

TO GROW SPIRITUALLY IS A CHOICE

Titus 3:5-8 (Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: The believer in Jesus is saved, redeemed, and renewed for in being baptized the believer undergoes a "washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit and then is to go on and "walk in newness of life.." (Romans 6:4). Just as a person needs to grow a healthy physical life, so the Christian needs to grow a healthy spiritual life but sadly, not all Christians grow very much spiritually. Countless have been Christians for years but have little change or improvement to show and are often less useful to the Lord than when they first became Christians. Failing to grow spiritually is like becoming like a stagnant pool of water. If one does not make that choice to grow spiritually and stay with it, there will be no spiritual growth.

I. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS COMMANDED BY GOD

1. The Great Commission commands believers to grow. (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - Jesus commanded His apostles to make more disciples:
 - Baptizing them
 - Teaching them to observe all things He commanded.
 - Disciples are to be obedient learners, constantly growing as they learn from the Lord.
2. Growing spiritually is clearly outlined in the letters of Peter and others.
 - Peter ends his second letter with a command to grow. (2 Peter 3:18)
 - Christians are to grow in grace.
 - Christians are to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Peter ends his second letter describing how Christians are to grow. (2 Peter 1:5-8)
 - By adding to one's faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, etc.
 - By abounding in such graces, being fruitful which indicates growth.
 - Christians who do not grow are sternly rebuked. (Hebrews 5:12-6:1)

II. SPIRITUAL GROWTH REQUIRES STEADY EFFORT

1. Spiritual growth is unlike growing physically.
 - People grow physically (unless there is some serious bodily disorder) automatically.
 - No effort is exerted in growing physically and maturity happens whether one wants it or not.
 - Growing older does not mean one is also growing spiritually.
2. Spiritual growth requires a concentrated effort.
 - Jesus said it requires even labor - (John 6:27)
 - Paul said that it requires work, constantly pressing on - (Philippians 2:12; 3:13-14)
 - Peter said that it requires diligence - (2 Peter 1:5, 10)
 - Regular exercise benefits spiritual growth as well as physical growth.
 - Spiritual growth is not easy and one must work at it, every day.

III. GOD HELPS THE CHRISTIAN GROW SPIRITUALLY

1. No Christian is alone in his/her effort to grow spiritually.
 - While the Christian is busy "working out his/her salvation", God is at work in that Christian. (Philippians 2:12-13)

- Just as God helped one become a believer in His Son, Jesus, He continues to work in the believer. (Titus 3:5)
 - God wants to complete the work in the believer He started when the believer was saved. (Philippians 1:6)
2. The Christian is given strength by God in his/her efforts to grow spiritually.
- God strengthens the believer by the Holy Spirit in that believer's life - (Ephesians 3:16)
 - God empowers the believer with unbelievable power within the believer - (Ephesians 3:20)
 - God provides the protection for the believer to stand strong in God's power. (Ephesians 6:10-11)
 - There is just no excuse for the Christian not to grow spiritual for God, Himself strengthens the believer. (Philippians 4:13)
 - With God as the believer's helper, there is no limit to one's spiritual growth.

IV. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS BLESSED BY GOD

1. Blessings in spiritual growth begin in the believer's life right here and now.
- As one grows in grace - (2 Peter 3:18)
 - One experiences the blessings of the grace in which he/she stands.
 - Peace with God and rejoicing in hope. (Romans 5:1-2)
 - As one grows in the knowledge of Jesus Christ - (2 Peter 3:18)
 - There is the experience of blessings adding virtue, knowledge, self-control, etc.
 - There is a victorious life, in which one does not stumble and fall. (2 Peter 1:10)
 - Jesus spoke of the "abundant life" and in growing spiritually, one experiences that life promised.
2. Blessings in spiritual growth continues on into the life to come.
- Believers will experience an "abundant entrance" into God's everlasting kingdom. (2 Peter 1:11)
 - The believer's works will also be there. (Revelation 14:13)
 - None of the labors of the believer will be in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

CONCLUSION:

1. Not all growth is good: some hearts grow dull, some grow cold, some grow weary in doing good, some grow corrupt, some grow worse and worse, like cancerous cells.
2. Spiritual growth is: commanded by God, requires steady effort, is assisted by God and is blessed by God.
3. What kind of growth is taking place in YOUR spiritual life?
4. ***"Come unto Me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light..." Matthew 11:28-30***

