

More Spiritual Growth

Introduction:

According to the Scriptures spiritual growth is necessary (1 Peter 2:1-3). We are clearly taught that, if we lack growth, will not achieve success (John 15:6).

To succeed, here and beyond, we must continually be growing as Christians: always reaching ahead as we press for new goals now (2 Peter 1:5-10); and our final goal, which will be received after this life is over (Revelation 14:12-13).

Let's consider together a plan for spiritual growth: some of the things we must do in order to grow; and some of things we must avoid in order to grow. Please open your Bible text as we enter this study.

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Spiritual growth is expected and achievable. Hebrews 5:12-14 speaks of this expectation and states *"By this time you ought to be teachers..."* The passage continues to speak of our growth transition from a lack of understanding to a point of discerning knowledge. The overall expectation is clear: not only are we to progress from gaining understanding to sharing our understanding. The word "ought" indicates expectation but also ability. Also consider 2 Peter 3:18, *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"*.

Spiritual growth is necessary. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12, tells us to *"Increase more and more"*. We cannot rest on our past successes. Revelation 2:1-5 provides us the example of the Ephesians had done many good things but they had left them behind. Jesus in His teaching of the Vine and the branches declares the necessity of growth (John 15:1-8). We are to grow in the Vine [In Christ] and a lack of growth is failure (v. 2). We must *work* at a *pattern* of continuous production for the Lord (v.2, 8). Remember that we will not produce the same results every day; remember a *partial* step forward is always better than moving *backwards*.

Lacking Spiritual Growth

There are all sorts of things said to excuse spiritual weakness. All too often everyone and everything is blamed except "self". Everyone from the brethren, to family, even God is blamed. Everything from stress, to lack of time, and even the word of God is blamed.

Let's face the truth. If we are spiritually weak--only we are to blame. We probably have become "dull of hearing" (Hebrews 5:11). Like those mentioned we may have deteriorated to this state. They had "become" dull of hearing. We may have become distracted (Luke 8:14 (choked by thorns). What are thorns? Thorns can be: work, family matters, and entertainment, etc.

If we are spiritually weak we cannot be what we need to be—we need to be teachers (Hebrews 5:12) willing and able to teaching family, friends, and others. We need to be doing our share in this congregation (Ephesians 4:16 "effective working by which every part does its share").

What we Need to Grow

We need proper nutrition. 1 Peter 2:1-2 admonishes us to *"desire the word and grow thereby"*. The Bible is the nutrition that feeds our souls and strengthens our resolve—we need to go back to the book (Psalm 1:1-6). Reading, meditating and applying the word causes grow and our *"progress will be evident to all"*.

We need "Son Light". Use the tools that Christ has designed to enable us. Prayer: through prayer we grow close to the Father (1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Peter 5:7). Also, study: we learn, know and grow in the will of God when we *"Abide in His word"* (John 8:31-32). All this knowledge needs to be put to practice: 2 John 9 tells us to *"Abide in the doctrine of Christ"*—this brings the words to living application.

We also need some occasional pruning. Every good fruit tree needs attention (Ephesians 5:15). Pruning is essential for production (John 15:2; Acts 8:22). Cut back the thorns and concentrate—re-evaluate your priorities. Matthew 6:33 *"Seek first the kingdom of God"*.

Conclusion:

Spiritual growth is necessary and expected. Spiritual growth is part of a spiritual life. Are you a Christian? Do you have spiritual life with the promise of life eternal? If not, you can today.

Growing for the Lord is a life-long process. Do not put it off another day, begin right now. Spiritual growth and true success is waiting. The gospel message is yours to obey, will you? ~tss