

## **GROW** (part 3)

11.11.2018

### **Review**

(October 14)

Anything healthy is growing and changing. Growth means change. If you're not changing, you're not growing.

The path of spiritual growth is a path of lifelong learning.

- *M. Scott Peck*

There is no growth without change, no change without pain, so therefore there is no growth without pain. - Sam Chand

Are you interested enough in personal growth that you're willing to face the pain that changing produces?

Are you changing from week to week, month by month, year by year? If not, why not?

Are you challenging yourself to improve?

Are you asking God to challenge you and change you? (Psalm 139:23-24).

Psalms 139:23-24 (NLT)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. (24) Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

### **Natural growth and spiritual growth parallel each other.**

1. Babyhood - lots of dependence, few habits
2. Childhood - exploring independence, forming habits
3. Adulthood - independent - well-formed habits

### **Four Characteristics of Babies that apply to Spiritual Growth** (October 21)

1. Babies need a lot of help.
2. Babies are innocent. They have no past.
3. Babies are hungry and curious.
4. Babies are self-centered.

### **Today: The childhood stage of spiritual growth**

I want to mention again that you can grow faster spiritually than you can naturally. It's all according to how much effort you put in to denying your flesh, and putting the Word first place in your life.

Spiritual growth has a lot to do with the choices we make daily.

**Four characteristics of spiritual children:** (The purpose of this is so we can locate ourselves.)

## **1. Distraction**

Ephesians 4:14

That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Children are easily distracted. They mean well. But they start something and, before you know it, the project is abandoned, and they are looking at something or are involved in something else!

Spiritual children are similar. They have a hard time committing and staying with something. They will start, but lack follow-through.

They can also be distracted by wrong teaching.

Ephesians 4:14 (NLT)

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

Natural children need guidance. So do spiritual kids:

2 Timothy 4:1-4 (NLT)

I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when He comes to set up his Kingdom: (2) Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. (3) For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. (4) They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

3 main distractions:

The world:

That which cools my affection towards God.

-Smith Wigglesworth

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. (16) For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. (17) And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

The Flesh:

Romans 8:5 (AMPC)

For those who are according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit.

The devil:

1 Peter 5:8 (AMPC)

Be well balanced (temperate, sober of mind), be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour.

## **2. Talkativeness**

Spiritual children want to be recognized. They talk a lot.

Proverbs 10:19 (NKJV)

In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Proverbs 10:19 (GW)

Sin is unavoidable when there is much talk, but whoever seals his lips is wise.

Proverbs 10:19 (NLT)

Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut.

Ecclesiastes 5:3 (NKJV)

For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice is known by his many words.

People who talk A LOT are often challenged in 3 areas\*:

1. Evil speaking—talking about and discussing the faults and failures of people not present
2. Vain speaking—always talking about themselves: what I've done, what I'm going to do, where I've been
3. Foolish speaking—jesting, joking, and things that are unprofitable

\*Hagin, Kenneth E. Growing Up Spiritually (Kindle Locations 298-305). Faith Library Publications. Kindle Edition.

### **3. Need for recognition**

Children want others to know what they have/know/can do!

Look at my toy. Look at my truck. Look at my play kitchen. Look at what I have. Look at what I can do.

Watch me daddy!

Spiritual children want to be seen by others. They want others to see and hear of their accomplishments.

They talk a lot about themselves.

They do things to attract attention.

Philippians 2:5-11 (MSG)

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. (6) He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. (7) Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! (8) Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion. (9) Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, (10) so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, (11) and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

### **4. Self-will**

When children don't get their way, they get really upset and act out: pouting, crying, throwing a fit. They demonstrate anger, defensiveness, and hurt.

As we grow, we learn to listen to others, and we learn to value and weigh their opinions.

It is a big grow-up day when we truly value others, let them talk, listen to their opinions, and sometimes, do it their way and not ours!

Philippians 2:3-4 (GW)

Don't act out of selfish ambition or be conceited. Instead, humbly think of others as being better than yourselves. 4 Don't be concerned only about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 (AMPC)

Do nothing from factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends] or prompted by conceit and empty arrogance. Instead, in the true spirit of humility (lowliness of mind) let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves].

4 Let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:1-4 (J.B. Phillips)

Now if your experience of Christ's encouragement and love means anything to you, if you have known something of the fellowship of His Spirit, and all that it means in kindness and deep sympathy, do make my best hope for you come true! Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of each other than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but should learn to see things from other people's point of view.

### **Action Points:**

1. Am I changing week after week? Am I stuck? Do I really want to grow by changing?
2. Do I follow through on my commitments? If not, why not?
3. Do I talk excessively? Am I learning to listen more than I talk?
4. Do I have a need to be seen and heard? Do I showcase my accomplishments, abilities, possessions? If so, why?
5. Do I value others and their opinions, and do I at times allow others to have their way?