

FOLLOWUP # 4: GROWTH IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Maturity in Christ takes time. It is a lifelong process in which we grow closer to Him as we spend time with Him every day and get to know Him better. Growth in the Christian life is directly proportional to how well we are getting to know God. The way we get to know someone is through communication, and communication is a two way street. This also applies to our relationship with Christ. We need to let Him communicate with us, and we need to communicate with Him. The Navigator Ministry uses a wheel illustration to describe the principles that are necessary for us to grow in our relationship with God. The vertical spokes of the wheel (Bible study and prayer) deal with our relationship with God. The horizontal spokes (fellowship and witnessing) deal with our relationship with others (believers and non-believers). In this lesson, we will look at each of these four principles and how they can help us grow in the Christian life.

I. Time in the Word

A. Why is time in the Word (the Bible) necessary for spiritual growth?

1. The Bible is our spiritual food. We would not grow physically if we did not eat for a long time. In the same way, we can't grow spiritually without our spiritual food.
 - 1 Peter 2:2
2. It causes our faith to grow.
 - Romans 10:17
3. It shows us sin in our lives.
 - Hebrews 4:12
4. It is used for teaching, reproof, correction, and training.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
5. God desires us to meditate on and obey His Word.
 - Joshua 1:8

B. How have you seen spending time in God's Word help you to grow?

C. Practical application:

1. Where do you begin? (One of the four Gospels, or the Psalms)
2. How often and how long do you need to spend in the Word? (Daily. Start out with 15 minutes a day.)
3. What are the hindrances that keep you from spending time in the Word?
4. What can you do to overcome those hindrances?

II. Time in Prayer

A. How does prayer help you grow in your relationship with God?
 (As we see God answer prayer, it encourages us. As we see His power, it comforts us and strengthens us. As we see our weakness, it humbles us. Prayer is simply sharing our thoughts, our needs, and our hearts with God.)

B. Scripture about prayer:

- Philippians 4:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 - What does it mean to “pray without ceasing”? (You might think of praying without ceasing as communicating with God on one line while also taking calls on another. Even while you are talking on the other line, you never lose your awareness of the need to return your attention to the Lord. So praying without ceasing means you never really stop conversing with God; you simply have frequent interruptions.)

C. How have you seen God answer prayer in your life?

D. Practical application:

1. What hinders you from praying?
2. Some suggestions to help you pray:
 - Pray through a list of prayer requests.
 - Pray through Scripture.
 - Pray out loud, or pray with someone.
 - Write out your prayers in your journal.
 - Pray while you take a walk.

III. Fellowship (Time with other Christians)

A. What is fellowship? (2 fellows in the same ship. Christians sharing in friendship. There’s a spiritual aspect involved.)

B. Why do we need fellowship with other believers? (Encouragement, learning from one another, sharing what we know of God, exhorting one another, accountability)

C. Scripture:

- Hebrews 10:24-25

Illustration: Several logs burn brightly together; but put one aside on the cold hearth and the fire goes out. So it is with your relationship with other Christians.

- Acts 2:42-47

This gives a picture of fellowship among the early Christians.

D. Practical application:

1. What hinders you from fellowship? (too busy, not wanting accountability, being uncomfortable around Christians because of sin in your life)
2. Make sure you are involved in a small group and church where you can begin to build friendships with other Christians.

IV. Witnessing (Time with Non-believers)

A. How does witnessing help you grow spiritually? (Helps you understand the gospel better, makes you rely on God, allows you to see God's power in using you.)

B. Scripture: (What does God's Word say about the importance of witnessing?)

- Matt. 4:19
- Acts 1:8
- Romans 1:16
- 1 Peter 3:15

C. What hinders you from sharing your faith? (Fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of not doing it right, not knowing how.)

D. Practical application: Help them learn how to share the gospel in an easy, concise form. Encourage them to pray and look for "divine appointments" to talk to someone about Christ.

V. Evaluation of your spiritual growth

- In which of these 4 areas are you the strongest?
- In which of these are you the weakest?
- What do you need to do to strengthen these areas?

A wheel with balanced spokes will roll evenly, but a wheel with uneven spokes is virtually useless and can accomplish very little. It cannot serve the purpose it was created for.