

“SPIRITUAL GROWTH”

Ephesians 4:11-16

On Thursday we will wake up to a fresh new year—2026. I wonder what God has planned for us, for America, and for the world. I’m sure there will be some highs and some lows. One thing is for certain. The Lord will be with us every step of the way. **Let’s don’t make the mistake of simply tipping our hat to the Lord; let’s tip our heart to Him.** To do this we must make the most of our time. That’s what Moses hinted at when he wrote Psalm 90:

Psalm 90:12...So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.

Unfortunately, some people never grow up. They just grow old. In one of George Barna’s studies, he found that when believers were

asked to identify the single, most important thing they hope to accomplish in life only 20% mentioned anything related to spiritual growth. Believers seem to say that their faith matters, but very few are actually pursuing spiritual growth. [[Growing True Disciples](#), George Barna, p.32]

This is nothing new. Even some of the first century believers had to be prodded to focus on spiritual growth...

1 Corinthians 3:1–2...And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. **2** I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.

Hebrews 5:12...For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of

God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

A lack of spiritual growth is why believers. .

- become insensitive toward the Lord and lose the joy of their salvation.
- fall into patterns of sin and exclude themselves from the life of the church.
- are not learning new insights from the Word.
- are not striving to live in obedience to Jesus Christ.

Stunted spiritual growth is toxic to our spiritual lives. . .

A mother was driving her four-year-old daughter to preschool one morning. She was a medical doctor and had left her stethoscope on the back seat. She noticed her four-year-old was quite interested in the stethoscope and was playing with it. This mother began to

think to herself, “Could it be that my daughter will grow up to follow in my footsteps?” Her thoughts were disrupted when her daughter spoke into the stethoscope and said, “Welcome to McDonalds, may I take your order please.”

Are you growing spiritually or has your spiritual life grown stale? If you are a true believer, I have some good news for you.

YOU CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY.

Take your Bible and turn to **Ephesians 4:11-16**. I challenge you to become a passionate zealot for Jesus. There are a few things you need to understand about spiritual growth:

1. THE PRIORITY

Our passage today deals with the growth of the church. But keep in mind that a church

only grows when its members grow. Look at the references to growth in this one passage.

- ***“...the building up of the Body of Christ.” [4:12]***
- ***“...to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” [4:13]***
- ***“...we are no longer to be children.” [4:14]***
- ***“...we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.” [4:15]***
- ***“...causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” [4:16]***

Paul repeatedly drives home the point that we must grow spiritually. When we grow like this, the church becomes stronger also. This

idea of spiritual growth can be found throughout the Bible . . .

Psalms 92:12—The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

2 Thessalonians 1:3—We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater.

1 Peter 2:1–2—Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

2 Peter 3:18—but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Listen, the same God who unleashed His power to save you redirects His power toward your spiritual growth after you are saved.

We simply must submit ourselves to His will and purpose. Out of this partnership, He produces spiritual growth in our lives. This is why I want to make this point with you as we move into 2026 . . .

YOU CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY.

As it relates to spiritual growth, I want you to understand the priority. Secondly, I want you to grasp. . .

2. THE PLAN

Our wise all-knowing God has a specific plan designed for your spiritual growth.

First, God provides spiritual leaders who teach us the Word of God and show us how to apply its truth to our lives.

Ephesians 4:11–13—And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Second, we start out as spiritual babies and over time we grow spiritually.

A group of tourists who were visiting a picturesque village walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked him, “Were any great men born in this village?” The old man replied, “Nope, only babies.”

It’s easy for us to get bent out of shape when we see old attitudes and habits exerting

themselves in our lives. Discouragement can set in and we can even begin to doubt our salvation. Hold on! Spiritual growth takes time. This process is called sanctification!

Third, I want you to see the goal of God's plan.

Paul mentions it twice...

"Until we all attain...to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." [vs. 13]

"We are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ." [vs. 15]

God's master plan for our lives is that we be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ **[Rom. 8:28-29]**. By this, I mean that we seek to please God in every area of our lives just like Jesus did **[Read Ephesians 4:22-24, 31-32]**.

Spiritual growth is a process. It takes time.

YOU CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY.

As it relates to spiritual growth, I want you to see the priority and to grasp the plan. Then, there is . . .

3. THE PILLAR

A careful look at this passage reveals a powerful truth as it relates to believers growing spiritually. Here it is...

The ministry of the local church is essential for spiritual growth to occur in our lives.

Ephesians 4:14–16—As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the

proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Paul uses the human body as an example. Jesus Christ fits and holds the body together but notice how He does it. Paul writes, “***...by that which every joint supplies.***” MacArthur made the following observation about this phrase...

This is the point of union where the resources, gifts, and power of the Holy Spirit pass from one member to the other, providing a flow of ministry that produces growth.

God put you in this church because the believers here need you and you need them. That's why Paul highlighted the importance of every member when he wrote, ***“according to the proper working of each individual part.”***

Hebrews 10:23–25—Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Healthy, growing disciples are not developed in a vacuum. Bottom line—we need each other to grow spiritually!

CONCLUSION

I'm not sure how it happened. Although we have heard countless sermons, attended numerous Bible Studies, and read Christian books—we have missed the point of the Christian faith. God's great purpose for your life is that you grow spiritually.

Paul, Peter, and John encountered the risen Christ and they radically committed themselves to Him. Nothing was more important than growing in the grace and knowledge of their Lord and Savior. A.W. Tozer wrote . . .

The great people of the Bible and Christian history have had an insatiable hunger for God. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with so many of us He waits so very long in vain.

The kind of fiery, focused discipleship that results in spiritual growth is a blend of both what God does in our lives and what we must do. Don't sell yourself short . . .

YOU CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY.

I trust that you are ready to embrace...

- 1. The Priority of Spiritual Growth***
- 2. The Plan of Spiritual Growth***

3. *The Pillar of Spiritual Growth*

However, if you are really going to grow spiritually, there are some things you must do.

First, examine yourself to make sure that you are in the faith.

Listen, Jesus offered Himself as a bloody sacrifice for your sins on the cross, and He was raised from the dead so that you might know that God the Father accepted His sacrifice. There is no substitute for believing in Jesus and committing your life to Him. Come to Jesus today in saving faith!

Second, you must develop a personal strategy to grow spiritually.

The Lord is calling you to a deeper level of intimacy through reading your Bible and praying on a consistent basis? Or maybe you need to commit to active participation in a

connect group or sign up or to attend one of our special Wednesday night equip classes or to be a part of discipleship group. Now is the time. Take action!

Third, decide right now that you will join CFBC.

For some of you it means that you present yourself for baptism. For others who are already saved and scripturally baptized, it means that you will officially become a member of this CFBC.

When it comes to spiritual growth, God has a sizzling, exciting, and abundant life just waiting for you to commit yourselves to growing spiritually. When we do this together, this church will become a testimony to the supernatural power of God!

YOU CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY.

December 28, 2025
CFBC... *New Year's Message*