

What Have I Gotten Myself Into? – It's None of Your Business

Every Christian A Growing Christian

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to **fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.** ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, **growing in the knowledge of God,** ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. Colossians 1:9-12

³We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because **your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.** ⁴Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 2 Thessalonians 1:2-4

¹Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ²Like newborn babies, **crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,** ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1 Peter 2:1-3

¹⁷Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. ¹⁸But **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. 2 Peter 3:17-18

The fatal metaphor of progress, which means leaving things behind us, has utterly obscured the real idea of growth, which means leaving things inside us. G.K. Chesterton

Obstacles to Growth

Self ¹⁵What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. ¹⁸You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

¹⁹I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. ²⁰When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! ²²**But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.** ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:15-23

Do you feel loved by God because you believe he makes much of you, or because you believe he frees you and empowers you to enjoy making much of him? John Piper (Mike Mileski would call this 'pure gold').

Satan ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸**to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God**, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' Acts 26:17-18

The World ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there **by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.** ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, **we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.** ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:14-16

How Does One Grow?

Pray ¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I **keep asking** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:15-23

⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound **more and more** in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11

The Holy Spirit ¹⁵I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, **sanctified by the Holy Spirit.** Romans 15:15-17

¹⁵"If you love me, you will obey what I command. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, **for he lives with you and will be in you.** ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

²⁵"All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, **will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.** ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:15-21, 25-27

While the Son and the Spirit are personally distinct, they are entwined with one another. Jesus is Teacher, Jesus is Guide, Jesus is Counselor, Jesus goes to make a home for His disciples. The Spirit is another like Jesus: He teaches, guides, counsels, and brings orphans into the home and heart of God. Moreover, because He is Spirit, He does this by personally indwelling our spirits in a mysterious yet wonderfully real and powerful way. Sinclair Ferguson

The Word ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for **teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,** ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Each Other ¹⁶Therefore **confess** your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us **consider** how we may **spur one another on toward love and good deeds.** ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us **encourage** one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:23-25

You ¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I **press on** to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I **press on** toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12-14

¹¹But you, man of God, **flee from all this,** and **pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹²**Fight** the good fight of the faith. **Take hold** of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to **keep this command** without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen. 1 Timothy 6:11-16

Significant human transformation always involves training, not just trying. Spiritual transformation is a long-term endeavor. It involves both God and us. I liken it to crossing an ocean. Some people try, day after day, to be good, to become spiritually mature. That's like taking a rowboat across the ocean. It's exhausting and usually unsuccessful. Others have given up trying and throw themselves entirely on "relying on God's grace." They're like drifters on a raft. They do nothing but hang on and hope God gets them there.

Neither trying nor drifting are effective in bringing about spiritual transformation. A better image is the sailboat, which if it moves at all, it's a gift of the wind. We can't control the wind, but a good sailor discerns where the wind is blowing and adjusts the sails accordingly. Working with the Holy Spirit, which Jesus likened to the wind in John 3, means we have a part in discerning the winds, in knowing the direction we need to go, and in training our sails to catch the breezes that God provides. That's true transformation. John Ortberg

So many times, you can't see anything happening week to week. Spiritual growth takes place beneath the surface. Stuart Briscoe

Turning up the Intensity

¹Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should **restore** him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Galations 6:1

¹⁹My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should **bring him back**,
²⁰remember this: Whoever **turns** a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. James 5:19-20

The Benefits to Growth

God is glorified.

You are free.

The world is won.

Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, ¹⁶so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. 2 Corinthians 10:15-16