

Spiritual Growth

Introduction

1. When we obey the gospel, we are born again; we are raised to walk in newness of life, and part of that new life is a commitment to spiritual growth (Romans 6:1-4; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 2 Peter 3:18).
2. The spiritual growth of a Christian is often compared to the physical growth of baby right through to adulthood; rightly so, as growth is major characteristic of life.
 - a. Though there is much joy at the birth of a child, the greatest wish of any parent is to see their child grow and develop into an emotionally stable and responsible human being.
 - b. Spiritually, our growth and development as Christians is as much a joy to God as the moment we obeyed the gospel and were baptised into Christ (Luke 15:7, 10, 32; Ephesians 4:11-16).
3. Reasons for the lack of spiritual growth include not having the commitment and the understanding of its moral and religious importance.

Main Body

I. The Christian's Commitment to Spiritual Growth

A. The Life of a Christian is One of Commitment (Luke 14:25-33).

1. If we are going to grow as a Christian it is fundamental that we remember our commitment to Jesus, which demands total subjection and obedience.
 - a. Our love for God must be a total and complete (Mark 12:28-30).
 - b. The promise of heaven is for those with a total love for God (James 1:12; 2:5).
 - c. Love for God is shown by our actions; His will must be our priority (Matthew 6:33 cp. Ephesians 5:17).

B. Spiritual Growth Requires Commitment (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 6:46).

1. Our commitment to full spiritual growth starts with realizing our obligation and opportunity through God's grace and word (2 Peter 3:18 cp. Ephesians 4:15).
 - a. To receive God's blessings, we must be doers of His word, not hearers only (James 1:22-25 cp. Luke 11:28).
 - b. The word of God is only profitable for those who are willing to obey (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).
 - c. Obligation denotes choice – spiritual growth is a choice (Acts 10:34-35 cf. John 13:17).

II. The Purpose of Spiritual Growth in a Christian

A. The Christian is to Develop to Maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28).

1. If we desire to grow as a Christian, then it is important to understand the moral and religious purpose of growing and developing the spiritual side of our nature (Ephesians 3:16-17 cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Peter 3:4).
 - a. "Might entering into the inmost personality. *Inward man*: compare *outward man*... It is the rational and moral *I*; the essence of the man which is conscious of itself as a moral personality" (VWS).
 - b. In sin, we were dead and separated from God (Ephesians 2:1-4; 5:7-9).
 - c. In baptism, we were cleansed and separated from the world (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 cp. Romans 12:1-2).
 - d. Our battle is with spiritual forces of wickedness and falsehood (Ephesians 6:10-17).
2. To grow as a Christian means to mature and develop in our moral and religious behaviour, not in the outward show of religion, but in the inner self of the heart (1 John 3:1-3 cp. Romans 2:28-29).
 - a. We grow by adhering to the pure milk of God's word (1 Peter 2:1-2 cp. 1 Corinthians 3:1-2).
 - b. Becoming teachers and active in a local church is sign of spiritual growth (Hebrews 5:12-14).
 - c. The local church is the environment provided by God for Christian growth (Hebrews 10:25).

Conclusion

1. While it is a joy to be called a child of God, it places upon us a commitment to spiritual growth out of an obligation and an understanding of its moral and religious significance. May God bless us and helps us in this endeavour.