

## Spiritual Growth

So you became a baptized and faithful Christian what now? Is that it, am I done? Can I just sit back and do whatever now? In this lesson we will explore the topic of spiritual growth. We will see that there is indeed more expected of a Christian after he or she becomes baptized.

Hopefully, it will become clear that being a Christian is a lifelong process in which one strives to grow stronger for however long their life may be. How does a Christian grow?

## Studying the Bible

**Acts 17:10-11** “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” How can anyone grow spiritually if they do not read the Bible? How can anyone know if what their Bible class teacher or preacher is teaching is correct unless they read their Bibles? Clearly, reading and studying God’s Word is vitally important to a Christian's spiritual growth. Just as a person will not grow stronger if they do not eat food. A Christian will not grow spiritually if they do not read and study God’s Word which is our spiritual food.

**2 Timothy 2:15** “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” God expects Christians to study His Word so they will know and understand it. This is how Christians grow spiritually and understands if they are living as God wants them to or not. Clearly, this also means that God is not going to just zap Bible knowledge into the head of Christians today, or we would not need to study it. God expects us today to put time into our spiritual growth.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” God wants us to know what He expects of us so He gave us an instruction book. If we choose to not read and study it, we will fail to grow spiritually and that is our fault, not God’s. He gave us the information we need to have eternal salvation, but also the free will to decide if we want to go to Heaven or not. Christians that grow spiritually through study of God’s word are trying to get into Heaven. People that have no time for God’s word do not have going to Heaven as a priority and will miss it sadly. Why would anyone not want to know what the creator of everything wants us to know?

**2 Timothy 4:13** “The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.” The Apostle Paul, unlike you and me, was granted miraculous knowledge by God to know what to preach to people and what to write for the New Testament. Even Paul felt like he needed to study. Today we do not have the miraculous gifts that The Apostles and those the Apostles laid hands on had, because we have the completed Word of God and no longer need these gifts to know what God expects from us. So if Paul believed it was important to study, surely all of us need to study.

**Hebrews 5:12-14** “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” For a Christian to grow spiritually they must spend time in God’s word, to strengthen not only themselves but to be able to teach it to others. After all, Christians need to try and spread the Word of God and how can they do that if they do not know God’s Word?

**James 1:21-25** “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” Christians must know God’s Word and be doers of His will. It is good, but not enough, to know God’s Word. Christians must know and obey God’s Word to grow spiritually.

**2 Peter 3:18** “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” Clearly, the Apostle Peter tells us we must grow in our knowledge of the Lord. Christians will not grow in knowledge of the Lord if they do not study God’s Word. To grow spiritually we must grow in knowledge of God’s book.

### Christian Characteristics

**2 Peter 1:5-9** “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” In these verses we see many characteristics that a Christian must grow in. A Christian must have faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. All of these things must be present in a Christian not just one or two. We are not a fruitful Christian unless all of these things are present in our lives. This is not easily or quickly done. We may each find that we master some of these traits more quickly than others. Growing spiritually as a Christian is a lifelong task, but it will be worth it to be in Heaven eternally.

### Christian Work

**1 Corinthians 15:58** “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” A Christian must be doing the work of the Lord. Doing God’s work will also help a Christian to grow spiritually. After all having a lot of knowledge about the Bible but never using it will hurt a Christian’s spiritual growth and keep them out of Heaven. This does not mean every Christian must be a preacher. We all have different areas in which we excel. However, every Christian can and must be willing to spread God’s Word even if it means just trying to teach

individuals you know that are willing to learn. A Christian is expected to spread God's Word but is not accountable for people's decision to accept or reject God.

**Ephesians 2:10** "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." God created us and wants us to do His will so that we can be saved. Accepting or rejecting God's will is our choice. We can do His will and go to Heaven or we choose to miss out and go to Hell. Which choice will you make?

**2 Timothy 2:20-22** "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." As a Christian grows spiritually, they learn to let go of worldly temptations that have been a problem in the past. I am not saying a Christian is never tempted, that would not be true, we are all tempted to sin from time to time. However, a Christian that is growing learns to put themselves in situations which can reduce their temptations. An alcoholic that becomes a Christian will strive to put down the bottle and not be around people and places that make them more likely to pick back up the bottle. This is not to say they will be perfect, but they will strive toward growing stronger each day. A Christian that is growing spiritually will strive to grow stronger in righteousness, faith, charity and peace throughout their lifetime.

