

# Growing (Part 3)

Sunday, October 18, 2020

## Series Texts:

### 2 Peter 1:5-11

**5** For this very reason, **make every effort to add to your faith** goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; **6** and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; **7** and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. **8** For if you **possess these qualities in increasing measure**, they will keep you from being **ineffective and unproductive** in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** But whoever does not have them is **nearsighted and blind, forgetting** that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

**10** Therefore, my brothers and sisters, **make every effort** to confirm your calling and election. For if you **do these things**, you will never stumble, **11** and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### Ephesians 4:11-13

**11** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12 to equip** his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be **built up 13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and **become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**

### Hebrews 5:12-6:1

**12** In 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! **13** Anyone who lives on **milk**, being **still an infant**, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. **14** But **solid food** is for **the mature**, who by **constant use** have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

**6** Therefore let us **move beyond** the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to **maturity**, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,

- There is an Expectation of Growth
- There is a Presumption by many that Growth will happen automatically
- But these scriptures teach us that there is also a **PRESCRIPTION** for growth

1. Are we GROWING in the areas of **Trust, Contentment and Thankfulness**?
2. Are we GROWING in our **Hatred of Sin and our Pursuit of Righteousness, Holiness, and Godliness**?

Today we want to ask ourselves two more growth related questions. Questions that are related to the growth we talked about last week; but which dig a little deeper into the practical application of how we can obtain that growth

### 3. Are we GROWING in our **Knowledge of, Understanding of and Obedience to the Word of God?**

Remember our scripture from Hebrews last week about the milk and the meat. Stephen was reminding me this week of another way of looking at this verse which focuses on the part of the verse that talks about being an infant and needing milk. This can be likened to a baby who is dependent upon someone else to feed it. However, as that baby grows, they progressively learn to feed themselves.

Our experience with Gods word needs to start with the basics

- 66 books
- Written by about 40 different men and women over a period of about 1600 years
- It is Gods inspired revelation of himself to mankind and his plan of salvation

#### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

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

#### **2 Peter 1:20-21**

**20** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. **21** For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, **spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

- THERE ARE TWO DIVISIONS (Old and New Testaments)
- There are 39 books in the Old Testament
  - Law - 5
  - History - 12
  - Poetry - 5
  - Major Prophets -5
  - Minor Prophets - 12

- There are 27 books in the New Testament
  - Gospels - 4
  - History - 1
  - Pauline Epistles - 14
  - General Epistles - 7
  - Prophecy - 1
  
- ✓ We can **READ** the Word of God for Breadth
- ✓ We can **STUDY** the Word of God for Depth
- ✓ We can be **TAUGHT** the Word of God for Greater Understanding
- ✓ We can **DISCUSS** the Word of God for Interactive Insight
- ✓ We can **MEMORIZE** the Word of God to Hide it in our hearts
- ✓ We can **MEDITATE** on the Word of God allowing it to Permeate our Spirits
- ✓ We can **OBEY** the Word of God in order to Realize its power in our lives

**James 1:22-25**

<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> 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. )

What could I do this week to grow in the area of my KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING and OBEDIENCE to the Word of God?

4. Are we GROWING in our Awareness, Study and Practice of the other Spiritual Disciplines?

**Romans 12:1-2**

**12** Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

*When Christians speak of “spiritual disciplines” they usually mean regular practices that benefit our lives and produce fruit. Much like the discipline of daily exercise or reading will produce benefits in our lives.*

- From <<https://www.biblestudytools.com/blogs/mark-altrogge/5-spiritual-disciplines-that-will-change-your-life-the-first-is-key.html>>

*The spiritual disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are habits of devotion, habits of experiential Christianity that have been practiced by God's people since biblical times. I describe them several ways...*

*First, the Bible prescribes both personal and interpersonal spiritual disciplines. There are those spiritual disciplines that we practice alone and those that we practice with other Christians...*

*A second characteristic of spiritual disciplines is that they are activities. They are not attitudes. Disciplines are practices...*

