

“THE DISCIPLINE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH”
HEBREWS 5:11-6:3

INTRO: In years past a lot of Bible Conferences, books, and studies were conducted on the concept of CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES. But it has been a LONG TIME since I have heard any conferences conducted, sermons preached or books written on the subject. Within those studies on CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES topics like Bible Study, Prayer, Separation from the World, Tithing, Personal Sanctification, Evangelism and the Deeper Spiritual Life were discussed. The apparent result of studies was **CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT AND SPIRITUAL STABILITY in the lives of God’s people**. In recent decades since the studies on CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES have been on the demise, the apparent result has been the **LACK OF CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT AND THE DEMISE OF SPIRITUAL STABILITY generally speaking**. An examination of what “seems” to be occurring in Christianity today appears that many of us are not really too interested in the study of **CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES but rather are more interested in the FREEDOM TO DO WHAT ONE PLEASES**. Yet a study of the Word of God clearly indicates that the Christian life is ONE OF GREAT DISCIPLINE. The foundational DISCIPLINE of them all is that of **THE DISCIPLINE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH**. When the DISCIPLINE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH is practiced, all other DISCIPLINES of the Christian life will fall in line. So, let’s take a look at the **DISCIPLINE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH**.

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WHAT IS SPIRITUAL GROWTH? **Spiritual Growth is the constant development of biblical principles in the life of the Christian, from the point of salvation to the point of death or the rapture, resulting in Christ-like character.**

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IN OUR STUDY WE ARE GOING TO NOTE THREE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH WHICH WILL BE A BLESSING TO US ALL.

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I. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS EXPECTED – HEBREWS 5:11-6:3

This passage teaches that many Christians do not grow spiritually but rather remain babes in Christ, even though they should be discipling others. And so, the expectation for spiritual growth is presented by saying in verse 1 of chapter 6, “LEAVING THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION.”

OBSERVE FOUR CLEAR COMPONENTS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

A. Spiritual Truths Often Cannot be Addressed because Immature Christians Cannot Comprehend them. Vs. 11

1. In this context, the greatness of the Priesthood of Christ could not be taught because the Hebrews could not digest it.

2. The Result: **The Priesthood of Christ was not fully understood.**

B. Many Christians should be Teachers but Because of the Lack of Spiritual Growth, they need yet to be Taught the First Principles of Christian Doctrine

-Vss. 12-14

1. Some Christians cannot be teachers because they need spiritual growth. They need to go from SPIRITUAL MILK to SPIRITUAL MEAT!

a. Spiritual Milk – Basic Christian Truths – 6:1,2

b. Spiritual Meat - Deeper Christian Doctrine

2. The Result: **A weakened Christian Life/Community**

C. Immature Christians are Implored by the Word of God to go on to Spiritual Perfection (Maturity) 6:1,2

1. This process begins by identifying where you are NOW spiritually and then go forward from that point. **WHERE ARE YOU SPIRITUALLY NOW?**

2. The Result: **A productive Christian Life/Community**

D. Spiritual Growth is Produced According to the Will of God as Christians follow the Principles of Spiritual Growth – 6:3

1. As Christians determine to follow the Principles of Spiritual Growth, GOD CAUSES THE GROWTH TO HAPPEN Cp. Ph. 2:12,13. (Spiritual Growth cannot be developed through personal effort).

2. The Result: **God's Expectations for the Christian are met!**

ILLUSTRATION:

II. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS EXPEDIENT – 2 PETER 3:18

This command for Spiritual Growth comes in the context of being prepared for the DAY OF THE LORD – God's Judgment of the Earth. (3:1-17). Compare Verses 11,12,14,17.

A. Spiritual Growth is a CLEAR COMMAND from God – Vs. 18

B. Spiritual Growth will EQUIP Christians to face the error and wickedness of the last days.

C. Spiritual Growth, neglected, is a clear sin of choice that has detrimental effects in the life of the individual Christian.

1. The Inability to Receive Strong Doctrine – 1 Cor. 3:1,2

2. The Inability to Receive Spiritual Freedom – Gal. 4:1-3

3. The Inability to Receive Spiritual Stability – Eph. 4:14

ILLUSTRATION:

III. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS EXPLAINED – 1 PETER 2:1-3

The explanation of spiritual growth in this passage comes through the context of a clear presentation of the source of our salvation – 1:22-25

A. Lay Aside Sinful Practices – Vs. 1

NOTE: This verse DOES NOT limit itself to the FIVE SINS listed. But the five mentioned covers the character of our entire life.

NOTE: PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH CANNOT PROGRESS UNLESS SIN IS RENOUNCED.

1. Malice – Used 11 times in the NT and speaks of the wickedness that comes from the depths of the human heart.

2. Guile – Deceit that blurs the truth.

3. Hypocrisies – False Coverings

4. Envy – The Lack of Contentment

5. Evil Speakings – An uncontrolled Tongue

B. Desire Spiritual Nourishment – Vs. 2

1. A Deep Desire – This is a PRIORITY in Spiritual Growth
(As a baby desires milk or as we desire food)

2. A Sincere Source – The MILK of the Word

THE ONLY SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

a. It must be read

b. It must be studied

c. It must be obeyed

d. It must be applied

3. A Genuine Growth

a. A lot of what is called "SPIRITUAL GROWTH" is very superficial and un-genuine. It makes people "feel good" but has no spiritual roots. This often comes from a good book, a good seminar, a special service, a concert, etc.

This type of superficial growth only sets one up for failure as it has no roots! Certainly God uses these things, but ONLY THE CONSISTENT TIME IN THE WORD OF GOD PRODUCES THE NOURISHMENT FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

b. Genuine Growth Comes from the Word of God being engrafted into our lives.

C. Taste the Graciousness of the Lord – Vs. 3

The more we TASTE THE LORD the more we FROW SPIRITUALLY!

1. At the point of salvation we experience HOW GRACIOUS the Lord is to those who trust Him.
2. The more we grow the more we see the GRACIOUSNESS OF GOD!

ILLUSTRATION:

IV. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS EXCITING

Too many Christians know very little about spiritual growth and as a result their walk with the Lord is stale and their interest in spiritual things is very low, even to the point of non-existent! BUT CHRISTIANS WHO GROW SPIRITUALLY, EXPERIENCE EXCITING THINGS THAT WILL NEVER BE KNOWN OTHERWISE.

- A. They will get to Know God better
- B. They will get to be Used by God better
- C. They will get to Bless Others more
- D. They will get to Glorify God more

ILLUSTRATION:

LESSON: The lack of spiritual growth displeases God a lot. The presence of spiritual growth pleases God a lot. WHICH PATH WILL YOU TAKE!