

The Nature of Spiritual Growth

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Prayer and Devotion Zoom Fellowship / Prayer; Devotion; Spiritual Growth; Mature / 1 Thessalonians 4:1

Scripture uses a number of images to emphasize that believers are meant to grow in their faith, understanding, holiness and commitment. It also provides advice on how this may be achieved. Having given spiritual life to his people, God expects them to grow to maturity.

Notes

Prayer and Devotion done on Zoom Online Video Conference

Spiritual Growth

Scripture uses a number of images to emphasize that

Believers are meant to grow in their

- faith
- understanding
- holiness
- commitment

It also provides advice on how this may be achieved.

Nature of Spiritual Growth

Having given spiritual life to his people, God expects them to grow to maturity.

Means of Spiritual Growth

God has provided various means by which believers may grow spiritually.

God Desires the Spiritual Growth of His People

Mt 5:48; Heb 6:1 See also 2Co 13:9-11; Eph 1:4; 2:10; 3:17-19; Php 3:12; 1Th 4:1,7; 2Ti 1:9

Matthew 5:48 ESV

⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Hebrews 6:1 ESV

¹ Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Christlikeness is the Goal of Spiritual Growth

Ro 8:29 See also Eph 4:13-15; Php 2:5; 1Jn 3:2-3

Ephesians 4:13–15 ESV

¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Philippians 2:5 ESV

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

1 John 3:2–3 ESV

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Aspects of Spiritual Growth

Growth in Grace

2Pe 3:18 See also Pr 4:18; 1Pe 2:1-3

2 Peter 3:18 ESV

¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

1 Peter 2:1–3 ESV

¹ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Growth in Faith

2Th 1:3 See also 2Co 10:15

2 Thessalonians 1:3 ESV

³ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

2 Corinthians 10:15 ESV

¹⁵ We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged,

Growth in Love

1Th 3:12 See also Ro 5:5; 1Co 14:1; Php 1:9; 1Th 4:9-10; Heb 10:24; 1Jn 4:7-21; 5:1-3

1 Thessalonians 3:12 ESV

¹² and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,

Hebrews 10:24 ESV

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

Growth in Understanding

Ps 119:27; 1Co 14:20 See also Ps 119:97-99; Ro 12:2; 16:19; 1Co 13:11; Eph 1:17-19; Php 1:9-10; Col 1:9; Heb 5:14

Psalms 119:27 ESV

²⁷ Make me understand the way of your precepts,

and I will meditate on your wondrous works.

1 Corinthians 14:20 ESV

²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

Romans 12:2 ESV

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 16:19 ESV

¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

1 Corinthians 13:11 ESV

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

Growth in Holiness

2Co 7:1 See also Eph 5:25-26; Heb 2:11; 10:10-14; 12:14; 13:12; 1Pe 1:15-16

2 Corinthians 7:1 ESV

¹ Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

Hebrews 2:11 ESV

¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

Hebrews 12:14 ESV

¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

1 Peter 1:15–16 ESV

¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Growth in Fruitfulness

Jn 15:16 See also Mt 13:23 pp Mk 4:20 pp Lk 8:15; Jn 15:2,8; Php 1:11; Col 1:10

John 15:16 ESV

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Luke 8:15 *ESV*

¹⁵ As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

John 15:8 *ESV*

⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Philippians 1:11 *ESV*

¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Colossians 1:10 *ESV*

¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Growth in Contentment

Php 4:11-12 See also 1Ti 6:6; Heb 13:5

Philippians 4:11–12 *ESV*

¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

1 Timothy 6:6 *ESV*

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain,

Hebrews 13:5 *ESV*

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”