**Growing in Christ Jesus leads to a Mature Child of God:
What it takes…**

**When we talk about what it TAKES to grow as a human being into an mature adult,,,, we can point to a number of things Example: a Baby needs a well-balanced diet and waited on night and day during the growing process. Education is involved, technical and professional training for those who want to truly succeed. All through a child’s life to adult constant learning, education is a must. The more the better….**

**When it comes to Christians growing spiritually, it is not always an ongoing event, desire, hunger to reach spiritual maturity. Just as it takes hard work to be successful in life physically, it also takes hard work by the use of Bible study, patience, and diligent practice of good works, spiritually.**

Introduction**: First and Ten**

***Spiritual growth the concept and its importance.***

Physical and mental growth aims toward Growth in development in both accounts. Biblical growth is taught in Spiritual Terms, the first step is being **"born again"(John 3:3-7)** as a child of God. Starting out as an immature baby in need of spiritual guidance. He or she can obtain this spiritual nourishment by either being self-taught,(reading the word of God daily) or by a spiritual mentor. As time passes, he should develop the qualities or abilities which the Bible says Christlikeness as the goal and model for spiritual maturity. **(Eph 4:13-15 See also Col 2:6-7; Heb 12:2)**.

As a young Christian (not in age but in spiritual growth) begins his/hers walk hand and hand with the Lord through this veil and evil world (Gal. 3:1) a prayer life is essential. Believers are to pray for grace: **Heb 4:16 See also Ps 25:16; Hos 14:1-2; Col 1:9; 4:12. WHY?** To build a relationship with the Lord one on one. Everyone needs someone to talk to, to ask for help and advice, comfort why not our Lord?

**We** can talk about how the lack of spiritual growth affects us, we can even point them out. However the word of God does a much better job at doing just that. When I first began to study God’s word with my wife. We both rose early in the morning before I went to work and again when I came home from work to study and read God’s word. We were both being exposed for the first time to God’s unvarnished word head on, face to face and with a believing heart and a will to be lead and taught by whatever God wanted from us. If we found out that speaking wrong of someone was wrong than we tried to stop doing that. Drinking, using God’s name in vain, using trash and corrupt language, staying away from places that we had no business being in, gambling, smoking, watching dirty movies, and on and on. This is what we found while reading God’s word and we bent to the will of God. We allowed God to truly work in our lives. We used a book that had a bible reading a day and it skipped back and forth from the New Testament to the Old. It takes you through the Bible in three years. We got it done a great deal faster than that because we found that our hunger for learning became addictive. Our addiction grew as we grew in grace and knowledge of God’s word.

**Spiritual understanding**

**Col 2:2 See also Ro 15:14; 1Co 2:6; 14:20; Eph 1:17-18; Heb 5:12-6:1**

**You** see when you bend to God’s will, wow, how wonderful is His correcting ways. Our hearts were open to God’s love and a daily **need** to feed on His word. The more we read the more we wanted to read and learn. Then came the Questions which lead us to explore all kinds of Bible helps and resources. As our library grew so did our spiritual growth. Our hearts were comforted with a real assurance of God’s grace. Our old friendships soon evaporated because now we were true Christians loving the Bible instead of the world and things in the world. Those things no longer mattered to us. They no longer fit in at all in our new world and we soon left old friends…… **we “left them behind, as well as the old and made new Christian friends and what a blessing it has been.” We have never LOOKED BACK…….**Our eyes, ears, discernment was opened with the spiritual revelation that we no longer belonged to this world but to God and His Kingdom instead.. We were new creatures in Christ Jesus. We did in fact put off our old bodies and put on our new bodies, made in the image of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**. (Eph. 6)**

**What are some of the potential problems that result when members fail to grow: some go back to the world, others cause strife because of ignorance or become stumblingblocks because of irregular attendance, worldliness, or indifference. They become lost in the world, with having desires of the flesh instead of the desire of the word of God.**

***I pray that the following study will help you understand how to get into the word and begin to grow spiritually.***

Just as a baby needs mike and baby food to grow physically, so do Christians need God words to feed on in order to grow spiritually. When members don't grow, it is because they lack one or more of the following.

