

WHAT'S GETTING IN THE WAY OF GROWTH?

A significant growth obstacle involves the way some Christians think about growth. To them it is not much more than a wish. They do recognize the need for growth; they understand passages like, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). They comprehend the growth imperative; they desire it. Yet sincere desire alone does not create spiritual growth.

One might suppose that a Christian’s failure to grow indicates a lack of sincerity. The Scriptures indicate this is a hasty generalization, for although the writer of Hebrews admonished some Christians for growth negligence, he believed that they were sincere people, dedicated to the Lord (cf. Heb. 5:11-14; 6:9-12). They weren’t apathetic, but they needed to make some changes, invest diligence, and work toward greater spiritual maturity.

So what is getting in the way of growth in the lives of sincere Christian people? Think about it as I ask some questions to stimulate further thoughts. How would you define growth? How would you determine if you had grown over the last year? If you had, how would you repeat that process in the coming year? How would you go about teaching growth skills to new converts, or to your children?

Consider how this article began: “A significant growth obstacle involves the way some Christians think about growth.” Again, we are not addressing every possible growth problem. For example, the issue with some is that they don’t have any desire for spiritual development—regardless of what they profess. But we are not talking about them. We are considering the person who looks at his Christian life, wants to grow, but

struggles with growth. Now as one thinks about the questions in the paragraph above, he may have trouble putting “his thoughts into words,” supplying little more than generalities. This indicates a problem. When the objective is not clearly defined, it will be hard to reach.

This suggests the need for clear, specific thinking in regard to growth. Consider the following passage that has “growth” written all over it:

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Think about the contributing factors of growth in this passage. First, growth is mandated. Second, urgency must be maintained. Third, proper motivation is a dominant factor. Fourth, diligence must be applied. Fifth, specific growth objectives are given; Peter did not relate mere generalities. Sixth, negative reinforcement supports the admonition; it is a challenging process. Seventh, Christian growth is an ongoing proposition; these growth qualities

must be “increasing,” and Christians are required to keep on bearing fruit.

There are two important conclusions about growth to think about for this passage: one, a person must “add” or “supplement” his faith with the specific qualities listed that he does not already possess; and two, he must develop those qualities listed that he does not already possess; and he must develop those qualities that he already has. These are specific, defined, and objective growth concepts.

We ought to conclude that real, sustainable growth involves specific, well-defined growth objectives—like, “I need to grow in faith,” or, “I need to grow in brotherly kindness.” We can’t hit the target if we don’t know what we’re shooting at. A lack of clear growth goals frustrates our ability to realize spiritual growth.

Jason Jackson from *Eastside Edifier*

Next Sunday we begin our

Spring Gospel Meeting

*“All Things Pertaining
Unto Life and Godliness”*

Dudley Morton

April 6-10, 2008

Sunday: 9:30 am ~ 10:30 am ~ 6:00 pm

Monday-Thursday: 7:00 pm

Wednesday Class: 10:00 am

ANNIVERSARY

Steven and Debra Schleif, 04-01.

BIRTHDAYS

Debra Schleif, 04-01; Steven Schleif, 04-01;
Brooke Nemechek, 04-03.

ILL

Sunday: John Cody Carter (PM).

Allen Scott is recuperating at home. Dee Adams is doing better, but is unable to drive. Helen Franklin is in Room 523 at the Cabrini Hospital in Alexandria, Louisiana. Richard Massey is scheduled for surgery at the Veteran's Hospital in Dallas, Texas on March 31.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, David Cole, Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

SYMPATHY

Our sympathy is extended to Verna Hanson in the passing of her brother-in-law in Abilene, KS last week.

OUT OF TOWN

The Thomas' and Janice Carter are in Louisiana this weekend with their parents and relatives. Trent Thrasher is in Fulton, Missouri visiting with his fiancée.

MEETING MEALS

Our Pot Luck Dinner will be next Sunday. The Ladies Class will provide a taco salad luncheon on Wednesday. There is a signup sheet for those who wish to provide an evening meal for the Morton's during the meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 55; Sunday PM, 39; Wednesday PM, 30.

Those To Serve

March 30, 2008

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS.....Steve Brown
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER John Dodson
PRESIDE..... Chris Edwards
ASSIST..... Joel Nelson
ASSIST..... Dave Parish
CLOSING PRAYER.....Jared Nelson

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Jeff Nemechek
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Cody Carter
LORD'S SUPPER..... Chris Edwards

WEDNESDAY April 2nd

SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
INVITATIONJared Nelson

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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