

HOW DOES SPIRITUAL GROWTH HAPPEN

Grow Up, Part 2

November 7th, 2010

Spiritual growth is something God does – we must cooperate with Him
1 Corinthians 3:6 (NIV) “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”

When Jesus first tried to explain this, no one got it - many still don't
John 16:7 (NIV) “[Jesus said] ‘But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go away. When I go away, I will send the Helper [Holy Spirit] to you. If I do not go away, the Helper will not come.’”
John 14:26 (NIV) “[Jesus said] ‘But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.’”

The same Spirit who had guided & empowered Jesus for ministry now resided within
the disciples

If I'm a genuine Christ follower, I have available within me the same Holy Spirit
who instructed, guided, and empowered Jesus and the early disciples
Romans 8:9 (NLT) “And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to Him [Christ] at all.”

That means my spiritual growth isn't so much the result of my hard work; instead,
it's the direct result of my willingness to listen and yield to the Spirit's inner promptings as He
works to guide and change me from the inside out

Our sin puts static on our line with God and hinders us from hearing clearly the
Spirit's leading and restricts the free flow of His power

To free up God's Spirit to work in our lives we must be willing to let go of our own agenda
and allow Him the freedom to genuinely change us from the inside out

Yielding To The Spirit Of God & Letting Him Change Us From The Inside Out

1. Remove as much “static” as possible

Obey what I already know brings more light & less static

Trusts God to bring spiritual insight into our lives when we're ready

2. Openness to the help and insight of other believers

By checking in with others, I have the ability to pick up what I missed on my
own & to discover and correct what I might have misunderstood

The power of collaboration can bring clarity when God's leading seems
unclear or hard to decipher

3. Am I willing to let God change me? This is a heart matter

We understand that God is supposed to provide us with the power to do the right thing, but we've short-changed His promise to also provide us with the desire and motivation to do the right thing
Philippians 2:12-13 (NIV/NLT) "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him."

We need to change our prayer from "Lord, help me do it" to "Lord help me want to do it"

We short-circuit the inside-out work of the Spirit when we're willing to let God provide us the power, but we don't want Him messing with our attitudes, feelings + desires

Any time my desire fails to match up with His, it doesn't just call for self-disciplined obedience – but for a spiritual realignment

Prayer of Permission: "Lord, I know what You want me to do, but I don't want to do it. I'm giving You full permission to change the way I feel and think about it."

Too often we try to obey on the outside while disobeying on the inside

When we do this, the result is the same – it makes doing the right thing way tougher than it ought to be, and it brings the inside-out work of the Spirit to a screeching halt

The greatest sign of God's work in our life is not a pattern of self-denial & dig-deep obedience – it's wanting what God wants – then going out and doing it

Matthew 26:42 (NIV) "He [Jesus] went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done.'"

If spiritual growth wasn't an inside-out job, only the few, the strong, and the mighty would have a chance

But thanks to the gift of the Spirit of God, there's hope for the rest of us

My Next Step Today Is...

- I am willing to let go of my agenda & allow God the freedom to genuinely change me from the inside out
- I will pray the "Prayer of Permission" when I don't want to do what God wants
- I will memorize Philippians 2:12-13
- I/we/my family will participate in Faith in Action on Sunday, November 14th from 1 to 4 pm