



SEA OF GALILEE

Spiritual Growth



Spiritual Growth: Introduction to Spiritual Maturity

This series of Spiritual Growth consists of 4 sessions:

1. Spiritual Growth: Introduction to Spiritual Maturity
2. Spiritual Growth: The Biblical Reading and Prayer
3. Spiritual Growth: Generosity and Companionship
4. Spiritual Growth: How to Start and Maintain Good Habits

The goal of this series is to commit to PRACTICE the habits necessary to develop and maintain spiritual maturity

¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,^[a] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.
Ephesians 4: 12-14

Focus of the series: Talk about the importance of reaching maturity in the Christian life and consider four basic habits that each Christian must develop to reach spiritual maturity.

What is Spiritual Maturity?

Spiritual maturity is seeking to be like Jesus in what we are and what we do.

Until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to be a man of full maturity, to the extent of the stature of the fullness of Christ. - Ephesians 4:13

We know that those whom he knew before, he also predestined them to be conformed to the image of his Son so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers. - Romans 8:29

Factors about SPIRITUAL MATURITY

It is a process - spiritual maturity is not automatic. For everyone it is a process that lasts a lifetime.

Rather, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory now and to the day of eternity. Amen. - 2 Peter 3:18

It requires discipline - every believer "disciple" is called to be disciplined (to have constant and constant training) in his social and spiritual life.



If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take his cross every day and follow me.
- Luke 9:23

Four Basic Habits of a Disciple

- **Bible Reading / Study**

Therefore, Jesus told the Jews that they had believed in him: If you remain in my word you will truly be my disciples; 32 And they will know the truth, and the truth will set them free. - John 8: 31,32

- **Prayer**

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done to you. 8 In this my Father is glorified: that they bear much fruit and be my disciples. - John 15: 7-8

- **Generous Lifestyle**

Honor the LORD with your riches and with the first fruits of all your fruits. - Proverbs 3: 9

"Bring the whole tithe to the treasury and have food in my house. Test me in this, says the LORD of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven and empty you a blessing until there is an overflow. Malachi 3:10

- **Love and Companionship**

By this all will know that they are my disciples: if they have love for one another. - John 13:35

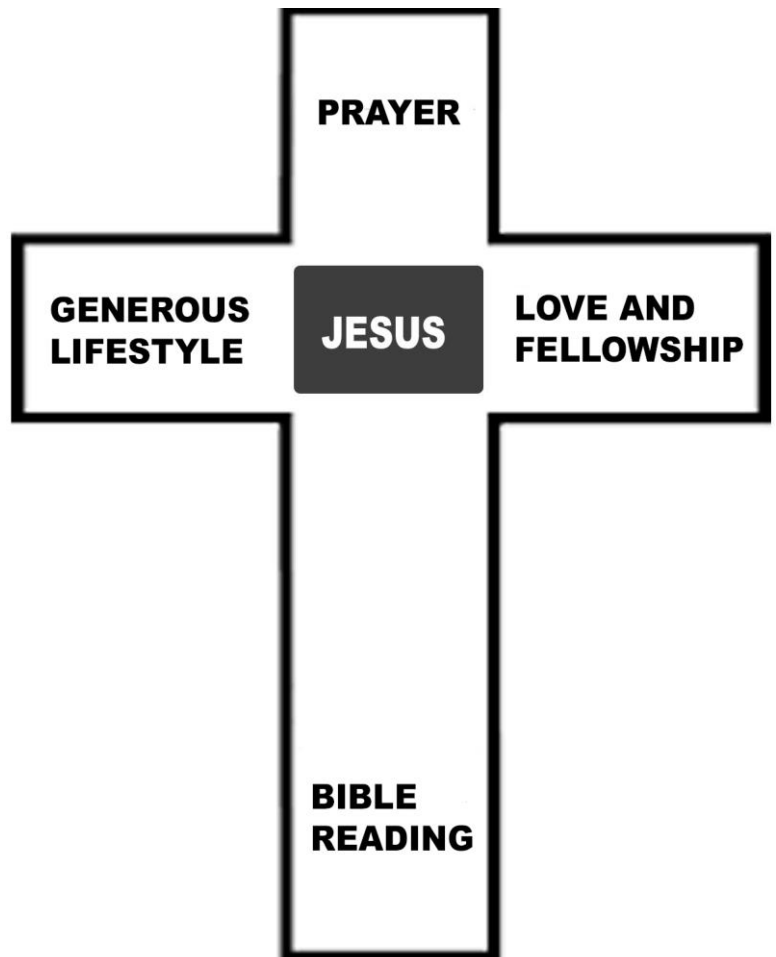
What is a Habit? A continuous and frequent inclination to do an activity acquired through repetition; a disposition of character.