**I. You must have A DESIRE TO GROW**

1. **We Will Never Grow Unless We Want to Grow**

We continue to use the baby analogy because it paints a good picture and we can relate to it.

When a baby doesn’t get it nourishment it cries….

When a baby doesn’t get enough sleep, it cries….

When a baby doesn’t get all of the attention, it cries….

A baby is all about me, me, me, I, I, I,……

A baby needs someone to wait on it day and night

A baby can’t do for itself…..

We must feed it, wash it, cloth it, keep it warm, happy, and healthy..

***Likewise, in spiritual matters, Christians need just about the same things in order to grow spiritually***

**1 Peter 2:2 - Desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.** 

A baby has a natural desire to want to eat and so on…. A Christian that’s truly Born Again has a desire also to feed. However, a Christian must take it on themselves to feed their own desires with the word of God. Just as parents supplies all the needs for a baby, God also supplies our needs but we must seek them ourselves.

1 Peter 2:21 - Jesus set an example for us, and we should follow in His steps. We should ask ourselves, "Don't I want to grow up to be spiritually strong like Jesus?"

1. **We Must Continue the Desire to Grow.**

**Discernment of God’s will and changed behavior**

**Col 1:9-1 See also Ro 12:2; 1Co 3:1-3; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:22-23; Php 1:9-11; 2Th 1:3**

When we come upon a verse of scripture that goes against our old nature we must apply that verse to our lives and begin to change. We must want to walk worthy of the Lord, ***be not*** conformed to this world, proving the will of God is good. With each correction to our flesh while applying God’s word, we grow little by little. Some more than others but the measure of our growth should be apparent, without bragging about it or boasting to others about it. Others may have greater problems getting rid of certain fleshly desires than you so we need to be mindful of that. **(Romans 15:1; Gal.6:1-2)**

When we are tempted we must understand it is the devils work that wants to separate us from our Lord. With prayer and an attitude of not siding and falling into deep, deep temptation which becomes overwhelming, reject it with, **“get thee behind me Satan.” Also (Col 4:12 See also Eph 4:14; 2Pe 3:17-18)**

**[Continue; first and ten on the 35 yard line]** 

***Some members who once wanted to grow, may lose that desire.***

In order for a fire to burn you must feed it fuel. If not it will burn out. Same with our desire to study and grow in the word of the Lord. If we are not feeding our desires the flame of desire will soon go out making very hard to rekindle. And in some cases that fire never gets rekindled. We must also surround ourselves with a ton of kindling for easy access, that being bible helps, and items that interest our hearts so we can apply it God’s word.

They may start off on fire for the Lord, but lose their zeal. They develop a **spirit of indifference** or negligence.

Others develop a level of maturity and stagnate. They are satisfied, thinking no more growth is needed.

***The word teaches that daily feeding is a must for continued growth.***

Philippians 3:12-14 - Even Paul, as mature as he was, did not consider himself to have achieved perfection (maturity) such that he could cease striving to improve. He **forgot past achievements (and failures)** and pressed on to greater accomplishments.

Matthew 26:31-35 - Peter thought he had reached a level where he would never deny Jesus. But that very night he denied Him three times.

1 Corinthians 10:12 - Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. Christians never reach the point we are so mature that we cannot fall.

One of the main reasons Christians do not grow is that they do not see the **NEED** for growing. They have **no desire** to work and serve to the full extent of their ability. When people develop a burning hunger and thirst to work for the Lord, then they will develop the other steps they need to grow.