**2 Timothy 4:7-8** "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." A spiritually growing Christian will face obstacles and trials but knows in the end they have a home in Heaven waiting for them.

**Titus 2:7** "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" As a Christian works to grow spiritually it will show in their lives. There are no secret Christians. People that are frequently around a Christian will see that the Christian has a clean and pure life that is different than theirs. Hopefully, it makes the non-Christian want to know more about God. This can be a tool to teach others about God.

**Titus 2:13-14** "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The Christian that is growing spiritually will want to do the will of God and it will show in their lives. This does not mean Christians should in any way be high on themselves, but they will be leading a life different from the one most of the world leads. The Christian's focus is on home in Heaven not on this material world.

**Titus 3:8, 14** "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." and "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for

necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.” As a Christian grows spiritually, they will be about doing God’s will and this will be first in their lives, not second or lower.

### Prayer

**Mark 11:24** “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” When a Christian prays, they have a direct line to God. Having the ability to humble yourself and have a regular prayer life is a good tool to further spiritual growth. A faithful Christian needs to have the faith that God will answer their prayers, because He will. The answer will not be a voice in your head or some kind of miracle event but it will be answered. A Christian also needs to remind themselves that God is far wiser than us and always knows what is for the best. Sometimes our answer that we see in our lives might be what we hoped, sometimes our answer might not be what we hoped, sometimes it might be our answer will require patience.

**James 1:5-6** “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.” As a Christian’s prayer life is important for spiritual growth, it is good to pray for wisdom to help you be a stronger Christian. If one studies God’s word and prays that they would gain wisdom, they are then working to build up their spiritual life and become a stronger Christian

**James 4:3** “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” and **1 John 5:14** “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us” A Christian’s prayers need to always be prayed according to God’s will, not just asking for all your wishes to come true. Praying to God that you can get the new car of your dreams is not praying according to God’s will, it is being materialistic. There is nothing good or bad about having a new car, but it is not something that is important for our salvation, or important to God that we have or don’t have. A Christian needs to pray to God to get stronger at resisting something that tempts them, and do their best to resist that sin. Don’t pray to God for strength to not pick up another drink and then go walk into a bar. A Christian can pray for others in their prayers and try to grow spiritually by not being selfish.

### Acceptable Worship

**John 4:23-24** “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” A Christian can grow spiritually by worshiping God in the way He has told us in His Bible to worship Him. This will help the spiritual growth of a Christian because they are obeying God and are hopefully, worshiping with other Christians that are also trying to grow spiritually. Christians can teach each other and help each other to grow. However, to worship God in spirit and truth one must do so as prescribed in the Bible, not in any other way. To worship God the way I want to and not the way prescribed in His Word is to be disobedient and disrespectful. Worship is not for personal entertainment. Acceptable worship will help a Christian grow spiritually.

**Ephesians 3:21** “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Worship is to praise God and humbly do so as He has commanded it be done. Spiritual growth will not happen when a Christian is not obedient to God.

**Ephesians 5:19-20** “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” The Christian’s spiritual heart is their mind. Being mentally present during worship is a time for Christians to both learn from and teach each other to help further one another’s growth. This includes paying attention to the songs that are sung during worship and what the words of the song mean. Keeping the mind present and involved in worship, not thinking about something else, helps spiritual growth.

**Hebrews 10:25** “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Christians grow spiritually by being at every worship service they can be at and putting God first. Missing worship to watch TV, go fishing, or whatever will not further spiritual growth and is disobedient to God. We are all sick sometimes, God understand that. If I am not at worship and I could be I am not putting God first, which will harm my spiritual growth.

### Conclusion

Hopefully, this lesson has made it clear that growing as a Christian, once you become one until the end of your life, is both necessary and important. Take a moment to consider, if you are a Christian, have I been growing spiritually? If so then keep up the good work. If not then start now. All of us have room to grow spiritually.