

What is spiritual growth?

(And how are you growing spiritually?)

<https://www.incpu.org/what-is-spiritual-growth.htm>

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Hello brothers and sisters in Christ, (April 2020)

A couple of common questions that we have heard for years, as with any Bible teacher, are: 1) what is spiritual growth? And 2) how do I know if I'm growing in my walk with Jesus? And a follow up is how long does growth take? The third question being tongue-in-cheek, of course, because all of us wish we could grow faster than we are. But just like you can't rush a plant to grow, you can't rush your soul and character to grow either.

To put it differently, if God showed you and me every detail of things that we (individually) need to grow and change in to be a faithful and most use-able servant of Jesus, you and I would definitely panic, if not die on the spot from the stress. Thankfully God is patient. He's a very good, gentle and patient coach to those who listen to Him, and a very strict judge on those who reject Him. But, don't expect satan or his Catholic-run media to tell the honest truth about Jesus – because they never will. These days, God doesn't seem to have a lot of people to contradict the lies said against Him, or to defend His caring and righteous character. But that will have to wait for other studies, and for others to stand up and defend Him and holiness. Would you take up that task? Pray about it.

Back to the topic of spiritual growth, we here in America (especially) have, up until now, had just about as much of anything and everything we could want. You can buy just about anything in a spray can these days, or radiate your food or water until it's warm enough to want to eat, etc. We live in an instant-gratification society, and satan, and the Vatican/Catholic "church" and her agents, have been trying to make that a problem worldwide for several decades now. But, Jesus explained His gospel (which is "the" gospel, in His teachings found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Over the years, we have posted some studies on that topic of what is the gospel, but we intend to do more in the future. For now, you can find a simple yet, I believe, clear study on what is the gospel that Jesus taught, here:

[http://www.incpu.org/what-is-the-gospel\(updated\).htm](http://www.incpu.org/what-is-the-gospel(updated).htm)

But, God doesn't work that way. Spiritual growth is slow, but not stagnant. It's organic growth, not manufactured. There is a huge difference between the so-called Jesuit "spiritual transformation" that is fake and makes novices look "noble" or "moral", and the slow steady growth of a mature believer who has grown from a spiritual baby, through the stage of being a Biblical young man or woman, and is now a mature spiritual father or mother who can rightly teach the fear of the Lord and to depart from sin and become dead to the sins and sin-driven pleasures that drive and control all unbelievers. Before we continue, let's look at that passage.

“¹² I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³ I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. ¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.” (1 John 2:12-14)

Let's look at that a little deeper. Notice, there are, as I mentioned before, 3 categories: 1) **“little children”**, which I call **“spiritual babies”**, based passages in 1 and 2 Corinthians, 2) **“young men”**, a category that also includes ladies, and would be the category of **“spiritual young men/young women”**, and 3) the most mature category of **“fathers”**, or that I explain as **“spiritual fathers/spiritual mothers”**. Now, let me note that a lot people around you want to pretend to be **“mature Christians”**, even so much more **“mature”** than you... even, oddly enough, those who are unbelievers who just want to hold the fake sign **“Christian”** or **“Christian leader”** or **“super Christian”** in their hands and get you to gullibly believe it, something the Bible calls **“simple-minded”** (Proverbs gives a lot of warnings to the **“simple”** or **“naïve”** or **“simple-minded”**). Jesus Himself commanded us and taught us to judge by the fruit – if the fruit, actions, and desires of the person contradicts what Jesus said was essential for salvation, they are not saved. Period.

“¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn-bushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” (Matthew 7:15-20)

We will know the difference of the **“genuinely saved”** and the **“almost saved”** by their fruits – if they actually love God and love His Word and are trying to grow in it, or they secretly hate the Bible and dive into their favorite sins as often as they can get away with it, while hiding their secret sins to look like **“good little Christians”** in front of you. What they talk about also tells what their heart loves. As Jesus said: **“³⁶ But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”** (Matthew 12:36-37)

God commands us to test all **“spirits”** as in angels or demons, and to test all teachers against His Word, the Bible, the only 100% honest source by which we can check anything and everything:

“¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

“¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

The devil, satan, who is the chief liar and father/inventor of lies, never outright comes to you as your enemy, as Jesus explained that he is. The devil, satan, always – always – always comes to you with a little bit of truth (at very least) and tells you what you want to hear, and then includes a twist on the little bit of truth that he was using as bait, to get you to do his wicked will and to chase your favorite sins. satan always presents himself as **“Lucifer”**, the former angel who was a light-bearer and a covering cherub for the earth. So, is it any surprise that satan's best false teachers make sure they know the Bible better than you and then twist it to get you to go along with satan's schemes? No! Of course not, for that is what satan and the demons and their human co-conspirators do – lie to trick you into going along with satan's schemes that will hurt and destroy you and those you love, in this life and eternity. Jesus spoke very clearly and bluntly about satan and his demons.

“⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” (John 8:44-47)

“¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

If you want to catch false teachers and false “Christians” better, spend a lot of time in 1st and 2nd Timothy, as well as 2nd Peter and Jude and 1st John. God gives you a lot of ways to tell the difference.

God put a stinging rebuke to those who think they are spiritual leaders, but who are not walking pure and holy and growing that, in God’s letter to Hebrew/Jewish people, by the hand of the close companion of the apostle Paul, a careful Bible student and scribe named Silas. God said it this way: **“¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”** (Hebrews 5:12-14)

If you want to see a fascinating study on the Book of Hebrews, you can find it here:
<https://www.incpu.org/Silas-wrote-Hebrews.htm>

So, again, notice that some people think they should be teachers, but they refuse to be walking according to the pure lifestyle that teaching the Word of God requires. You find those qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and 2. But then, God through Silas, explains that we are all to become skilled in the “Word of Righteousness”, the Bible, to learn how to patiently and persistently compel people to turn from sin to Jesus Christ. It needs to become our pattern. And that is what an actual spiritually mature “father” or “mother” does. If someone is trying to lead you back to their favorite sins by enticement or clever words, they are a slave to sin and not a Godly leader. That should be self-explanatory, but sadly, in this age where all of the 501c3 “shepherds” are nothing more than satan’s mouth-pieces, and traitorous false shepherds and FEMA clergy. Many of them are satanists in the freemason or the Catholic-Jesuit cults, but they won’t tell you that – you have to figure that out on your own. A good study that helps you determine if your favorite pastor is a wolf, can be found here – no names, just a lot of clear verses and topics:
[https://www.incpu.org/True-or-false\(booklet\)1.pdf](https://www.incpu.org/True-or-false(booklet)1.pdf)

So, now, let’s go back to the topic of spiritual maturity. Now that we’ve cover the 3 categories in some detail, let’s look and see what other clues the text gives us.

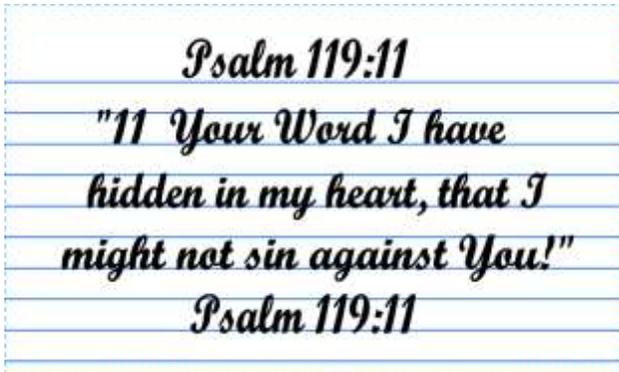
“¹² I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³ I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. ¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.” (1 John 2:12-14)

If you compare these details with the Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8 “Parable of the Soils”, you start to see some clear analysis of how to tell which of the 3 categories you are in, which then as you pray about it will be confirmed by the Holy Spirit as He teaches you.