**Do you have that burning desire to accomplish more for the Lord? Have you set specific goals of work you want to accomplish for God, improvements to make, new levels to reach?**

**II. NOURISHMENT**

**A. We Need Spiritual Food from God's Word.**

1 Peter 2:2 - As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

2 Peter 3:18 - Grow in the **grace and KNOWLEDGE** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Matthew 4:4 - Man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**

[Eph. 4:15; Matt. 5:6]

**B. To Get This Nourishment, We Must Study the Bible and Attend a true Bible Believing King James Church. (No Compromise)**

***Scriptures show the need for regular nourishment.***

Hebrews 5:11-14 - Christians were rebuked for not growing as they should have, because they had not studied. Time and again members fall away or are spiritual midgets because they do not eat properly.

Acts 17:11 - Bereans were able to determine whether truth was taught because they searched the Scriptures DAILY. We need REGULAR nourishment.

Psalm 1:1,2 - Meditate on God's word day and night. Children and adults need physical food regularly, and get very upset without it. But are we content to go for days at a time without feeding on God's word? [119:47,48,95-99; Josh 1:8]

 **It’s forth and 29 for a first.** 

**Sometimes we have set backs, not like Obama but we have them none the less. It’s how we handle those sets backs that separate us from babies, adolescents’, teens, and self-professing Christians. Sometimes we do have to punt in order to regroup, develop a better offense and learn how to deal when we are being blitzed. We must have a plan… Not a reaction but pro-action.**

**We must also learn from our mistakes. When we watch our home team play and see them not adjusting to in game problems but continue to make the same stupid plays over and over again with no gain….we get very frustrated. They seem to be stuck in stupid…. With no real game time adjustments…. And they wind up LOSING!! Well growing as a Christian is the same thing.. We must know how to adjust when temptations came our way, when we are hit with serious sets backs in our lives. If we haven’t prepared for such occurrences then we will fail. We will lose our joy, hope and even begin to doubt our salvation.**

**It’s a fake punt……..YEA!!!!! First Down !!!!!! First and 10 on the devils 39 yard line.**

**III. EXERCISE AND PRACTICE**

**A. Exercise and Practice Are Essential to Physical Development and developing a game plan.**

***Athletes & musicians know they must exercise and practice to improve. It’s also like playing Chess. If you never study it and try to improve your paly, you’ll remain a three hour per-move chess player and still lose making the same stupid mistakes.***

Developing skills requires continual repetition: playing a song, throwing pitches, shooting baskets playing a ton of Chess games.

Athletes run, lift weights, and practice hour after hour in order to grow strong and develop endurance.

Illustration: A man once had an apartment next to a professional cello player. He thought it must be exciting to play in an orchestra. Then he listened as the man practiced the scales, exercises, and songs endlessly day after day. No one understands what it takes to become an accomplished musician. It’s takes years and plenty of hard work.

***Children practice skills over and over to learn them.***

Children learning to walk try again and again. They are proud to learn a new word, then they use it till they drive you crazy! They want to play the same thing over and over: play the same tape recording, put the clothes on a doll.

Parents encourage children to repeat what they must learn: drill math facts, spelling, reading, and piano. They get tired, but we encourage them because that's how they learn.

"Practice makes perfect" - or at least it promotes improvement. So why not apply this same work attitude towards God’s personal letter to us called the word of God.

1. **Exercise and Practice Are Essential to Spiritual Growth.**

**I have a daily personal approach to my Bible study. After many years at doing this, I still have to motivate myself at times because I’m still trapped in this sinful flesh. I try to make it as interesting as I can. I try to pick times that I can take advantage of while still in some respect study God’s word. You don’t always have to have a Bible, you can become very creative by using other objects and sources to study God’s word. I use my morning bathroom event to squeeze in some Bible study time. I have been doing this for over 40 years now. I have a few small cards with Bible verses on them and try to memories some scripture verses while ………. Siting …..do you realize how many Bible verse you can memories like this? Doing this day after day, week after week, year after year, and WOW !!! With no strain whatsoever……**

