

## CHRISTIANS NEED TO GROW

**Ephesians 4:14-15; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:3** (Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** It is sad to see a child that never developed, never grew through the different stages of growth and has remained physically and mentally as a small child. There are some adults who are adult size physically but their minds never developed and are still child-like. Everything needs to grow, people, business, science, industry, just to mention a few. Christians also need to grow, they need to grow in knowledge, zeal, faith, good works and into a Christ-like character. However, as there are always hindrances to growth, the Christian also faces things which can cause him/her not to grow spiritually and to be Christ-like.

### I. HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

#### 1. There is the lack of effort:

- Growing in Christ is not something automatic.
- A Christian can still act like a baby even after many years of being a Christian - Hebrews 5:13; 1 Corinthians 3:1-2
- Growth requires effort, but some Christians are spiritually lazy and will simply follow the course of least resistance and will remain forever "babies."

#### 2. There is discouragement:

- Many Christians make a good beginning, but get discouraged and stop trying to grow spiritually.
- There are many reasons why some Christians slow down growing such as church troubles, personal problems, lack of encouragement from others, etc.
- Paul is a good example of "keeping on keeping on:"
  - Not very many have had the problems he had - 2 Corinthians 11:24-29
  - Problems did not cause Paul to lose heart/become discouraged - 2 Corinthians 4:8-9
  - Paul kept remembering his labor was not in vain - 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1
- Paul encourages every Christian to not grow weary in doing good - Galatians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58

#### 3. There is the law of "disuse" o-

- When used a knife stays bright but when unsued, it becomes rusty and dull.
- When Christians do not use what knowledge, ability and opportunity they have, they become stale.
- Unless a Christian is earnest in wanting to grow spiritually, he/she will drift away - Hebrews 2:1

#### 4. There is the law of interference:

- Nothing grows very well when crowded.
- Spiritual growth will be hindered if one allows others to crowd out his/her spiritual life:
  - Christians in business may become too busy to attend to God's business.
  - Some may get so occupied in housekeeping, etc., that there is little time for God left.
  - Some may get so busy with school activities that prayer, worship, good works and Bible study get crowded out.
  - Even preachers might so tied down with meetings, church duties that they don't have enough time to spend alone with God.
- Jesus warned about the danger of interference - Mark 4:18-19

## II. HOW TO CONTINUE GROWING SPIRITUALLY:

1. A Christian needs to become active in the work of the congregation:
  - Start immediately:
    - do not delay for hindrances will crop up
    - start with something one is able to handle
    - the most humble service can be a source of joy to someone - Psalm 84:10; John 13:12-17
  - Offer one's services to the church leaders:
    - church leaders will be glad to find work for one to do in line with one's ability.
    - church leaders hesitate to call for help as they may not be sure if anybody is willing to help.
    - say what Isaiah said: "Here am I! Send me" - Isaiah 6:8
  - Look for something that needs to be done:
    - the best worker is one who can see things to be done and does them without having to be asked.
  - Don't criticize, show how things need to be done by doing it yourself.
2. A Christian needs to start a program of regular private devotions:
  - Spend time each day alone with God in prayer, Bible study and singing praises.
    - Such time spent will supply the spiritual nourishment needed for spiritual growth.
  - Many Christians don't grow because they try to exist on a "spiritual starvation diet."
3. A Christian needs to be involved in an informal Bible study group:
  - Meet regularly (weekly) with other Christians in an informal setting and study the Bible together.
    - This will provide opportunity for mutual sharing and encouragement which will lead to more knowledge and spiritual growth.
4. A Christian needs to become involved in leading people to the Lord:
  - One doesn't have to be a teacher or preacher or deacon to witness, every Christian can do it and should - John 1:40-46
  - Christians involved in leading others to Christ hardly ever stop growing in Christ.
5. A Christian needs to examine him/herself frequently, if not constantly:
  - Examine one's self in one's relation to Jesus - 2 Corinthians 13:5
  - Ask one's self questions:
    - Do I understand the Bible better than a year ago?
    - Am I as interested in Jesus now as I was when I was baptized?
    - Have I helped someone else become a Christian?
    - Am I really enjoying my life as a Christian?
    - Is my life improving and becoming more like Jesus' life?
    - Do I set a good example for other Christians?
    - Am I growing in Bible study, prayer and worship?

## CONCLUSION:

1. Many Christians are just religious enough to be miserable, how is YOUR life?
2. Every Christian needs to be growing in the Lord - are YOU?
3. The Christian life is intended to be filled with love, joy, peace and countless other wonderful things.
4. No Christian has ever reached the limit of his/her spiritual growth capacity - so KEEP ON GROWING!

