

SANCTIFICATION

How we grow in Christ



THE POTTER

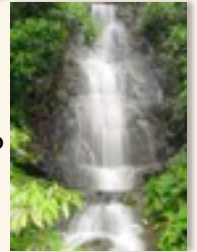
MOLDS THE CLAY

THE SPIRIT MOLDS US DAILY

MAGNA LACUS TEMPUS
12:00 NOON

God's Promise

The greatest truth
Of Sanctification is
God has promised to
mold and make His
children all the days
of their lives.



In the book of Ezekiel, God
outlines what He will do in His
children under the New Covenant.

25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. - Ezekiel 36:25-27

Notice all the things that God says He will do. "I will... I will..." God has promised that growing in godliness and walking in His commands is something He will do in us.

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. - Ezekiel 36:27

GROWING IN CHRIST IS ACTIVE

God has promised to continually sanctify us throughout our lives. However, we don't just sit back and relax, waiting for God to do His thing. He is the source of all our spiritual growth, yet we are accountable to abide in Him, facilitating the growth process.

What does this growing in Christ look like? It is an ever increasing manifestation of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. For instance, our growing in love and patience means that we express these virtues, which God produces in us, more often and for longer periods of time. Our growing in faith means that we are exercising faith in God more often and

for longer periods of time. Growing in grace is our making use of God's grace more often and for longer periods of time.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. - John 15:1-2

The vine produces everything the branches simply stay hooked to it. We grow by abiding in Christ.



Methods of Abiding: Spiritual Disciplines

There are many ways that believers place themselves in a position to grow in their spiritual lives. These methods DO NOT produce growth. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that they cause people to grow. What they do is allow us to deepen our communion with God, who does produce growth in us. They allow us to abide in Christ.



Prayer - Communicating with God by word or thought. The discipline of prayer is not simply walking through you day throwing up sentence prayers. It is taking time is secret to commune and speak with God. This takes focus and discipline.

Bible Study - Digging deep into the text of Scripture. We fail in our duty to study God's word not because it is difficult to understand, not because it is dull and boring, but because it takes work!

Scripture Meditation - Filling our minds with God's truth. Deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture.

Scripture Memorization - When Scripture is stored in the mind, it is available for the Holy Spirit to take and bring to your attention when you need it most.



Worship (corporate and individual) - To ascribe the proper worth to God, to magnify His worthiness of praise, or better, to approach and address God as He is worthy. Focusing and responding to God.

Fasting - Voluntary abstinence from food (or anything) for the purpose of strengthening prayer, seeking God's guidance, expressing grief, seeking deliverance, expressing repentance, or expressing concern for God's work.

Solitude - Getting alone and away from the bustle of life to listen to God.

Service - Any sacrificial form of work toward God or man that is for the purpose of glorifying God, edifying the saints, or making God known to the lost.

Stewardship - Making provision of one's possessions for the work and glory of God. This involves an active decision on the part of the individual to mark off a particular percentage for the work of God.



Like anything else, developing and maturing in our Christian life takes hard work and commitment. No one gets in shape sitting on the couch, and no one gets strong spiritually without making time to commune with God through the spiritual disciplines.

Growth Takes Work!

It's just that simple. Many people are simply sitting around waiting to grow in their relationship with the Lord. Of course, those who refuse to develop that relationship will be disciplined, but growth cannot come if we are not abiding in Christ. The only way to do that is to spend time with Him, developing our understanding and relationship. It takes work, there is no doubt about it. It also takes faith, because sometimes growth comes at a slow pace. However, God promises to draw near to us as we draw near to Him (James 4:8). We must trust His Word.



YOU WANT TO GROW...PROVE IT!

The Vine and the Branches



I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. **As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me you can do nothing.** John 15:1-5



STOP! Lets be honest...

Do you REALLY want to grow in Christ, becoming more holy, stronger, more faithful to Him? Do you really? Do you believe that growing in Him is the answer for peace, joy, and obedience?

Prove it! Have you struggled with God in prayer? Have you taken time to study God's Word (even if it is hard to understand?) Have you fasted and prayed that God would give you freedom from a besetting sin? We can do absolutely nothing outside of Christ, yet we often think Christ is going to grow us as we sit comfortably in our favorite chair, or busily go about our lives.

Its simple. You either want to grow in Christ, or you don't. Growing requires work. So, do you want it?