**How about when you are in the doctor’s office, instead of reading some stupid magazine, how about some books on say, Bible Prophecy, Learning Greek, Commentaries, Bible subjects and topics of all kinds. I have been doing this for over 40 years and sometimes I have waited in the doctor’s office for over three hours. But I not only do this for myself, I also bring some reading or study material when I take my wife as well. This works for the dentist as well. Just this past week I have to take my wife to the Doctors, and our wait was over 3 hours. I read an entire book on Muslims including marking the interesting points as I went along. As I have said, I have been doing this for over 40 years. Just think about that for a moment, do you realize how many books I have read over that period of time? Without any pain or discomfort. I have made it a nature thing in my life now. You’ll never see me in any waiting office without some kind of reading material pertaining to the Bible.**

***Scripture reading can become habitual …….like smoking, drinking, eating…..swearing, etc., etc.***

***What do you do before going to work?***

***How about getting up ½ hour earlier so you can have quiet time with God and his word. Begin to make this a daily ritual, Morning Prayer with your Saviour. Don’t forget you bathroom scripture cards.***

You start off by using this time for your daily prayer, and limited study. Read a verse or two and see how you can apply it to your life. Wow, what a way to start your day…..On your way to work….what do you listen to? How about Bible tapes of some sort. Or perhaps a Bible radio station with teachings. Also when you go on a trip, you can bring alone some tapes to play.

 Make cutting the grass fun and bible study time.

Did you know the very same listing equipment some use to listen to Rock, Love songs, Instrumental music can be used to study the Bible? So use that equipment to pop in a tape on Salvation, Spiritual discernment, or any Bible topic you may be interested in. And once a week or once every two weeks you have yet another system to feed on God’s word. Wow, Bro. Jim, I never thought of this before…… I know.

 by the way, for those who don’t like to read that much, you can use your listening device while waiting in the Doctor’s office, Dentist, Tax Audit, Car Wash, for some have your nails done, and on and on…..


 

Waiting in long lines, even when you go vote.

Hebrews 5:14 - Those who are of full age, by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Growth requires exercise as well as nourishment.

1 Timothy 4:7 - Exercise yourself toward godliness.

Like children, athletes, and musicians, we must work again and again at applying Bible principles to become effective in the Lord's work. Using the above tips can add to your growth without any effort at all. Just use these down times as a positive instead of dreading the wait time.

**IV. TIME AND PATIENCE**

By definition, growth requires TIME. It is progress and development as time passes. Several important lessons follow:

**A. Don't Expect to Reach Your Goal in one set of downs.**

If you are consistent and have a great game plan and are well schooled on defending what you believe. Then you’ll need not to make haste and foolish decisions but instead become steady and consistent. Get in a habit of doing these things and other things as well and your well on your way.

Being in hurry and trying to learn and read the Bible say in a 6 month period of time will become none productive and soon you’ll slow down and even stop altogether. The reason is because you put too much pressure on yourself. Slow and easy staying consistent is far better way than burning yourself out and accomplishing nothing. Four yards and a cloud of dust !!!!!

***Likewise spiritually, do not expect maturity overnight.***

James 1:4 - To become perfect and mature (entire), lacking nothing, we must have patience.

Before you go onto the **Fo**otball field and do battle, or Baseball, Soccer, Ice Hockey, Polo, etc., etc… you must spent hours upon hours perfecting your craft, plays, skills, timing, endurance, ……… They say it takes about 5 years for a NFL QB to develop from College to the pro-level. Some Mayor League pictures may take as long also. This can be applied to many sports, and it’s a good analogy to help see why studying God’s word also takes years of study. As a matter of fact we will be studying God’s word in all eternity as well. So develop the plan and execute it.

**B. Don't Become Discouraged by Mistakes and Rebukes.**

***Many Christians make some serious mistakes when they quickly try and share what they learn in a dogmatic way only to be corrected by a much wiser and knowledgeable student of the Bible. This can be a learning experience if done in the correct way. But far too often a new Christian can get crushed when they are told they are wrong. Once again this too is another opportunity to grow and learn and mature. Don’t get discouraged remember your brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus are still growing as well and sometimes how they respond to you may seem harsh and short. Don’t let this get in your way of spiritual growth.***

Another baby example: How often does a child fall while learning to walk? They fall again and again, gathering bumps and bruises. They spill their milk, don't hold their spoon properly, fall off their bikes, and come to bat in the bottom of the ninth with the winning run in scoring position and strike out. Get over it, not all can come out being the winner or be 100% great at what you do right off the bat.

