

Spiritual Growth

Lesson 05 in the series, "Purpose"

I. We were all created to grow spiritually and become like Christ.

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT)

"For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." Romans 8:29 (NLT)

"If we say that we remain in union with God, we should live just as Jesus Christ did."

1 John 2:5-6 (GNT)

II. Becoming like Christ is a joint effort between us and God.

A. God's part:

1. To continually work on us.

"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (ESV)

2. To give us the power to change.

"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

"By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires." 2 Peter 1:3-4 (NLT)

Note: We can't do it on our own, but God won't do it for us.

B. Our part:

1. To place our attention and affection on Jesus.

"All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NAB)

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith..." Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)

2. To "throw off" our old nature.

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"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Galatians 2:19-20 (NIV)

"The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires." Romans 13:12-14 (NLT)

3. To "put on" our new nature.

“Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.” Ephesians 4:24 (NLT)

“In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.” 2 Peter 1:5-9 (NLT)

4. To protect the progress we’ve made.

“If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.” 2 Timothy 2:21 (NLT)

“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.” Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

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