

Principles for a Transformed Life (PTL)

Principle #6: Spiritual Growth

The Christian life is more than a declaration of faith. The new believer must continue to grow in the Lord. The Bible prescribes several things that are designed to assist in growth. For those who wish to live a life of freedom there is no standing still. If you are not progressing, you are regressing. You can't rest on your spiritual laurels.

- ◆ The Bible teaches that after we place our faith in Christ, we must grow up.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17 / John 3:3-8 When we come to Christ we are reborn in Spirit. We are spiritual babes.
 - Ephesians 4:14 Spiritual children are easily tossed around by new doctrines and can be tricked by religious hucksters.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 Spiritual babies are prone to argument and envy. See also Hebrews 5:12-14. Spiritual babes have not yet learned to practice the principles of the faith.

Topic for Discussion

Where do you think you are in your spiritual growth? Give reasons for your answer.

- ◆ The Bible depicts the spiritual life as a journey of constant increase.
 - We are growing in faith. Faith grows as we receive the Word of God and as we exercise our faith. Romans 1:16-17 / Romans 10:17 / 2 Thessalonians 1:3
 - We are growing in strength. Our inner strength grows as we increasingly learn to lean on the Christ in us. Paul prayed for the churches that they would be strengthened on the inside by the Spirit. We can do the same. Psalm 84:5-7 / Colossians 1:9-11 / Ephesians 6:10 / Isaiah 41:10 / Isaiah 40:29-31 / Psalm 138:3 / 2 Timothy 4:16-17 / 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 / Philippians 4:13
 - We are being transformed from glory to glory, ever-increasing in our likeness to Christ. We become like what / Who we follow. The aim of the Christian life is to grow in our resemblance to Christ. We do that by looking into His Word and allowing the Spirit to change us. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 / Romans 8:29 / Romans 13:14 / Ephesians 4:22-24 / Colossians 3:10 / Luke 6:40

Topics for Discussion

From the 3 sets of scriptures in the section above, pick 1 passage and discuss how it applies to your life.

Has your faith grown since you have been a Christian? How do you know? What does it mean to live by faith?

Are you stronger now than you used to be? What makes you think so? What does it mean to be strong in the Lord?

What areas of your life are more Christ-like than they were 6 months ago? What areas are still in need of work? What makes you think so?

◆ **Necessities for proper spiritual growth.**

- Philippians 3:12-16. A commitment to the process of growth is essential. The moment you think you are perfect you stop growing. This will result in failure, which for us means falling back into the bondage we came out of. Some Christians can stop short of total commitment and simply live below their potential in Christ. For those with life controlling habits, attitudes, or addictions, this is not an option.
- The Word of God is essential to growth. We must learn how to think all over again. We need to find out what God thinks and adopt His opinion. This is called “renewing the mind.” 1 Peter 2:2 / Romans 12:2 / 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 / James 1:18-25
- Spiritual growth requires a local church where you can receive ministry from the gifts set in the Body by the Lord. Ephesians 4:11-16 / Acts 20:28
- Spiritual growth requires the fellowship and encouragement of other believers. Hebrews 10:24-25 / Proverbs 13:20 / Proverbs 27:17
- Prayer is an integral part of the Christian life. Mathew 26:41 / Luke 18:1 / Luke 22:40 / Romans 12:12 / 1 Corinthians 14:14-15 / Colossians 4:2 / James 5:16

Topics for Discussion

Pick one passage from the Scripture references given in this section and discuss how it applies to your life.

Are you personally committed to growing as a Christian? What does that mean to you?

Describe what you do to renew your mind to the Word of God. What would you like to do better?

Do you have a regular local church? If so, what part do you play there? If not, why not?

Tell us about your prayer life. How do you think it could improve?

◆ **Transformation is a process, not an event.** It absolutely requires a commitment to ongoing spiritual growth. This means a defined commitment to activities, including church involvement, which enhance and encourage spiritual development.

◆ **Growing in the spiritual realm must become the primary focus of life or a return to bondage is inevitable.**