



Spiritual Growth

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Introduction to Spiritual Growth

Spiritual Growth is the direction we want to go once we have given our life to Christ through the salvation experience. When we believe in our heart and confess with our mouth, we've invited the Holy Spirit into our life, and we are now a new creation in Christ.

Growing spiritually is a life-long journey and the word of God assures us that ³ *By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know Him, the one who called us to Himself by means of His marvelous glory and excellence.* ⁴ *And because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.* ⁵ *In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.* ⁸ *The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Peter 1:3-8

The objective of this course is to teach key principles in:

- ❖ Understanding spiritual growth
- ❖ The results of continual spiritual growth
- ❖ Practical ways to grow spiritually



Understanding Spiritual Growth

Spiritual Growth Develops through Intimacy with God

“Intimacy is one of the greatest delights and blessings that two people in a close relationship can have. The capacity to draw close to another person and share your lives in such a way that you know each other through and through is part of the image of God that we bear as emotional and relational human beings. Now let me ask you a question. If God designed us with a deep need and deep desire for intimacy in our human relationships, and if intimacy reflects God’s image within us, what do you suppose God is seeking in His relationship with us?” (Tony Evans *Kingdom Disciples* “A Deep Intimacy” p. 118)

Trust is at the heart of intimacy and what God is primarily seeking is a relationship where our faith and reliance upon Him increases. The more we trust God, the more intimate we come to know Him. Scripture shows us that God is intimate with those who trust Him, ⁸ *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.* James 4:8

We draw near to God through faith in Christ, who alone gives us access to the Father.
²⁵ *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.* Hebrew 7:25

Building an intimate relationship with God involves desire, effort and discipline. We are also to trust the work of the Holy Spirit who is transforming us into the likeness of Christ. ¹⁶ *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.* 2 Corinthians 4:16



Understanding Spiritual Growth

Aspects of Developing Greater and Ongoing Intimacy with God.

1. Commit to obedience no matter the cost or the difficulty of the journey.
¹⁵ If you love me, keep my commands. John 14:15
2. Engage intensely with God's word.
*¹ My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,
² for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.* Proverbs 3:1-2
3. Spend time pursuing God.
¹⁷ I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. Proverbs 8:17
4. Saturate God with worship, taking advantage of every opportunity to sing love songs to and about Him. Singing helps to open the heart in a way that is sometimes difficult using just words.
¹ Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant and praise is becoming. Psalm 147:1



Understanding Spiritual Growth

Aspects of Developing Greater and Ongoing Intimacy with God.

5. Become active in the Body of Christ through a bible-believing, teaching, and spirit filled church.

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24–25

⁷ Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. Hebrews 13:7

6. Seek out and submit to the Holy Spirit for personal healing of hurts, offenses, and unforgiveness; refuse to live in self-condemnation or in bitterness.

²⁸ Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:25

7. Minister to others; learn how to serve and to how to love.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16



Spiritual Growth

Is Only through Jesus Christ

Spiritual growth can only occur in a person who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her Savior.

¹ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:16–17

² Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Thus, we first must make sure we possess a true spiritual life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² The one who has the Son has life. The one who doesn't have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5:11–12

Is a Lifelong Journey

Growing spiritually is not an overnight process, as with any journey, there are going to be bumps along the way...we may even get lost but we will never be abandoned.

Temptations and troubles can sometimes cause us to believe that God has abandoned us. They test and temper our faith.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our momentary light affliction^{is} is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. ¹⁸ So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18



Spiritual Growth

Is a Partnership

The uniqueness of the Holy Spirit is His presence within us. Jesus said before he ascended to heaven that the Holy Spirit would come and dwell within us as a believer. With that, He empowers us to live victoriously for the cause of Christ and glory of the Father. It is the Holy Spirit who produces growth in our life, yet we must submit to His leading, becoming more loving, more joyful, more kind, more self-controlled, etc. It is then we can rest assure that spiritual growth is genuinely occurring.