"Sow a thought, you will reap an act".

"Sow an act, you will reap a habit."

"Sow a habit, you will reap a character."

"Sow character, you will reap a destiny."



Spiritual Growth: Reading the Bible

The Bible is the source of the Christian to know God and His plan of salvation. Reading and systematic study is essential if we want to reach spiritual maturity and grow in the grace of God.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be perfect, fully qualified for every good work. -

2 Timothy 3:16

Listening to the Bible - this form helps people who have difficulty reading

Therefore, faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ - Romans 10:17

- Services in the church
- The bible in audio format
- Family studies in the home
- Preaching on radio / TV / social networks

NOTE: Keep in mind that more than 90% of what we hear is forgotten after two or three days.



The key in hearing the Word of God:

Avoid distractions

Take notes of what you are listening to

Confess any sin in our life

Act according to what you hear

Reading / Studying the Bible - The Bible must be read daily and constantly studied to learn from God and obey His commandments.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may keep and do according to all that is written in it; for then you will prosper your way, and everything will turn out well for you. - Joshua 1: 8

All Scripture is inspired by God, and useful to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be perfect, fully prepared for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3: 16-17



Suggestions: Read systematically; in devotionals; underline key texts; read out loud; choose a one-year reading plan.

How to study the Bible

The Bible is the most read book in all history. And it must be read constantly to be understood and obeyed. It is the Word of God. For this reason, we must take it seriously.

All Scripture is inspired by God, and useful to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in righteousness, so that the man of God may be perfect, fully prepared for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

Basic principles

- Read the Old Testament and know the origin of man; know their stories; how God began to deal with the nation of Israel and the teachings that are for today.
- The New Testament emphasizes the A.T. and it presents the revelation of God to humanity, which is Jesus Christ.
- Read the Bible in a spirit of prayer and joy
- Meditate on what we are reading
- Consider who the characters are; the context of the story, etc.
- What is the teaching of the biblical portion?
- How can I apply it to my personal life



Considerations

- Have a pencil and paper on hand or a way to take notes
- Consult additional books that will help you in understanding (study bible, biblical dictionary, commentary, etc.)
- Have a comfortable and appropriate place to read / study
- Practice the memorization of biblical verses (to comfort your life, resist temptation, make good decisions, etc.).

In my heart I have kept your sayings so as not to sin against you. - Psalm 119: 11



Spiritual Growth: Prayer

Prayer as a means of speaking with God

joyful in hope, patient in tribulation, constant in prayer - Romans 12:12

Prayer for the Christian should be as it is to breathe for every human being: automatic. God has designed the method of prayer as the way to communicate with Him at all times and for all reasons.

Reasons to pray: the family; personal stuff; business; divine direction; health; forces; salvation; know the will of God; governments and nations; etc.

The lack of prayer demonstrates a lack of faith and trust in the Word of God and His promises.

We pray to always remain connected with God.

Be anxious for nothing; rather, present your requests before God in all prayer and prayer, with thanksgiving. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4: 6-7



Principles

Approaching God with a correct attitude

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, to be seen by men. Truly I tell you that they already have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you [a]. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, like the Gentiles, who think they will be heard because of their talk. 8 Therefore, do not become like them, because your Father knows what things they need before you ask them. - Matthew 6: 5-8

Consider the model of Jesus

You, therefore, pray like this: Our Father in heaven: Hallowed be your name, let your kingdom come, your will be done, as it is in heaven also on earth. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. Amen. 14 For if you



forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if they do not forgive men, neither will their Father forgive their trespasses. - Matthew 6: 9-15

Components of Prayer

- Worship - start by expressing my love for God in worship and praise
Our Father in heaven: Hallowed be your name
- Purpose - God's will be done in the family, church, work, future, etc.
Let your kingdom come, your will be done, as it is in heaven also on earth.
- Provision - ask God for my needs (be specific)
Give us this day our daily bread.
- Forgiveness - may God forgive my sins
Forgive us our debts
- Other people -
... as we forgive our debtors.
- Protection
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The Habit of having a daily time with God

But you, when you pray, enter your room, and close the door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you in public. Matthew 6: 6

Establishing a personal place and time with God is to bring us closer to God without the distractions of life, mostly to meditate, pray and read the Bible.

