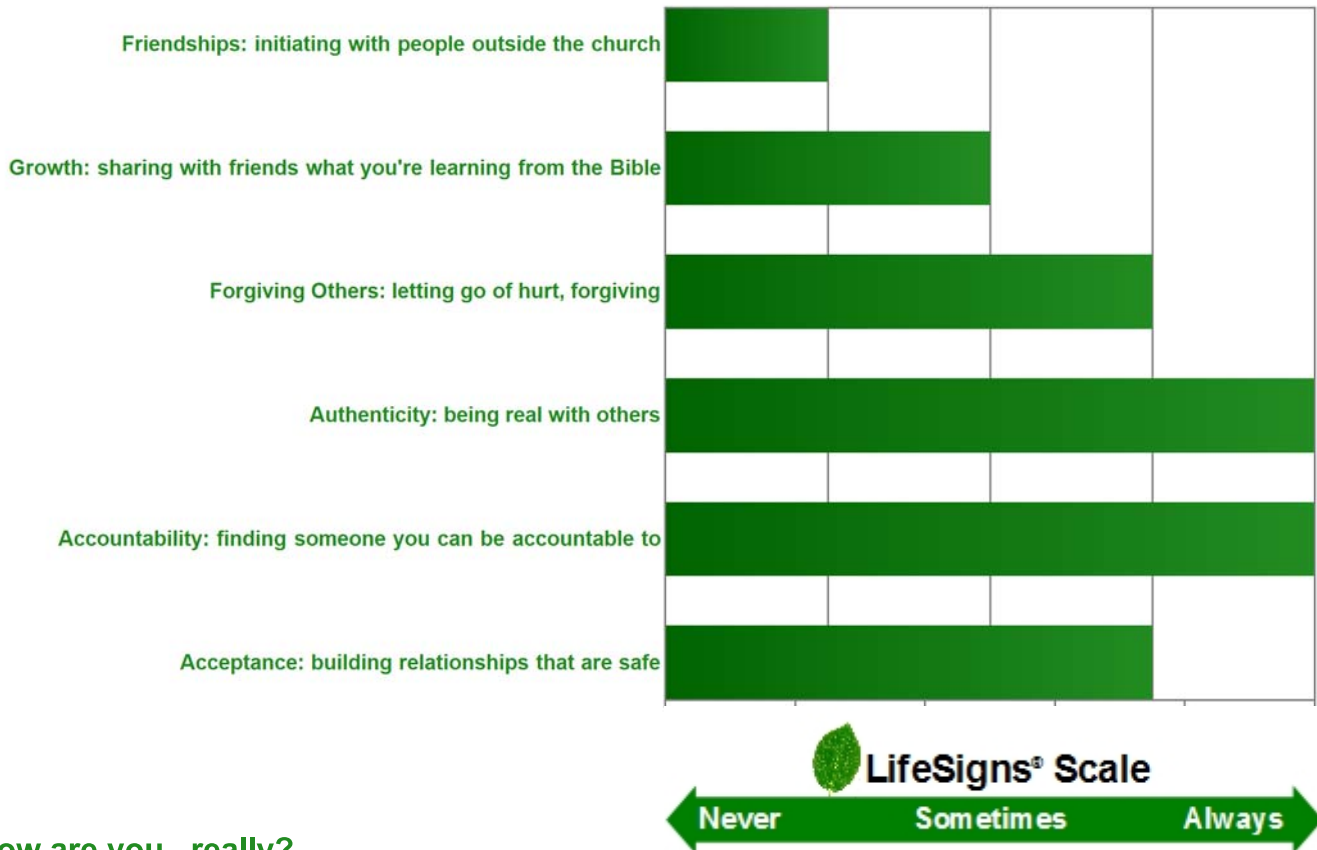


Relationships: Where are you now?

What are the signs of life when it comes to Relationships?

Remember back in Genesis, when God said it was "not good" for Adam to be alone? It's still true today. You were created to be connected. Yes, relationships can be messy, but relationships are one way you can experience the abundant Life that God has promised you. In Proverbs it says, "A friend loves at all times. He is there to help when trouble comes." (Proverbs 17:17)

Your LifeSigns: Relationships



How are you...really?

What joys and frustrations are you experiencing in your relationships, whether inside or outside the church?

Lord you know how I've struggled to connect with other people. The more we struggle in our marriage, the harder it seems to relate to other couples. I used to meet with Steve every Saturday morning for breakfast and some accountability. But we haven't met in months. I hate to admit this, but I really don't have anyone I could call a Best Friend, just lots of acquaintances at work and at church. The men's bible study is really good. There are a couple of guys I'd like to connect with.

