

Steps to Spiritual Growth

Philippians 1:9-11

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Shepherd's Community Church

Love

(2 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:7, 19, 20; 3:14; 1 Corinthians 13:13, 6; 16:14; Romans 5:5; John 15:12; Psalm 119:130)

Discernment

(Luke 12:56; 14:19; 10:38-42; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

Integrity

(Hebrews 4:12; 2 Pet 3:1-2; Acts 24:16; Proverbs 28:13)

Fruitfulness

(Psalm 1:2-3; Proverbs 11:30; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:8-10; John 15:5)

Glory

(John 15:8; Ephesians 1:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)

We don't hear much about spiritual growth these days. Many Christians in our society have been diverted by various teachings that promise power, spiritual energy, and success without the process of growth into spiritual maturity. They look for dramatic experiences, climactic turning points, instant solutions to their spiritual problems; but real, lasting victory doesn't come through those means. God's design is that we be seasoned to maturity through a continual process of growth.

This contemporary de-emphasis of spiritual growth has reaped a bitter harvest. Millions of professing Christians suffer from arrested development. Churches are filled with people who are spiritually immature, undiscerning, weak, and fragile. Spiritual underdevelopment is the rule, no longer an exception. Thousands—perhaps millions—are now addicted to “therapy,” evidently preferring the dependency of a counseling relationship to the rigors of true discipleship and growth in grace.

This is a severe threat, and is a sign that something is terribly wrong, for growth is one of the essential signs of life in both the physical and the spiritual realms. Where there is no growth, no true life exists. Where is no spiritual growth, there is good reason to question whether spiritual life exists.

Be sure of this: God intends every Christian to grow into spiritual maturity. His Word commands us, “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). That's our obligation—and our privilege. Each day we can progress in our spiritual life toward a fuller, higher, personal, experiential knowledge of God and Christ. We can go past His Word to the God who wrote it and know Him more personally.

Spiritual growth is simply matching up our practice with our position. Our position in Christ is majestic. God has “raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). Our position could not be more lofty. Positionally, we are perfect. Now God wants us to reflect that position in our progressive experience. That's what growth is all about.

Spiritual growth is critical. Call it what you will: pursuing righteousness (1 Timothy 6:11); being transformed (Romans 12:2), perfecting holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1), pressing toward the goal (Philippians 3:14), or being built up in the faith (Colossians 2:7). The goal is the same for every Christian: to be transformed into [the Lord's] image. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Spiritual growth is not mystical, sentimental, devotional, psychological, or the result of clever secrets. It comes through understanding and practicing the principles that are given in the Word of God.

John MacArthur, *The Keys to Spiritual Growth: Unlocking the Riches of God*, 13-16