

“Growing in Christ”

Once we are born into God family by being saved from our sins by the Lord Jesus’ death on the cross for us, we have a new spiritual life that begins to grow inside us. To understand this new life think of the word FOCUS:

Fellowship
Obedience
Communion
Understanding
Security

SECURITY OF MY SALVATION – 1John 5:13; John 10:28-30

The way that we know we are saved is through the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God, and so to a person of faith it gives the reliable promises of God.

1John 5:13 *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

But is the salvation I have received from the Lord through the Bible permanent? Can anything change it? There are many passages that show us that once a person is genuinely saved, God will continue to save them, protect them and lead them. He promises to never leave us (Hebrews 13:5-6; Matthew 28:18-20); we are His sheep, and as a faithful shepherd He ensures that nothing will allow us to be snatched out of His hand (John 10:28-30); He is like a mother who cannot forget her child (Isaiah 49:15-16); we have been born into God family and become children of God, and birth is something that cannot be undone (1Peter 1:23). See also Romans 8:38-39; Colossians 3:3.

John 10:28-30 *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”*

But what happens if I sin in my life? The Bible makes it clear in 1John 1:7-10 that a Christian will sin. This does not destroy my connection/relationship to God or His love to me, but it does make me uncomfortable with God. Think of a child who disobeys a parent and feels very uncomfortable, but is still part of the family. When I as a believer sin, I confess my sin to the Lord so that I am cleansed and the feeling of discomfort leaves.

1John 1:9 *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

UNDERSTANDING GOD’S WILL BY READING THE BIBLE – 1Peter 2:1-3

1Peter 2 views a Christian as someone who is born into the family of God. Every newborn baby needs food for its development. The food for a Christian is described in verse 2 as God’s Word, the Bible. Christians should have a regular diet of reading the Bible every day just like a baby eats. It needs to be a constant habit (verse 2 says “crave pure spiritual milk” and verse 3 says “as you come to him” – the idea is coming over and over). This is necessary for growth (verse 2 says “so that you may grow up in your salvation”). So start reading the Word of God and you will want to read more and more!

COMMUNION WITH GOD BY PRAYING – Luke 11:2-4

As a Christian we have a new connection/relationship with God. God Himself comes to live inside me when I become saved, and He does that through the Holy Spirit whom He sends to live within the believer (Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:9, 14-15). God living inside me gives me a position of intimacy with God our Father. Any relationship grows through communication and understanding. Communicating with God is called prayer, and the Lord Jesus gives us a sample prayer in Luke 11:2. Reading this passage shows us how to pray:

With reverence “hallowed be Your Name”

Expecting God to work in the future “Your kingdom come”

Ask God for our needs “Give us this day our daily bread”

Confessing the things we know have done wrong “Forgive us our sins”

OBEDIENCE TO GOD – 1Peter 2:4-5

Coming back to 1Peter 2 and little children in the family of God, we see that not only do babies need food, they also need exercise. In the Old Testament the priests were able to communicate with God for people, and they did the work for God in the temple. But in the New Testament, when a person believes on Christ they become part of the priesthood! We can communicate with God directly, and He wants us like priests to do things for Him – this is part of our practice, our Christian exercise, our obedience.

One of the first things that many believers realize they need to obey God in is to be baptized. Baptism does not make a person into a Christian (saved person); that happens by personally trusting the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Acts 16:31). But it is a way of announcing that I have believed in Jesus Christ as my Lord and that I will seek God’s grace to follow Him for my life (Romans 6:3-5; Acts 8:26-40).

God also wants us to grow up in our character and become more loving, joyful, peaceful people (Galatians 5:22-23), He wants us to tell others about the Gospel so that they can be saved (Mark 5:19; Romans 1:14-16; Acts 1:8).

FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS – Acts 2:41-42, 46-47

When you watch a brightly blazing fire, if you take one piece of wood away from the fire and put it on the ground on its own, it will soon stop burning. This shows us the principal of the benefit the a single thing can have from being with others. In God’s plan, He does not want believers to just privately worship God and have a relationship with Him. He wants us to come together to worship, pray, learn His Word and strengthen one another. This is what being part of a church is all about. The first church 2000 years ago in Jerusalem is a great example. Read the report about them:

Acts 2:41-42, 46-47, “Those who accepted his message were baptized ... they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer ... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.”