

HOW CAN I GROW SPIRITUALLY?

TO GROW SPIRITUALLY I NEED TO . . .

1. Recognize my real problem.
2. Repent of my sin.
3. Remember my position in Christ.
4. Renew my relationship with God.

I. Recognize My Real Problem

Many times we will seek to change an area of our life that is just a manifestation of a deeper problem. That expression of outward fruit is often easy to identify. In contrast, finding the root or the cause of that fruit is not always a simple task.

A. Recognize the manifestations of sin in my life.

1. Mark 7:21-23, Rom 1:29-31, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:3-7, Col. 3:5-9, 1 Tim 1:9-11, 1 Peter 4:3, Rev. 21:8
2. Adultery, Fornication, Pornography, Moral Uncleaness, Homosexuality, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Racism, Jealousy, Envy, Gossip, Slander, Critical of Others, Self-Centeredness, Anger, Wrath, Strife, Lack of Forgiveness, Murders, Heresies, Covetousness, Materialism, Lying, Stealing, Laziness, Disobedient to Parents, Disrespectful to Authority, Fear, Pride, Boasting, Drunkenness, Reveling, etc.
3. Application: Circle all my manifestations of sin

B. Recognize all my manifestations of sin are driven by inward desires.

James 1:14-15 *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

James 4:1-3 *"From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."*

1. Notice how the World's system plays to my desires.
 - a) Pride of Life - Motivation - *"The Desire to Be"* Isaiah 14:12-15
 - b) Lust of the Eyes - Materialism - *"The Desire to Have"* Luke 12:15
 - c) Lust of the Flesh - Morality - *"The Desire to Experience"* Gal. 5:16-17
2. Notice how my desires are actually my idols.
(Answer the question: what do I really want?)

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C. Recognize that my desires reveal the real problem.

1. A Wrong View of God – due to a shallow understanding of the character of God as revealed in Scripture (Col 1:16-18)

a) Primary attributes that are misunderstood:

- God is All-Knowing: Prov. 15:3, Mt. 10:30
- God is All-Powerful: Jer. 32:17, Ps. 115:3, Eph. 3:20
- God is All-Present: Jer. 23:23-24
- God is Faithful: 2 Tim. 2:13
- God is Good: Ps. 34:8, Luke 18:19
- God is Holy: 1 John 1:5, Ps. 99:9
- God is Love: 1 John 4:7-8, Rom. 5:8
- God is Merciful: Ps. 103:8
- God is Sovereign: Is. 46:9-10, Prov. 21:1
- God is Sufficient: Heb. 13:5, 2 Cor. 3:5
- God is Wise: Rom. 11:33
- God is Wrath: Rom. 1:18

2. A Love for Self that is Greater than a Love for God – due to a weak walk and/or relationship with God (Luke 18:18-22, 1 John 2:15)

a) Luke 18:18-22 *“And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.”*

b) Matthew 22:37 *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”*

2. Repent of My Sin

As God reveals my lack of obedience I am to come to Him in humble repentance. Christian's are to be broken over their wrong view of God and their love for self.

A. Confession of My Sin

1. To "say the same thing" as God – Ps. 32:5; Ps. 51, 1 John 1:7-10
2. Blame shifting, excuses, and denial have no place in true confession
3. Employ Godly affections – James 4, 2 Cor. 7

B. Forsaking of Sin

1. To Put Off those things of the old life that offend God – Eph. 4:22
2. To be willing to Put On the attributes of the new man – Eph. 4:24
3. To Flee from that which would lead me back to the old life - Rom 13:14
4. To be reconciled with those affected by my sin – Luke 19:1-10

3. Remember My Position in Christ

There are many passages of Scripture that communicate the Christian's position in Jesus Christ. Through Christ the Christian is no longer controlled by sin. He is free from sin and the law. Our identification with Christ is the reason that we can live and the motivation to live a life that is obedient and pleasing to God.

A. As a Christian . . .

1. I have died with Christ – Col. 2:20; 3:3
2. I have been raised with Christ – Col. 3:1
3. I am hid with Christ – Col. 3:3
4. I will appear with Christ – Col. 3:4

B. Therefore As a Christian I can . . .

1. Seek heavenly things – Col. 3:1
2. Set our affections on things above – Col. 3:2
3. Mortify the old man and his manner of living – Col. 3:5
4. Put on the character of Christ – Col. 3:12

C. Other Positional Passages: 2 Peter 1:1-11, 1 John 1, John 15, Rom. 6-8, Gal 5-6:10, Eph. 4, Gal. 2:20

4. Renew My Relationship with God

A. The root of my choice to sin is found in a . . .

1. Wrong view of God (Mind)
2. A love for self rather than God (Will/Affections)

B. I want to renew my relationship with God by . . .

1. Filling my mind with truth from the Bible about God.
 - a) Study passages that describe God's attributes and character.
 - b) Build a Biography of God.
 - c) Listen to sermons and Bible teaching.
2. Cultivating a heart that loves and enjoys Christ more than sin.
 - a) Discern and avoid the things in my life that rob me of my ability to enjoy God.
 - b) Meditate on the sacrifice and triumph of Christ.
 - c) Develop a disciplined yet devotional pursuit of God. 1 Peter 1:8

C. Application: Four ways that I want to renew my relationship with God.

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