

GROW (part 5)

11.25.2018

Subtitle: Seven things that enhance your personal spiritual growth

Review

Ephesians 4:12-13 (NLT)

Their (the ministry offices') responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. (13) This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

We've been talking about what spiritual growth looks like, and have looked at the parallel between physical growth and spiritual growth.

In this series we have looked at the babyhood, childhood, and adult stages of growth.

(October 14)

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

(October 21)

Four characteristics of spiritual babies:

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.

(November 11)

Four characteristics of spiritual children:

1. Distraction
2. Talkativeness
3. Need for recognition
4. Self-will

(November 18)

Five characteristics of spiritual adults:

1. Natural things take second place to spiritual things.
2. Unaffected by criticism or compliments.
3. Ability to see God in every life event.
4. Respect for and submission to spiritual leaders.

5. Ability to love people you don't like.

Today:

Seven things that enhance your personal spiritual growth:

1. The Bible must be at the center of your personal spiritual growth.

E.W. Kenyon

Our attitude toward the Word determines the place that God holds in our daily life.

1 Peter 2:1-2 (NKJV)

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, (2) as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God inspired His Word and designed it to do four things for you.

1. Doctrine - shows you the way. Challenges your current lifestyle.
2. Reproof - Knocks you down with conviction so that you know you need change.
3. Correction - Picks you up, dusts you off, and places you on a forward path.
4. Instruction in righteousness - Gives you a plan to change.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 (AMPC) For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.

John 6:63 (NKJV)

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (AMPC)

And we also [especially] thank God continually for this, that when you received the message of God [which you heard] from us, you welcomed it not as the word of [mere] men, but as it truly is, the Word of God, which is effectually at work in you who believe [exercising its superhuman power in those who adhere to and trust in and rely on it].

James 1:22-25 (NLT)

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

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2. Develop a consistent Bible reading plan.

Psalms 90:12 (KJV)

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Remember that plans aid motivation and keep you interested. The mind needs motivation.

Read variety.

When you read the Bible, remember to slow down, and ask the questions:

Is there something that I need to personally change?

Is there something I need to stop doing?

Is there something I need to start doing?

Do I need to change my motives?

Is there a sin I need to repent of?

3. Challenge your relationships. Be willing to change the ones that hold you back.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (AMPC)

Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character.

I had to make friendship changes before I could move forward. (I even had to let an old girlfriend go who came back to see me).

4. Develop a method for reading a variety of books and taking notes.

Underline, highlight, and copy/paste into files.

I started this in 1983.

Look back over the highlights, the underlined material, and the notes.

5. Look for ways to practice what you read.

Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of what you have read.

John 14:26 (NLT)

But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

Sometimes, you may seem to get nothing out of what you read (tired, preoccupied, in a hurry), but if you will read it, the Holy Spirit will at some point use it.

You will always find life application for what you read, if you will be honest with yourself throughout the day.

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For instance:

If I read Philippians 4:8,

Philippians 4:8 (KJV)

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Then I will look for ways to practice it by monitoring my thoughtlife throughout the day.

If I read Ephesians 4:29,
Ephesians 4:29 (NLT)

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

Then, I will make an effort to watch my words with every person I talk to at home, at work, among friends, and even my self talk.

6. Ask the Holy Spirit to nudge you to change your habits.

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NKJV)

That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Remember that it takes 3 to 4 weeks to begin to change a habit.

You change a habit by catching it every time you do it. It's after-the-fact at first. Just keep catching it. Then, you will eventually catch yourself while in the middle of performing the habit. And lastly, you will catch yourself before you perform the habit.

Change means growth. There is simply NO growth without change!

7. Activate God's power for living godly.

Acts 1:8 (NLT)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Power:

=Dunamis: Inherent power, capable of reproducing itself, like a dynamo

We get three English words from Dunamis: Dynamic, Dynamite, Dynamo.

Dynamic:

pertaining to or characterized by energy or effective action; vigorously active or forceful;
energetic: the dynamic president of the firm

Dynamite:

any person or thing having a spectacular effect

Dynamo:

an electric generator, especially for direct current

This power enhances our ability to walk with God, and empowers us to bless others in a more full way.

1984 - Holy Spirit to me - You have a spiritual dynamo in you...

A dynamo doesn't work without an energy source. Your spiritual dynamo is fueled by the Word and by time with God in prayer.

I noticed an immediate change in my lifestyle when I committed to fueling my spiritual nature with the Word and prayer...

Action Points:

1. Is the place that God holds in my life reflected in my Bible reading?
2. Do I consciously put God's Word into practice in my life?
3. Do I consistently read books that aid my spiritual life?
4. Have I asked God by the Holy Spirit to highlight areas of life where I need to change?
5. Have I activated my personal spiritual power plant by reading and praying to start my day?