We must consciously choose, through faith, to rely upon the Holy Spirit; allowing Him to fill, control, and guide.

¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,
Ephesians 5:18

We must rely upon Him to guide in thought, word, and deed.

¹¹In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:11–14

We must walk in the Holy Spirit

¹⁶So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Galatians 5:16–17; 24–26



Spiritual Growth

Is Lifelong Learning

Reading and applying God's Word to our life, being properly taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained is not optional.

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Every believer is required to grow spiritually.

¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. Hebrews 5:11

Is a Work In Progress

The results of spiritual growth are demonstrated through a continual process of:

- Increasing knowledge and understanding of God's Word.
- Increasing in faith and trust in God.
- Increasing in the practice of Christ-like qualities.
- Decreasing in frequency and severity of sin.

This process manifests the acts of the flesh less and produce the fruit of the Spirit more.

¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:19-23



Spiritual Growth

Is Personal

God forms each one of us lovingly and intentionally, with purpose, planning, and design that led up to our existence. When we become a Christian, God's creative work in our lives begins again in a different way. God works uniquely with each of us, some grow rapidly, while others grow slowly but steadily. God continually brings about change in us throughout life. Our focus should not be on comparing ourselves with others, but rather comparing with God's word. The Scriptures are the mirror to show us what we are like spiritually and to shine light on the areas that need to experience and learn spiritual growth.

²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:23–25



Practical Application

The Bible is our Tool

Through the Word of God, we have been provided everything needed to live for Christ. The bible is the true and vital source for every believer to thrive.

¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. Colossians 3:16

Provides the Basis for Our Faith

¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Romans 10:17

Illuminates Our Way

The Word of God opens our eyes to see truth and in the midst of affliction it guides and comforts

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:105

Arms Us for Spiritual Warfare

When we absorb, arm, and adhere to God's Word, we are enabled and empowered to stand against the tricks and schemes of the devil.

¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:16-17



Practical Application

How to Learn From God's Word

Hearing Luke 8:18

18 "So pay attention to how you hear. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what they think they understand will be taken away from them."

Reading Acts 17:11

11 And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.

Studying 2 Timothy 2:15

15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Meditating Joshua 1:8

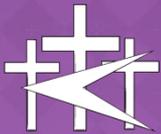
8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Practicing James 1:22

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Sharing 1 Peter 3:15

15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,



Practical Application

Establishing Study Time

Plan & Set Realistic Goals

- ❖ Be intentional – set a definite time.
- ❖ Find a quiet place – it is useful to setup a regular location.
- ❖ Have paper and pencil.
- ❖ Have a right heart attitude – come to this time seeking to hear from God.
- ❖ Read a few verses daily.

Quiet Time Guide

Pray	Ask God to help you understand what you are reading and to speak to you through His word.
Read	Take time reading through each verse.
Think	What does the verse say, mean, and what is God saying? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a command to obey? Is there something God wants me to know?
Write	Copy a verse or part of a verse that is special to you or the one you liked best.
Pray	Thank God for what He has done and for what you learned from your time in His word.



Practical Application

Memorizing Scripture

Psalm 119:11

11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

- ❖ Read the verse several times and think about what it says.
- ❖ Repeat the verse out loud several times.
- ❖ Write the verse on a 3X5 card to carry with you.
- ❖ Learn the verse by dividing it into parts.
- ❖ Review the verse many times throughout the day.
- ❖ Do what the verse says.
- ❖ Use the verse when talking with a friend or when witnessing.



Facilitator/O-Quiz

Please send an email with quiz answers, questions or comments to:

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Questions

- ◉ When does spiritual growth begin?
- ◉ Describe the partnership for spiritual growth.
- ◉ Name 3 of the 7 aspects of developing intimacy with God, give a brief description of each.
- ◉ As our tool, what are the 3 benefits we gain from the Bible?
- ◉ Provide the scripture that teaches on sharing God's word.
- ◉ Explain "fruit of the spirit" as it relates to spiritual growth, provide scripture.