Stage 1) The “spiritual little children” or “spiritual babies” stage notes that they are forgiven and are excited about that. **“because your sins are forgiven you for His Name’s sake”**. That’s good.. It also notes that spiritual babies are

studying to learn who God is “**because you know the Father**”. We should be excited to know that our sins are forgiven because of Jesus and His perfect sacrifice and we should want to study the Word of God to understand it. But, that’s just 101. That’s just the spiritual baby stage. Let’s look at stage 2.

Stage 2) The “young men” or “spiritual young men/ladies” stage has a few deeper notes of maturity. The first one is “**you have overcome the wicked one**” – that’s a tall task. That simply means that they are mature in righteousness to be able to stand against all sins by practice. That takes some serious intentional years of growth to become dead to all of the sins and temptations the devil and demons offer. But there’s more. The next part is “**because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you.**” That is key. You must grow in “hiding” the Word of God in your heart. Write it on 3” x 5” cards, and keep it where you will remind yourself it. A simple format to write it in would like this.



Step 1: Write (or type) the verse reference – as in what Book of the Bible, and what chapter and verse

Step 2: Write (or type) the verse. I like to put double quotation marks in front and at the end "".

Step 3: Write (or type) the verse reference again.

Step 4: When you read it, read the verse reference out loud (or silently), then read the verse, then read the verse reference. Do this each time you read that verse. This will help your brain retain the Bible reference with the verse. The more you practice the verse, the more you will remember it.

Step 5: Find random ways to write, post, or quote the verse to family, friends or strangers. Again, the more you use it, the more your brain will retain it. And, if you do it this way, you will also find that each piece of this will help – writing it out, reading it as you write it out, reading it and saying it out loud, and then reading it and/or quoting it to others. That’s how you memorize Scripture. I (Steven) am not very good at memorizing, but I can quote the verses that I use most often more easily, because I practice. That’s the same for anyone, unless you have a photographic memory, and that it will be easier for you :)

So, part of the second stage is memorizing and/or practicing Scripture by repetition and trying to commit it to memory. The other part is learning how to stand up to false teachers by correcting them (with gentleness and boldness) with them about what the Bible says versus what they say. There are so many levels of understanding on these topics, even the deeper studies of Bible translations and the use of an interlinear and concordance. You will find comparing the Bible with the Bible will always help you get a better or clearer definition than any other book, but certain books can be a good starting guide in your studies. If you want to know ideas of what I have found trustworthy, just ask – Steven.H3@gmail.com

Stage 3) The “spiritual fathers” (and mothers) stage is one where they have grown up to stand against sins and evil and have stood up to at least one or two false teachers, so they are mature enough to teach others. Both phrases about the spiritual mature describe one thing – knowing God and His character deeply. That only comes with years of finding God through trials and stresses, and growing one day at a time. There’s no quick fix to get there. You can’t rush a natural or spiritual harvest. But a harvest can only grow if the seeds are good and the ground is getting

water and getting the weeds removed, as Jesus' "Parable of the Soils" shows quite well. A couple of other passages would help here too.

"¹⁵ Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all." (1 Timothy 4:15)

The spiritually mature stage is what all of us are supposed to aim for, a stage that God highly commends and that He will reward well in eternity, including with a position of righteous leadership in His eternal Kingdom.

Romans 6 and 8, and Galatians 5 and 6, and 1 Timothy 3 and 2 Timothy 3 and 4, are just a few of the passages that you can look into more to study and grow more in understanding and obedience on levels of spiritual growth. This is the short version of this study, but I pray it has been a blessing to you. I end with one of my favorite passages on spiritual growth – there are so many levels in this passage, and each is learned per individual, per day.

"⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5-11)

Till next time, make sure your progress is evident, away from sin and toward being a faithful and bold servant of Jesus Christ.

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<https://www.incpu.org> (look for the "S&R blog" page for the latest articles and Bible studies)
or <https://www.RestoreMBI.com>

~ Watching, Preaching, Praying, SH