

Growing As a Christian

Introduction

1. Spiritual growth is:
 - a. Comanded. (2 Pet. 3:18)
 - b. Accomplished by:
 - 1) The word of God. (Acts 20:32; 1 Pet. 2:1-2; Matt. 5:6; Col. 3:16)
 - 2) Experience. (Heb. 5:12-14)
 - 3) Association with other Christians. (Heb. 10:24-25)
2. In this lesson, we will:
 - a. See the directions in which a Christian is to grow.
 - b. Examine some of the measurements of growth.
 - c. Present some practical suggestions for growth.

I. Directions of Growth

A. Upwardly.

1. Toward Christ. (Eph. 4:15)
2. It involves developing one's character so as to be like Christ. (1 Pet. 2:21-22; Phil. 2:5)
3. One is to develop Christ's virtues so as to be like Him when He comes again.

B. Inwardly.

1. Consider 2 Timothy 2:15.
2. One has the obligation to know Christ and His will in order to apply it to self. (2 Pet. 3:18; 1:5-11)
3. One is to develop the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23)
4. One is to know and acknowledge his own weaknesses to avoid compromise.

C. Outwardly.

1. This involves attitudes and relationships to others.
2. Family: love and provide. (Eph. 5:23; Titus 2:3-4; 1 Tim. 5:8)
3. Friends: be a true friend. (Prov. 17:17; 18:24)
4. Brethren: be tenderly affectionate. (1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:14-18)
5. Enemies: love. (Matt. 5:43-48)
6. The lost: seek to save. (Matt. 28:18-20; 5:14-16)

D. Downwardly.

1. One is to be rooted in love. (Eph. 3:14-19)
2. One is to be rooted in Christ. (Col. 2:6-7)

II. Some Measurements of Growth

- A. Knowledge of God's word. (Heb. 5:11-14)
- B. Attitudes: what you say and think of other people. (Jas. 1:26; 1 Thes. 5:12-13)
- C. Discipline: the use of time, acceptance of responsibility, etc. (2 Pet. 1:6; Gal. 5:23)
- D. Deportment: behavior toward others. (Col. 4:5)
 - 1. Those in authority. (Heb. 13:17; Eph. 6:5-8)
 - 2. Those under you. (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1)
- E. Interests: a desire to be better informed. (Col. 3:1-2; Phil. 4:8)
- F. What you outgrow.
 - 1. Service out of fear and/or duty. (1 John 4:17-19)
 - 2. Inability and doubt. (Eph. 4:11-16)
 - 3. Childishness and/or worldliness. (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
- G. Fruit-bearing.
 - 1. The fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23)
 - 2. Doing good works. (Eph. 2:10)
- H. The power to resist temptation. (Jas. 4:7; Eph. 6:13)
- I. A deeper, selfless love.
 - 1. For God and Christ. (Matt. 22:37)
 - 2. For others: family, brethren, etc. (Phil. 2:3-4)
- J. The beauty of Christ's character. (Gal. 2:20)

III. Some Practical Suggestions for Growth

- A. Read and study the Bible every day.
- B. Memorize a Bible verse weekly.
- C. Pray every day.
- D. Have regular family devotionals.
- E. Attend worship services and Bible classes of the church faithfully.
- F. Do a kind deed at least once a week.
- G. Attend gospel meetings.
- H. Attend special classes.

Conclusion

1. In order to gain heaven, you must grow and mature as a Christian.
2. Your faith must increase.
3. Wishing will not get the job done.
4. You must make a diligent effort and fervently pray in order to grow and develop as you should.