Relationships: What's next?

What's important to you?

As you prayerfully completed each section of your LifeSigns, you selected one PRIORITY where you want to grow (below). Use this as a starting point for LifeSigns conversations.



#1 Growth Opportunity: "When it comes to Relationships, where do you want to grow the MOST?"

Connecting: Developing deep relationships and taking the initiative to find a best friend (i.e., someone you can call at midnight, who asks you tough questions, laughs at your jokes, pays for lunch, and would tell you about a blind spot, etc.).



Encouragement from the Bible: What does God's Word say about this particular LifeSign?

"Two are better than one . . . If they fall down, they can help each other up. But pity those who fall and have no one to help them up! . . . Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24) Additionally, read Proverbs 18.

Growth Tools and Resources

We matched these resources to your #1 Growth Opportunity (shown above).



- 1) Continue to connect in your Biblical community (Bible Study small group; LifeGroup; accountability group; mentoring relationship) Find a group at www.benttree.org/groups.
- 2) If you lack this kind of a friend, pray that you will see the person(s) God has provided for you, then build into these relationships.
- 3) Take the initiative to invite people out for a coffee or meal or have them over to your home. Remember that the relationship is important, not the surroundings.

Your Next Step:

What specific step of faith, large or small, is God leading you to take in your Relationship?

Okay Lord, I'm going to see if David wants to grab coffee after our bible study on Tuesday night. I'll take a risk and share what's really going on in my marriage, and see if he wants to meet on a regular basis - just to talk and encourage each other.



Walking with Christ: Where are you now?

What are the signs of life when it comes to walking with Christ?

Everyone's relationship with Christ is different. And yet He offers the same forgiveness and grace to everyone. You've probably heard the analogy before: Your relationship with Christ is like a vine and branches. When you (the branch) depend on Jesus (the vine), new growth happens – and you'll see positive results (the fruit) in your life. In fact, abiding in Christ is the only way you'll truly experience Life.



Your LifeSigns: Walking with Christ



How are you...really?

What major struggles do you face when it comes to Walking with Christ?

Lord you know we used to "talk" every morning. When I make the time, it's always encouraging and my day seems to go SO MUCH better. Honestly, it's been a couple months since I've made the time/effort to get up early. I know our relationship is more than just a quick devotional in the morning and prayers before meals. At least it should be. I hate to admit this, but I've been blaming You for the struggles in our marriage. All the prayer and counseling doesn't seem to be making much of a difference. Where are you when I need you??

Walking with Christ: What's next?

What's important to you?

As you prayerfully completed each section of your LifeSigns, you selected one PRIORITY where you want to grow (below). Use this as a starting point for LifeSigns conversations.



#1 Growth Opportunity: "When it comes to Walking with Christ, where do you want to grow the MOST?"

Intimacy with Christ: On any given day, having an INTIMATE encounter with God (being fully aware of His presence, hearing His voice, experiencing Him in a fresh way).



Encouragement from the Bible: What does God's Word say about this particular LifeSign?

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself...unless you remain in me." (John 15:4), And read all of John 15; "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes... and never fails to bear fruit." (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

Growth Tools and Resources

We matched these resources to your #1 Growth Opportunity (shown above).



- 1) Establish a regular worship time with the Lord. Some call this a "quiet time." During that time you can read Scripture, pray by presenting your requests to God and listening for Him to speak to you. You may also listen to or sing songs that focus your attention on the Lord. Work through a devotional or Bible study. Visit the Bent Tree Bookstore for devotional material.
- 2) There are many "worship pathways" to develop an intimate worship life. We are all wired a little differently, and may connect with God in different ways. Here are some examples: Listen to a sermon online; put together a playlist of worship songs you love to sing and have a private worship time in your car or home; Take a walk in a nature preserve, listen for his voice and worship Him for the beauty of creation; share with a friend.
- 3) Talk with others about their day to day relationship with the Lord. How has their time with Him changed through the years? How are others being impacted by the Lord? Are you part of a Group of people for whom this relationship is thriving? Go to www.benttree.org/groups to search for group activities.

Your Next Step:

What specific step of faith, large or small, do you want to take in your relationship with Christ?



I feel like You're leading me to make time with You a priority every day. I also want to commit to scheduling some extended time away from work and the kids, to spend talking with You about the difficult parts of my life. Namely, my marriage and the possible career change.