Rising very early in the morning, still very dark, he went out and went to a desert place, and there he prayed. Mark 1:35

The importance of personal time

- Brings peace - the focus is God and not the problems of life
- Renewed joy - the fruit of the Holy Spirit manifests
- Personal satisfaction - to put God first in life
- Divine direction - we receive direction to make decisions



- Power and strength - we are full of spiritual strength
- Emotional stability - we are less worried knowing that God is in control

Spiritual Growth: Generosity

Generosity is a habit that every Christian should cultivate if we want to be like Jesus. The nature of God is to be generous, since He gave of himself so that we would be saved.

Being generous does not imply giving everything we have, but it becomes a lifestyle where we believe that God meets our need and prepares us to help others.

Consider these biblical principles:

Generous people always give more than what is required

And they spoke with Moses, saying, The people bring much more than they need to carry out the work that the LORD commanded to be done. 6 Then Moses commanded to proclaim through the camp, saying, No one, man or woman, should do anything more as an offering for the sanctuary. Thus the people were prevented from continuing to bring; 7 for there was already enough material to do all the work, and there was still enough left over. - Exodus 36: 5-7



Generous people give in response to a great cause

Because ministering this sacred service not only supplies what is lacking to the saints, but also results in abundant thanksgiving to God. 2 Corinthians 9:12

Generous people give how much or little they have

Looking up, Jesus saw the rich men throwing their offerings into the treasury. 2 He also saw a poor widow throwing there two small coins of little value. 3 Then he said: Truly I tell you, this poor widow has cast more than all. 4 For all these, out of their abundance, cast into offerings [a]; but this, from his poverty, he put all the sustenance he had. - Luke 21: 1-4
Generous people give more than their finances

See Parable of the "Good Samaritan" - Luke 10: 25-37

Honoring God with my offerings

On the first day of the week, each of you keep something in your house, treasuring it in proportion to how you are prospering - 1 Corinthians 16: 2



Our offerings are part of the worship of God. Each time we offer, we are providing for the mission of the church to achieve building lives for Jesus Christ. This includes ministries and missions.

The offerings have been incorporated as part of each worship service indicating that we support the mission of the church and its goals.

Three reasons to give of what God gives us

- Giving is an antidote to materialism - 1 Timothy 6: 17-19
- Giving strengthens my faith - Proverbs 3: 5-10
- Giving blesses my life - Proverbs 11:25

Honoring God with my tithe

The tithing habit reveals that God and His church are more important to us. It also reveals the condition of our heart.

Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. - Matthew 6:21

God is wise. He knows that we all have different resources and that is why he establishes a 10% tithe of income.

Why should we tithe?

God sends it and Jesus orders it

"All the tithes of the earth, both of the seed of the earth and of the fruit of the trees, belong to the LORD. It is a sacred thing to the LORD. - Leviticus 27:30



"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because they give the tithe of mint, dill and cumin; but they have omitted the most important of the law, namely: judgment, mercy and faith. It was necessary to do these things without omitting those. - Matthew 23:23

Prepares my life to be blessed

"Bring the whole tithe to the treasury and have food in my house. Test me in this, says the LORD of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven and empty you a blessing until there is an overflow. 11 Because of you, I will also rebuke the devourer, so that he will not consume the fruit of the earth, nor will his vine in the field become barren, says the LORD of Hosts. 12 And thus all the nations will say to them, 'Blessed are they,' for they will be a desirable land, "says the Lord of Hosts. - Malachi 3: 10-12

How we should tithe and offer to God

With joy and gladness

Each one gives as he proposed in his heart, not with sadness or obligation because God loves the joyful giver. - 2 Corinthians 9: 7



With the expectation that God blesses us

And I say this: He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows generously will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9: 6

Spiritual Growth: Christian Fellowship

Christian fellowship is essential to achieve maturity in the life of every believer. Every time we have interaction with each other, we have opportunities and experiences to grow together.

