



SERMON NOTES & PERSONAL/GROUP STUDY

Sunday, September 27

SERMON NOTES

PASSAGE

Colossians 2:6-7 -- *“So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.”*

BACKGROUND OF COLOSSIANS

Colossians is a letter Paul wrote while in prison to the Christians at Colossae, warning them about the false teaching that was entering the church and what they should do about it. He was encouraging Christians to follow Jesus as they had been taught and to NOT listen to the false teachers.

THEME

God’s goal for every Christian is to GROW spiritually.

STAGE 1 OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

SPIRITUAL BIRTH -- A person must make the decision to make Jesus the Lord of their life.

The birth stage of a Christian is what we call **SALVATION** -- you may also hear terms such as SAVED or BORN AGAIN, which mean the same thing.

The term **SAVED** comes from the fact that you are SAVED FROM GOD’S WRATH.

The term **BORN AGAIN** is used because you are starting a NEW LIFE WITH JESUS.

STAGE 2 OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

INFANCY -- A Christian must apply spiritual disciplines to their life and feed on God’s Word.

Some of the baby steps an infant Christian must be taught are what we call **SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**, which includes learning how to PRAY -- READING, UNDERSTANDING, & APPLYING SCRIPTURE -- GIVING -- SERVING -- SHARING YOUR FAITH, as well as others.

1 Peter 2:2 -- *“Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation.”*

STAGE 3 OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

CHILDHOOD & ADOLESCENCE -- A Christian must know why they believe what they believe.

This is where they move from the MILK of SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES to the **SOLID FOOD** of THEOLOGY, DOCTRINE, and APOLOGETICS -- discovering WHY THEY BELIEVE WHAT THEY BELIEVE.

1 Peter 3:15 -- *“Be ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason of the hope that is in you.”*

STAGE 4 OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

ADULTHOOD -- A Christian must make disciples who make disciples.

A spiritually **YOUNG ADULT** has grown tremendously from where they started -- they are EAGER TO SERVE, THINKING INDEPENDENTLY, more GOD-FOCUSED and OTHERS-FOCUSED, they are intentional about SHARING THEIR FAITH, but they are NOT YET ABLE TO MAKE DISCIPLES WHO CAN MAKE DISCIPLES.

When a Christian reaches the final stage of spiritual development -- a **MATURE ADULT** -- they are ABLE TO MAKE DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES.

Matthew 28:19-20 says, *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.”*

You should be GRATEFUL to JESUS for helping you grow, and to the SPIRITUAL MENTORS who took time to disciple you.

*“When we become Christians, we enter into a relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit -- and THEY will cause us to GROW. With the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to become MORE LIKE JESUS and to become more HOLY. It is this SPIRITUAL GROWTH that becomes a BIRTHMARK OF OUR FAITH!” -- **Charles Stanley***

TODAY'S TAKEAWAY

God does not desire to keep you where you are -- He desires for you to GROW!

QUESTION

If there was a chart of your spiritual growth, what would your chart look like?

PERSONAL / GROUP STUDY -- Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

This week, Drew began a new series, "God's Expectations of a Christian". Each week we will be looking at the basics that God expects of His people. This week's topic is Spiritual Growth.

Drew talked about how his mom marked the growth of him and his brothers. He specifically pointed out a year where he seemed to be stuck in his growth. No matter how much he tried to grow that year, it just wasn't happening.

In 2 Peter 3:18, Peter writes, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." What would be the difference if he'd said, "try to grow," instead of "grow"? (How does a suggestion or encouragement differ from a command?)

What are some ways you've experienced spiritual growth in the past? Have you experienced a time that your growth slowed or stopped?

Can people really be Christians if they do not grow spiritually? Explain. (Note: One of the signs of genuine faith is spiritual growth. But we all grow spiritually at different rates. Only God can determine the genuine state of a person's heart.)

Into the Word

The scripture that Drew used has as a key word, "rooted". We live in an agricultural area and many of us either have gardens or had parents/grandparents that raised gardens. When we think of roots, our minds go to the plants we raise. The plants need tending for them to grow properly. It takes work to have our garden plants properly rooted and then grow. The same is true for our spiritual growth.

Read Psalm 19:7–11 and 1 Peter 2:2–3.

Because plants need nutrition, applying fertilizer to the soil is an important and necessary part of gardening. That fertilizer comes in all different types. Like the plants in our garden, our spirits, souls, and minds need to be fed as well. One of the most important spiritual foods available to the Christian is the Word of God, the Bible. Like the food we use for our plants, this food, too, can take various forms. It can be read and explained from a pulpit, set to music and sung by individuals or groups, listened to on CDs, or downloaded to an iPod.

But the way to get the most spiritual nutrition from God's Word is to read it personally. When we read the Bible by ourselves, we can read at a time and at a pace that is comfortable for us—we can pause and

reflect at any point, we can stop and search further when we come to something we don't understand. Regular, frequent reading of the Bible contributes greatly to spiritual growth.

How did you get your first Bible? If you are in a group, share the story.

Does it matter which version of the Bible we read and study? Why or why not?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4–9. What significance is there in the many forms in which God wanted his commands taught to children?

What is the right amount of Bible reading for the Christian who wants to grow? (The Bible does not specify a specific amount of time that believers should invest in scripture. Consider what happens when "quotas" are placed on people.

Can that become a burden that causes resentment and drudgery? What should be the standard that we use for the amount of time we spend in scripture? What is the important thing to keep in mind?)

The plants in our gardens are not just passive recipients of the things that they need to grow. Studies have revealed that plants will move and respond to the presence of sunlight and water. They actively seek these things out because they instinctively know they need them for growth. We also should actively seek out the things we need to grow. We do that through prayer.

Read Luke 18:1

If God can read our minds and see what we are experiencing, why do we have to pray to Him? (What do you think God puts the most importance on: that we get what we want/need or that we develop a relationship with Him?)

What are some different forms of prayer? Name as many as you can think of.

What does each form of prayer add to our spiritual growth?

Seed packets have instructions on them. These instructions were written by scientist and experts that have gone through the experience of planting and growing the plants. Thanks to them, we can rely on their counsel to help us with our gardens. We don't have to go it alone.

Christians, too, are not intended to go it alone. God has seen to it that there are resources available to the Christian that will promote healthy spiritual growth. We get those resources by being a part of a body of believers.

Read Luke 4:14–21.

What was the best Sunday school or Bible study you ever attended, and what made it so good? How did it help your growth?

How would you respond to someone who claims, "I can be a Christian without going to church"? (While you can confess your belief in Christ as Savior without going to church, what does a believer run the risk of by not attending?)

Apply The Word

Each individual Christian is called to grow spiritually. God has provided his Word, prayer, and the body of Christ as key ingredients in our growth and making us more fruitful as Christians. It is up to us to make the best use of these provisions.

As you look back over the past year, can you see areas where you have grown spiritually? Which of the above fostered that growth?

Are there times your growth slowed or even stopped? Which of the above was missing?

Pray and ask God to reveal to you the "nutrients" that you specifically need to grow and then, like plants do, actively seek them out.