

# Valley Bible Church Growth Studies

## Spiritual Growth and Christian Character

### Lesson 1 – Why Grow?

#### Introduction

How many are satisfied with their walk with God? Hopefully each of us are content in the circumstances of life that God has us in, but we are not *satisfied* in the sense that we have become complaisant in our walk with God.

- It is a bad thing to be satisfied spiritually. Oswald Chambers (1874–1917)
- He who believes himself to be far advanced in the spiritual life has not even made a good beginning. Jean Pierre Camus (1584–1652)

For many Christians, we do not necessarily need to *know* more, we just need to *do* what we know. The purpose of this class/workshop is to study or review the basic principles of God's Word in relation to spiritual growth and mature Christian character.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*. 2 Pet 1:12 (NASB)

#### Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth is the process of becoming more and more like Jesus; of walking in a manner worthy of our calling; of matching up more and more of our Christian walk with who we are in Christ.

<sup>18</sup>But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Cor 3:18 (NASB)

<sup>10</sup>so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects**, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; Col 1:10 (c.f. Eph 4:1 and 1 Thess 2:12)

<sup>8</sup>for you were formerly darkness, but now **you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light** <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), <sup>10</sup>trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; Eph. 5:8-11 (NASB)

#### Who Causes Growth?

##### God

<sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. <sup>7</sup>So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, **but God who causes the growth**. 1 Cor. 6-7 (NASB)

## Valley Bible Church Growth Studies

<sup>18</sup>Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, <sup>19</sup>and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, **grows with a growth which is from God.** Col. 2:18-19 (NASB)

<sup>12</sup>So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>**for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** Phil. 2:12-13 (NASB)

### Our Part

We are to...

Press on / Pursue – Phil 3:12-15

Press on / Go on – Heb 6:1 [go on (NIV); press on (NAS)]

Excel over and above where we are – 1 Thess 4:1, 10

Be diligent and exert ourselves – 2 Pet 3:14; 2 Tim 2:15

Long for / Earnestly desire – 1 Pet 2:2

There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity. It takes time to be holy. Erwin W. Lutzer (1941–)

Sanctification means . . . a life of discipline such as nine out of every ten of us will have nothing to do with. Oswald Chambers (1874–1917)

If it takes time to be grow (be holy) and from observation we see that many of us are unwilling to take the time and effort, then why should we pursue growth?

### Why Pursue Growth?

God's Glory! Phil 1:11 & John 15:8

<sup>9</sup>And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup>so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; <sup>11</sup>having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, **to the glory and praise of God.** Phil. 1:9-11 (NASB)

<sup>8</sup>"My Father is **glorified by this, that you bear much fruit**, and *so* prove to be My disciples. John 15:8 (NASB)

God Commands us to grow.

<sup>18</sup>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. 2 Pet. 3:18 (NASB)

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To experience abundant Life / To avoid ruin, destruction, and grief

<sup>9</sup>But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into **ruin and destruction**. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with **many griefs**. 1 Tim. 6:9-10 (NASB)

<sup>11</sup>"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full. John 15:11 (NASB)

### **Homework**

Read Phil and 2 Peter – 7 Chapters

Think about the question: Are you satisfied with your walk (level of maturity) / growth?

Look over the following evaluation and see how you are doing in your walk with God.

### **How am I doing?**

#### **Relationship with God**

Daily personal time with God. (Time in Word and Prayer)

Seek to be yielded to God's Word.

Living each day with a God conscience attitude.

Seek to bring God's Word to bear on life's circumstances.

Turning thoughts into prayers.

Memorizing Scripture.

#### **Relationship with Believers**

Seek to live in peace with Christians

Seek forgiveness with those that I have offended.

Seek to love my brothers and sisters

Serve Christ through a church ministry.

#### **Relationship with Unbelievers**

Pray regularly for the unsaved.

Seek to share testimony with others when there is an opportunity.

Seek to share the Gospel regularly.