

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

**Introduction**

Have you ever known someone who aged physically in years but they never grew up. It's not a pretty sight, is it? In fact, it is sad.

I don't know of many things more pathetic than seeing a person who is supposed to be a mature adult trying to act like they're still a teenager! You want to say to them, "*Why don't you grow up!*"

One of the most important truths of Scripture is that we who are **believers are to mature and grow spiritually!** As we do so, our lives will be changed. We will begin to live fuller more satisfying lives.

**Understand that God is not just in the SAVING business, but He is in the LIFE CHANGING business!** Yet, there are many who have come to Christ, but they don't seem to understand this vital part of God's will for their lives!

I want us to look seriously at this matter of growing in Jesus Christ and of what it **should mean** and **can mean** to each of us!

**I. FIRST, LET'S DEAL WITH SOME MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING SPIRITUAL GROWTH:**

**A. Spiritual Growth Is Not Automatic!**

We know that people are saved by God's grace and mercy when

- 1) they come to see themselves as lost sinners,*
- 2) they repent of their sin, and then*
- 3) they trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation.*

Salvation is an **instantaneous** and a **sudden** event!  
It happens only once and is **unchangeable!**

We know that it may take time for a person to come to an understanding of the Gospel and believe it. Nevertheless, at the very moment the Gospel is accepted or believed on, **the fact of that person's salvation or their position in Christ is established forever!**

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

*2 Corinthians 5:17—"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

The moment we believed on the Lord for our salvation, **we were placed in Christ!**

**And we received all the spiritual blessings and all the things that pertain unto life and godliness!**

*2 Peter 1:3—"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."*

*Colossians 2:10—"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."*

**We are complete in that we are fully a child of God!**

Which means we are fully equipped to accomplish all that God has for us in our lives!

There is no second blessing, as some erroneously teach. There is **only one Gospel** and it is the full Gospel and there is no other!

What this means is that we, as believers, received the Spirit of God which **enables us to live a godly life that is pleasing to God and to grow spiritually!**

When a baby is born it can not talk, walk, or work. Yet, if the child is normal, it has everything necessary to grow into a mature adult! However, it must be taught AND it must learn!

*A group of tourists were visiting a town on a tour and they came across an old man. One of the tourists asked the old man if any great men were born in this small town. "No he replied, Only babies."*

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

We all came into our physical life the same way!  
When we began in our physical life, we began it learning,  
didn't we? Well the same is true in our Spiritual life!

The very essence of life is about growing and maturing—  
whether that life be our physical lives or our spiritual lives!

From the first time that a source of milk is placed in a baby's  
mouth it learns that it is good and begins to drink it!

But understand that growth is not automatic is it? It takes  
effort on the part of those who are mature and doing the  
teaching as well as effort on the part of the one who is  
maturing!

*Spiritual Growth Is Not Automatic!*

**B. Spiritual Growth Does Not Gauge God's Love For Us!**

God's love is NOT dependent on our spirituality! He loved us  
BEFORE WE WERE BORN AGAIN while we were sinners!

Yet, to experience God's blessings in our daily lives we must  
be in His will, filled with His Holy Spirit and living obedient  
lives to His established principles!

God's love means that He will always do what's best for us and  
that means **He will not bless those who are disobedient or  
unfaithful to the Biblical principles of life!**

**C. Spiritual Growth Is Not Dependant On Long Periods Of  
Time!**

There are many believers who have been saved a long time and  
yet have grown very little!

On the other hand, there are some who have been saved only a  
short time, yet spiritually, they are growing very rapidly!

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

Now, if two people are both equally dedicated and faithful to  
the Lord, then it stands to reason that the one who has been  
maturing longer will be more spiritual mature.

But length of time saved is not the most important factor in the  
amount of spiritual growth!

I have seen people saved and within a year or so they were able  
to teach Sunday School or really effectively use the gifts God  
had given them and they had a good understanding of the  
Bible.

On the other hand, I have seen folks saved who, after years,  
have failed to grow and consequently they understand very  
little and are not able to be used very effectively for God!

*Spiritual Growth Is Not Automatic...Does Not Gauge God's  
Love For Us...Is Not Dependent On Long Periods Of Time...*

**D. Being Spiritually Mature Is Not A Matter Of How Much  
We Know!**

What matters is what we **DO** with what we know!

*1 Corinthians 8:1—"Now as touching things offered unto idols,  
we know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffeth up,  
but charity edifieth.**"*

Paul warned the Corinthians that knowledge can puff one up.  
He was talking about PRIDE. **Having a knowledge things  
presented in the Bible is important for the believer, but it  
cannot be equated with spiritual maturity!**

Spiritual growth is determined by what we **DO** with what we  
have come to know from God's Word!

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

**E. Spiritual Growth Is Not Just A Matter Of Being Active In Church!**

Certainly, spiritually mature believers will be active in their local Church and be serving the Lord wherever they are. Yet...

One can be very busy DOING THINGS in the Church, and all the while NOT be growing spiritually!

Some think that if they are busy enough then they are spiritual. That's not necessarily true. It is even possible to be active and not even be saved!

*Matthew 7:22-23—“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

Being busy and doing a lot in the Church doesn't even qualify one for salvation...let alone for spiritual maturity!

Before the Apostle Paul was saved, he had a lot of Bible knowledge, but he didn't have wisdom because he was lost!

**F. Spiritual Growth Has Nothing To Do With Prosperity!**

Some folks may think that material possessions are an indication of spiritual maturity or special favor with God. That, again, is not true!