Parents are continually correcting, instructing, and punishing, till we almost feel sorry for the kids. Growing up is tough!

If kids are going to become mature, they have to keep going in spite of mistakes and rebukes. And someday they will look back on their own childish mistakes and just smile. A child corrected according to the Bible will grow up a much stronger person in Character, and the way of life skills. Same can be applied to your Bible and spiritual growth.

**Maturity is to be the aim of the Christian**

Php 3:13-15 See also Lk 8:14 a reason for spiritual immaturity; 2Co 7:1; 13:11; 1Ti 6:11

The process of maturity

**God causes spiritual growth**

Php 1:6 See also Gal 3:3; Heb 10:14

**Possessing gifts of ministry**

Eph 4:11-13 See also Ro 1:11

**Being equipped by the word of God**

2Ti 3:16-17 See also Ro 15:4; 1Pe 2:2; 1Jn 2:5

***Likewise, new converts and those not well versed in the Bible will make many mistakes and must often be told they are wrong. But in some cases we treat new Christians or immature Christians as the plague, once they are saved, we let them on their own. I have seen this time and time again. It’s like allowing a young child to fend for themselves all alone. Now most of you would agree with me on that, yet when it comes to new converts Church after Church does exactly that. They let them grow on their own.***

***So if you are reading this and find you have been left all alone. Just follow the steps I laid out for you above. And for yet even getter study you can check out my Bible study system. It’s all good….***

***Remember this :***

Proverbs 29:1 - A person is destroyed, not simply because he errs, but because he becomes stubborn when he is rebuked and will not repent. What is needed is repentance and patience to learn to do right.

For Farther Study:

**Immaturity**

The result of insufficient growth, or a failure to develop to one’s full potential.

**Marks of physical immaturity**

Pride

2Sa 15:1-4

Rejection of wise counsel

Dt 21:18; 1Ki 12:8

Tactlessness

1Ki 12:13-14

Lack of respect

2Ki 2:23; Job 19:18

Weakness of character

2Ch 13:7

Foolishness

Pr 22:15

Lack of understanding

Dt 1:39; Pr 1:4; Jnh 4:11; 1Co 13:11

Lack of self-control

Tit 2:6

Disgrace

Pr 29:15

Waste

Lk 15:13

**Spiritual immaturity is to be avoided**

1Co 14:20; Heb 6:1 See also 2Co 13:9, 11 The word “perfection” may be understood in terms of maturity; Eph 4:13, 15; Col 1:28; 4:12; Jas 1:4; 2Pe 3:18

**Marks of spiritual immaturity**

Backsliding

Mt 13:20-21 pp Mk 4:16-17 pp Lk 8:13 Jesus Christ to his disciples. See also Gal 4:8-9

An over-sensitive conscience

Ro 14:2

Lack of spiritual understanding

1Co 3:1-2 See also Mt 11:16-19 pp Lk 7:31-35; Heb 5:11-14

Divisiveness

1Co 3:3

Instability

Eph 4:14 See also Jas 1:6-7

Pride

1Ti 3:6 The church overseer must be a spiritually mature person. See also 1Pe 5:5

**Remedies for immaturity**

Confession of sin

Pr 28:13 See also Jer 3:13-22; Jas 5:16; 1Jn 1:9

Discipline

Pr 3:11-12 See also Ps 119:67-71; 1Pe 4:1-2; Rev 3:19

Prayer and meditation

Ps 119:97-99 See also Ps 119:27; Jn 17:17-19; Ro 8:26; Heb 4:16; Jas 1:25

**Are you ready for some Football?**

**You are first on offense, what is your game plan?**

**Bro. Jim Pro. 3:5-6**