ABIDING IN CHRIST

Determination

Jacob's Example

Genesis 32:26

Jacob wrestled with a stranger in Genesis 32. Jacob could see nothing. The assailant was silent and nameless. But Jacob, no pushover himself, rose mightily to the occasion. And that long night (six or seven hours?) became one of burning sweat, dripping hair and beard, and slipping appendages. There came brief periods of labored breathing, and then renewed fury, gouging, pulling, butting. And then more rage—and more pain and thirst—and smothering frustration.

Later we find out that Jacob was wrestling with God. As the day broke, the stranger told Jacob to let him go and Jacob say something that should characterize our attitude toward spiritual growth. He said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." (Gen. 32:26).



"I must take care above all that I cultivate communion with Christ, for though that can never be the basis of my peace - mark that - yet it is the channel of it.

Charles H. Spurgeon



This is how we approach the Spiritual disciplines. This is how we approach our relationship with God. I will not let you go...I will not stop reading, studying, memorizing...I will not stop praying...I will not stop fasting...I will not stop seeking your face until you bless me. Make me like Christ...grow me in godliness...give me the strength to honor your name.

If I'm Already Saved, Why work at it?

Salvation is forever. There is no losing it, so what motivation is there to work at growing and maturing in Christ. I already have the prize don't I?



Motives For Growth

1. Desire to please God and express love for Him (John 14:15)
2. The need to keep a clear conscience before God (Rom. 13:5; 1 Tim. 1:5)
3. Desire to be effectively used for the Kingdom (2 Tim. 2:20-21)
4. Desire to see unbelievers saved through observing our lives (1 Peter 3:1-2; 15-16)
5. Desire to receive present blessings from God on our lives and ministries (1 Peter 3:9-12)
6. Desire to avoid God's displeasure and discipline on our lives (Eph. 4:30; Heb 12:6)
7. Desire to seek greater heavenly reward (Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 19:17-19)
8. Desire for a deeper walk with God (Matt. 5:8; John 14:21)
9. Desire that angels will glorify God for our obedience (1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Peter 1:12)
10. Desire for peace and joy in our lives (Phil. 4:9; Heb. 12:1-2)
11. Desire to do what God commands, simply because his commands are right, and we delight in doing what is right (Phil. 4:8; Ps. 40:8)
12. The more we grow in Christlikeness, the more we personally experience the joy and peace that are fruits of the Spirit.



God places the desire to grow in Christ in every believer's heart. The desire does not come from a longing to prove ourselves for salvation, but a desire to serve the author of our salvation.



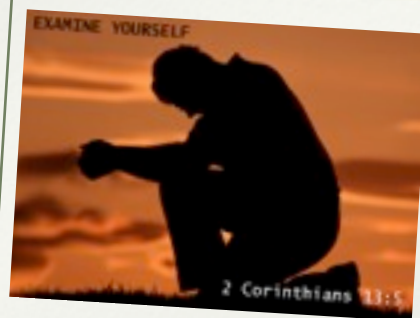
The only evidence that the biblical promises of salvation are personally yours is the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit, growing and developing in your life. 1 John 2:3-6

THE EVIDENCE OF OUR SALVATION

Examine Yourself

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves...1 Corinthians 13:5

It is a necessary practice for the Christian to continually examine and assess himself by God's word. This does not mean salvation can never be assured. It simply means that salvation and the Christian life are to never be taken for granted. They are precious commodities that must be revered with awe and fear. Human nature easily takes familiar things for granted and they lose their wonder as



they become commonplace. The only evidence of justification we have is the observable movement toward godliness wrought in us by the Spirit.

Study Questions

1. As you look back over your Christian life, can you see a pattern of definite growth in sanctification?

2. What are some things that you used to delight in which no longer interest you?

3. What are some things that you used to have no interest in that now hold great interest for you?

4. As you have grown to greater maturity and holiness in the Christian life, have you become more conscious of the weight of sin that remains in your heart?

5. How would it affect your life if you thought more about the fact that the Holy Spirit is continually at work in you to increase your sanctification?

6. Since the Holy Spirit works in our sanctification, should we simply lay back and let Him do His work? Why or why not?

7. What are some things that we do to place ourselves in a position to grow in our Christian life?

8. By looking at your habits in the Spiritual disciplines, do you really *want* to grow in Christ?