Let us not cease to assemble, as some are accustomed; rather, let us exhort ourselves, and even more so when we see the day approaching. - Hebrews 10:25

Principles of Christian fellowship

We belong to a great family - the family of faith

Therefore, as long as we have an opportunity, let us do good to all, and especially to those of the family of faith. - Galatians 6:10

Therefore, they are no longer foreigners or foreigners but fellow citizens of the saints and members of the family of God. - Ephesians 2:19

so we, being many, are one body in Christ but we are all members of one another. - Romans 12:5



We need each other for spiritual support and growth

Let us consider one another to stimulate love and good works. - Hebrews 10:24

Better two than one, because they have a better reward for their work. 10 For if they fall, the one will raise up his companion. But, woe to the one who falls when there is no other to raise him! - Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10

The iron with iron sharpens and the man refines the face of his friend. - Proverbs 27:17

There is great spiritual strength when we pray together

Again, I tell you that if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. - Matthew 18:19

Christian fellowship testifies to the world of God's love

... so that all may be one just like you, oh Father, in me and I in you, that they too may be one in us; so that the world believes that you sent me. - John 17:21



By this all will know that they are my disciples: if they have love for one another. - John 13:35

What the bible says about "Each Other" in relation to Christian fellowship: (Partial list)

- Serve each other Galatians 5:13
- Accept one another Romans 15: 7
- Forgive one another Colossians 3:13
- Greet one another Romans 16:16
- Bear loads to each other Galatians 6: 2
- Love one another Romans 12:10
- Honoring one another Romans 12:10
- Teach one another Romans 15:14
- Submit to each other Ephesians 5:21
- Cheer on one another I Thessalonians 5: 11

How is the Christian Fellowship maintained in Sea of Galilee?

- Assistance to services, activities and special events
- Visiting and serving one another
- Praying for one another
- Building and encouraging each person
- Do not speak badly about people (GOSSIP)



Maintaining good relationships with difficult people

Being a mature Christian implies managing our relationships with wisdom. Unfortunately, some people we know do not fit easily into our lives. They are people who seem to steal our emotional strength. As long as there are people in this imperfect world, there will be difficult people in our life, at work, in the neighborhood and in the church.

What should we do about it? We cannot pretend that they are not there. Ignoring them is not necessarily the most loving practice. Instead, we have to have a plan to deal with difficult people who will often cross our path.

These are some practical steps:

Free yourself from the need to change the person - We are not responsible or have the ability to change anyone. We can help, assist and at some point, confront, but we have to leave the results to them and to God.

Recognize the positive aspects of the person - Find the good qualities of others and encourage them to cultivate and develop those qualities. Possibly some of the negative aspects will decrease.

Set limits - Hard people sometimes steal your time and emotional energy. Determine a limit to what we can do for them. For example, if a co-worker continues to occupy his or her time with



talk or gossip, we can say: "I only have five minutes to speak at this time, and then I have to go back to my project."

Reflect on God's love and forgiveness - When we think of the many times God has forgiven us, it is hard for us not to forgive. Let's give more love and forgiveness. It can mean helping someone change their life of sin or a destructive lifestyle.

Spiritual Growth: How to Begin and Maintain Good Habits

The life we lead is usually composed of habits (pattern of behavior) that are part of each person. Thus God created us. Since we have good habits, we also have habits that are not so pleasant.

Usually in January we start talking about goals we want to achieve and habits we want to implement in our lives. Fortunately, we do not have to wait until January of each year to make significant changes that will help us be the person God desires.

If we are thinking about establishing good habits, there is the probability that we have to give up some "bad" habits. The first thing we must do is pray to God for direction, humility and willpower for the process.

During this process, continue to depend on God. Usually, experts indicate that it takes approximately 21 days to form a habit. Some experts say 30 days or more, depending on the person, personality, motivation and circumstances, and what kind of habit we want to adopt or eliminate from our life.

How can we develop a new habit?

- Desire - we must be deeply motivated internally to want to change
- Decision - we must take the step of faith in action. The habit is created by "doing".
- Statement - make public your intention for support and encouragement.
- Determination - do not give up until the habit is formed. Have self-control.

When we are thinking about habits, consider the benefit that will be for you. Focus on the blessing it will bring to your life, family and friends.

The idea of adopting good habits in the life of the Christian is that the action be "automatic" of daily life.

If we want to seek spiritual growth, let's try to develop habits in:

- Bible reading / study
- Talk with God in prayer



- Practice Generosity (Tithe)
- Christian Fellowship

AND NOW THAT?

SERIES: Heart of a Servant

The next step is the Heart of a Servant class. It is recommended that each member take this class. Everyone is important to God. The way we are created by God to serve is analyzed. Discover and develop your talent and ability to be useful wherever you are. This class will help you in your spiritual and social life, in your work and in your home. You will find more satisfaction in who you are and how you can use your time to transform lives for God.

