

The Value and Necessity of Spiritual Growth

Introduction

- A. When we were created God made us like Himself – a spiritual person. Therefore, we must recognize that the area of our greatest value, potential, fruitfulness, and fulfillment will be in the spiritual. This is the kind of a person we are.
- B. The degree to which we deny our spirituality, whether in thought or practice, to that degree we introduce confusion and failure into our life.
- C. The Biblical solution God has made for us is found in an understanding of what it means to grow spiritually. There is nothing more valuable.

I. The Provision for Spiritual Growth.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. I Peter 3:18

- Comment:
1. The words "grace" and "knowledge" are central in this verse and both of them point to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Grace" refers to all the benefits of redemption and "knowledge" all the benefits of revelation.
 2. The word "grow" is a command. As parents understand the value and necessity of growth – so our Heavenly Father insists that we grow.
 3. Every provision has been made for our growth and we have been given the ability in the new birth to do so.
 4. Each of us must face our personal responsibility here. If we are not concerned – and growing – we are disobedient to God and are living outside of His will. We must stop pretending about this failure.

II. The Characteristic of Spiritual Growth.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. I Peter 2:2

- Comment:
1. This passage explain that we are to seek the Word of God with the same intensity that a newly born baby will seek food.
 2. While we may not remember our pangs of hunger in the first few months of our life we have all witnessed the distress of a hungry child and their unrelenting demand that they be fed.
 3. We are commanded in this verse to "desire" the Word of God in the same way a child demands food. When we obey this command, and make it a part of the priority of our life – we will grow.
 4. Our problem with growth is that we all have a disease-like destructive force in our life – it is a lethargy, a passivity regarding spiritual things. We can be so determined, thoughtful, and persevering about the trivia of our life – and yet almost totally unconcerned about that which is the most important. We may not go on living like this.

III. The Methodology of Spiritual Growth.

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro . . . But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. Eph. 4:14,15

- Comment:
1. "Speaking the truth" are the important words here. These are not the usual words for speaking. A literal translation would be "truthing." The emphasis here is on an aggressive application of the truth in both speaking and life. It is a description of the application of faith.
 2. The context has to do with the spiritual growth of the Church. The only way this can come about, whether corporately or individually, is through the practice of the truths of the Bible.
 3. We are reminded that we are not to live as children – without a knowledge of priority, goal, and value. We have information and can make choices related to value. We can plan our life and establish the priorities necessary to fulfill that plan. We all do this rather well but never as well as we should in the area of spiritual growth.
 4. As the verse states we need the loving help of one another in order to carry on this "truthing." In particular we need to be rescued from our sinful lethargy regarding spiritual matters.
 5. We must test ourselves regarding lethargy. For example: how have we responded to the truth concerning the joy of the Lord and the love of God?
 - a. Have we humbled ourselves before God and confessed our sin in not having the experience of what is so evidently the will of God?
 - b. Have we humbled ourselves before one another and asked for prayer?
 - c. Have we read the Bible on these subjects and followed instructions so we could know the joy and love God has for us?
 - d. Would we be so lethargic about treating a destructive physical type of disease? Of course not! What does this tell us about ourselves?

IV. The Goal of Spiritual Growth.

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro . . . But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. Eph. 4:14,15

- Comment:
1. The provision for spiritual growth has been designed to bring us into close fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Once we begin to obey the Bible in this area we will start experiencing the joy and love of God.
 2. Only through spiritual growth can we become the spiritual person God designed us to be in creation. If we allow ourselves to remain a lethargic person – we will never become our true self.
 3. We must choose to make a Biblical response both to God and to one another. We have a disease-like destructive force (lethargy) that cannot be controlled nor cured by our own efforts. We must face our condition.