*A third descriptor of the spiritual disciplines is that we are talking about things that are practices taught or modeled in the Bible...*

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

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

*And the last characteristic of the spiritual disciplines is that they are means and not ends. The end, that is, the purpose of practicing the disciplines is godliness...*

- From <<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-are-spiritual-disciplines>>

### **1 Timothy 4:7 (NASB)**

**7** But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;

## **Spiritual Disciplines**

Dallas Willard, in *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, and Richard Foster, in *Celebration of Discipline*, have compiled a list of spiritual disciplines and practices they believe were modeled in the life of Christ. These disciplines are typically organized into two categories: **the disciplines of abstinence (or "letting go") and the disciplines of activity.**

## Disciplines of Letting Go

**These practices allow us to relinquish something in order to gain something new.** We abstain from “busy-ness” in ministry, family life, and work. We stop talking for a while to hear from God. We give up buying another material possession to experience God more fully. [First Peter 2:11](#) warns us to “**abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.**” Identify what is keeping you from experiencing greater strength and perspective. Do you talk too much? Are possessions controlling you? Are you too worried about what others think? Choose disciplines that will help you become more dependent on God.

***Solitude—Spending time alone to be with God.*** Find a quiet place to be alone with God for a period of time. Use the Bible as a source of companionship with God. Listen to Him. Remain alone and still.

***Silence—Removing noisy distractions to hear from God.*** Find a quiet place away from noise to hear from God. Write your thoughts and impressions as God directs your heart. Silence can occur even in the midst of noise and distraction. But you must focus your attention on your soul. This could mean talking less or talking only when necessary. And it could mean turning off the radio and the TV.

***Fasting—Skipping a meal(s) to find greater nourishment from God.*** Choose a period of time to go without food. Drink water and, if necessary, take vitamin supplements. Feel the pain of having an empty stomach and depend on God to fill you with His grace.

***Frugality—Learning to live with less money and still meet your basic needs.*** Before buying something new, choose to go without or pick a less expensive alternative that will serve your basic needs. Live a simple, focused life.

***Chastity—***Voluntarily choosing to abstain from sexual pleasures for a time (those pleasures that are deemed morally right in the bond of marriage) to find higher fulfillment in God. Decide together as a couple to set aside time to go without sexual pleasures in order to experience a deeper relationship with God in prayer.

***Secrecy—Avoiding self-promotion, practice serving God without others knowing.*** Give in secret. Serve “behind the scenes” in a ministry that you are assured few will know about.

***Sacrifice—Giving of our resources beyond what seems reasonable to remind us of our dependence on Christ.*** Choose to give your time or finances to the Lord beyond what you normally would.

### **Disciplines of Activity**

Dallas Willard writes, “The disciplines of abstinence must be counter-balanced and supplemented by disciplines of engagement (activity).” It’s choosing to participate in activities that nurture our souls and strengthen us for the race ahead.

***Study—Spending time reading the Scriptures and meditating on its meaning and importance to our lives.*** We are nourished by the Word because it is our source of spiritual strength. Choose a time and a place to feed from the Word of God regularly.

***Worship—Offering praise and adoration to God.*** His praise should continually be on our lips and in our thoughts. Read psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs, or sing to the Lord daily using a praise tape. Keep praise ever before you as you think of God’s mighty deeds in your life.

***Prayer—Talking to and listening to God about your relationship with Him and about the concerns of others.*** Find time to pray to God without the distraction of people or things. Combine your prayer time with meditation on the Scriptures in order to focus on Christ.

***Fellowship—Mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ.*** Meet regularly with other Christians to find ways to minister to others. Encourage one another.

***Confession—Regularly confess your sins to the Lord and other trusted individuals.*** As often as you are aware of sin in your life, confess it to the Lord and to those you may have offended.

***Submission—Humbling yourself before God and others while seeking accountability in relationships.*** Find faithful brothers or sisters in Christ who can lovingly hold you accountable for your actions and growth in Christ.

- **Bill Donahue, *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996), pp. 51-52**

I would like to learn more about and begin to practice the Spiritual Discipline of?