

Spiritual Growth / Growing in Grace

1. We are told to have or be in "fellowship" with God. The NT Greek word for 'fellowship', can also be translated 'participation' or 'partnership'. (1 Cor 1:9, Phil 2:1, 1 John 1:5-10)
2. Consider this statement: Our faith is based upon knowing the truth about God.
3. S.E. Pierce wrote, "What is not apprehended by the mind cannot profit the heart."
4. What is a disciple? (Matt 28:19, Acts 11:26) A learner and follower of Christ. (Luke 14:26-33)
5. Eph 4: 11-16, (v 12,13 purpose of this church). One sentence!
 - a. What is it that causes growth of the body?
 - b. Who causes the growth? (John 5:1-6; Col 2:19)
6. Definitions
 - a. Spiritual Growth - A lifelong journey that occurs as you read and apply God's word to your life.
 - b. Grace – CS (Why Grace Changes Everything, pg 23) "God's unmerited favor." And "...God giving to me something I cannot obtain on my own. ...being accepted by God even though I do not deserve it, even though I am not worthy of it."
 - i. We can't grow in the grace God has given to us, but we can grow ("to be a product of something, to develop from something else" or "to move from one condition to another.") in our capability to offer our grace to others.
 - c. Application - acts of the flesh decreasing - fruit of the Spirit increasing. (Gal 5:16-23) - Walking in the Spirit
 - i. V 22 describes what spiritual growth looks like, 9 visible attributes.
 - ii. Walking in the Spirit is a conscious decision to allow God to fill you, control you, and guide you. (Rom 6:11-14)
7. 2 Peter 3:17-18
8. Believers are all part of God's family, but we are all at different stages of our growth.
9. Three stages of Spiritual Growth identified - 1 John 2:12-15
 - a. As children – basic awareness of God + our need to grow.
 - b. As young men – know sound doctrine, but don't have experience in the word and in life.
 - c. As fathers – deeper knowledge of God in His fullness.
 - d. If we are His disciples, we ought to grow in grace and progress as Christians. Everything advances by gradual growth and orderly progress, time is needed for development.
10. Contrasted with a look at spiritual *immaturity*. Heb 5:11-14
11. There are 5 evidences of our Spiritual Growth (suitable to our season)
 - a. A deeper love for God's Word. (Ps 1:2, Ps 119:16,35,97, Josh 1:8)
 - b. Obedience to God's Word. (1 John 2:3-5, John 14:21)
 - c. A strong doctrinal foundation. (1 John 2:12-14, 1 Tim 4:13)
 - d. An expanding faith. (2 Thess 1:3, Ps 31:23, 1 Cor 4:2)
 - e. A greater love for others. (John 13:34,35, Matt 5:44, 1 Cor 13:3, Phil 1:9, 1 Thess 4:9,10, Rom 12:10; 15:7,)
12. AN IMPORTANT CAUTION: Christian growth DOES NOT advance us in God's favor! We can't increase or decrease in favor with God, nor can anything we do or fail to do alter our standing in Christ.
 - a. We are complete in Christ (Col 2:10)
 - b. Perfected forever (Heb 10:14)