Don't think that because you are well off or financially secure that this means God approves of how you are living your life and how you are growing spiritually!

The other side is true too. Being poor or having very little does not necessarily mean that God disapproves of your spiritual condition or your spiritual progress!

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

So, now that we've dealt with these *MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING SPIRITUAL GROWTH*.

**II. WHAT THEN IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY?**

If Spiritual maturity is not just a matter of our position in Christ, or a matter of God's love for us, or a matter of time, or a matter of our knowledge of the Bible, or a matter of how active we are, or a matter of how rich or poor we might be, then what is it?

By the way, it is not some mystical, sentimental, devotional, or psychological thing either.

We could say that, in simple terms, Spiritual growth is: ***"MATCHING MY PRACTICE WITH MY POSITION"***.

If you are saved, and a child of God, then you are complete in Christ! That means that you have everything you need to live for the Lord!

You have everything you need to live a full and satisfying abundant life. If you choose to do so, you can live a life that will glorify the Lord Jesus Christ!

Spiritual maturity is NOT about just being ABLE to put into practice the principal of God's Word. (Because if we are saved, we ARE able! In fact, we are ENABLED to do so by the God of all grace!)

It is a matter of commitment!

It is a matter of dedication!

It is a matter of willing ourselves to do as God wants!

It is a matter of faith! (i.e. It is a matter of trusting Almighty God and letting Him direct our lives and obediently doing what He says.) (Colossians 2:6-10)

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1—SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

**III. WHY SHOULD I GROW SPIRITUALLY? WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT THAT?**

**A. It Is A Matter Of Being In Harmony With God's Plan!**

God created us! He made us! Just like any builder, He had a purpose for what He built!

Suppose I took a Ferrari that cost over \$250,000 dollars and used it as a farm vehicle on a dirt road? That would be crazy!

Suppose I bought a John Deere tractor and used it like the family car? That wouldn't be very bright, would it?

In each of those cases we would say that both the Ferrari and John Deere tractor were **misused** and not used as they were **designed** to be used.

Now you could take the family to town on a John Deere, but wouldn't it be much better to take them in a automobile that has four doors, AC/Heater, comfortable seats with plenty of room, and a engine and transmission made to do the job?

Wouldn't we call it abuse for someone to take a car designed to race and use it like a farm truck? Its use would **not** be in harmony with the plan of the designer!

**B. God Created Us! And He Designed Us To Bring Glory To Himself!**

*2 Peter 3:18—"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."*

That's what we were created to do— to bring glory to God!  
The problem with the world (and with many believers as well) is that they don't know who they are or why they were created!

This lost world surely doesn't know!

They are living in rebellion against God!  
They obviously don't bring glory to God in their lives!  
They are ruining themselves and abusing themselves because they are not doing what they were originally designed to do!

Could I tell you though, that many believers, also have fallen in the same trap!

They trusted Christ for salvation, but then for some reason they continued trying to live lives that are not in harmony with the Designer's plan! The result is that their lives are destructive, un-fulfilling and miserable!

They are like that expensive fine tuned race car, running down a dusty, rocky, bumpy road, bearing heavy loads they weren't designed to carry!

God created us to bring glory to Him and when we don't, we are out of place and cause problems for ourselves and others!

**C. To Bring Glory To God, We Must Live As God Has Designed Us To Live!**

It brings great honor to the John Deere Company when one of their tractors, is out in the fields, hauling, plowing, breaking or tilling land as it was designed to do!

There is great satisfaction to see a piece of equipment running smoothly doing what it was made to do!

For the believer who is living apart from the Lord, whose growth has been stunted, who is living in disobedience to God, who is being unfaithful, it brings shame to the God who made them!

And if they don't rectify the situation, it will destroy them!

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1–SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

And the longer they are living apart from the Designer's purpose for their lives, the more it will have an adverse affect on them and all those around them!

**D. God Has Given Each Of Us A Will!**

1. We are not robots, but are made in the very image of God Himself—**having intellect, emotions and a will!**
2. The Ferrari that is used on a farm has no choice, but to do as its operator forces it to do.

HOWEVER, GOD WILL NOT FORCE US TO DO RIGHT!  
WE CAN CHOOSE TO DO WRONG! IT IS UP TO US!

**E. Do You Want To Do Right? Then Determine In Your Heart And Life To Just Do It!**

If you are a child of God you have the ability! God gave you the ability when you were saved.!

Because believers are complete in Christ, that means they have all that is needed to live as they should!  
But they must choose to do it (or **“will”** to do it!)

Our love for sin is usually the problem. We have a sinful nature that has a bent to sin and all that is wrong. But, that is not an excuse.

If we want to avoid sin and wrong living, we can. We can because we have been given a new nature! In fact, we've been given the very nature of God, that gives us the power to do that which is right!

But if you haven't trusted Christ, you can't do right no matter how hard you may try!

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE**  
**PART 1–SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
**2 PETER 3:18; 1 PETER 2:2**

If you have not yet trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior...then why not?

What is it that keeps you from believing Him and putting your trust in the One died for you and rose again that you might have life and have it more abundantly?

Don't you think that it is time to begin a new life right now?  
I'm talking about the life that God created you to live!

**Conclusion:**

Growing in Christ and growing spiritually is first a matter of getting new life from Him and then exercising your will, by His grace, to do as He commands.

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS A MATTER OF MATCHING OUR PRACTICE WITH OUR POSITION IN CHRIST!**

If you are a child of God you can choose to live a wonderful life of fulfilling God's purpose in your life! That is, you can if you want to! You can if you are committed and simply make the effort to do it with the Lord's help!