

Growing Spiritually Rock Solid

Have you ever wondered why some Christians seem to struggle with the same sins over and over while others appear to have genuine freedom? The answer lies in understanding our new nature in Christ and learning how to grow spiritually by feeding on God's Word while laying aside what doesn't belong to us.

What Does It Mean to Be Born Again?

When you're born again, something fundamental changes at your core. You receive God's nature on the inside of you. Before salvation, every person has a sin nature inherited from Adam - a nature that's rebellious and drawn to wrong. But when you accept Jesus, your spirit is made completely new.

As newborn spiritual babies, we now have God's nature within us. It's no longer our nature to be rebellious and sinful. Our nature is now to do things God's way. This is why First Peter 2:1-2 tells us: "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow thereby."

Why Can We "Lay Aside" Sin?

Notice the phrase "laying aside." This suggests something you can simply take off, like removing a coat when you come inside. The key insight is that sin is no longer part of who you are - it's something that gets on you from the outside.

For someone who isn't born again, sin isn't something they can just lay aside because it's their nature. They would have to lay themselves aside, which is impossible. But for believers, wrong attitudes and behaviors are like ill-fitting garments that we can choose to remove.

How Do We Grow Out of Sin?

There are two clear indicators that you're growing spiritually:

1. Old Behaviors Stop Fitting

Wrong attitudes, actions, and reactions become increasingly uncomfortable. Things you once did freely start feeling tight and restrictive. You find yourself yielding to wrong behaviors less and less.

2. Your Spiritual Appetite Increases

You develop a growing hunger for God's Word. Just as physical appetite increases with growth, spiritual appetite expands as you mature. You want more than just "milk" - you desire deeper understanding and revelation.

What If I Keep Struggling with the Same Issues?

Don't panic if you find yourself repeatedly laying aside the same wrong attitudes or behaviors. The solution is to keep growing spiritually. Sometimes you'll simply grow out of certain struggles - they won't fit anymore because your spirit has become too big for them.

Keep feeding on God's Word consistently. Keep laying aside what's wrong. Eventually, some things will become so foreign to your nature that you can't even put them on anymore. Your spirit will reject them automatically.

The Importance of Stirring Up Spiritual Hunger

Unlike the world around us that constantly stirs up fleshly appetites, we must intentionally cultivate spiritual hunger. The world won't encourage your spiritual growth - in fact, it will try to mock and discourage it.

You must make a conscious choice to desire God's Word. Tell yourself, "I'm hungry for the Word of God." This isn't about feelings - it's about faith and decision. As Jesus demonstrated when tempted in the wilderness, we don't live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

What Happens When We Neglect Spiritual Food?

Just as physical appetite can shrink when we don't eat regularly, spiritual appetite can diminish when we neglect God's Word. People who once had strong hunger for spiritual things can lose their appetite through neglect.

Warning signs include:

- Struggling to receive spiritual teaching
- Finding fault with how God's Word is presented
- Losing interest in church and fellowship
- Feeling spiritually "full" after very little input

The Power of Consistent Spiritual Feeding

When you consistently feed your spirit with God's Word, something beautiful happens. You develop such a strong appetite for righteousness that unrighteous things become nauseating. You don't have to fight temptation - you simply have no stomach for it.

This isn't about gritting your teeth and resisting. It's about growing to the point where wrong things are genuinely unappealing. You can choose not to like something until you genuinely don't like it anymore.

From Struggle to Freedom

The Christian life becomes much easier when you reach the point where you're not constantly struggling with sin. Instead of fighting against your old nature, you're simply living from your new nature in Christ.

Jesus said His yoke is easy and His burden is light. As you learn of Him and grow spiritually, life becomes easier, not harder. His way of doing things becomes natural and effortless.

Life Application

This week, commit to feeding your spirit daily with God's Word while consciously laying aside attitudes or behaviors that don't fit your new nature in Christ. Remember, you're not trying to discipline yourself - your spirit is disciplining your body.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What "old clothes" do I need to lay aside that no longer fit who I am in Christ?
- How can I stir up greater hunger for God's Word in my daily life?
- What specific steps will I take this week to feed my spirit consistently?
- Am I trying to fight sin in my own strength, or am I growing out of it through spiritual maturity?

The goal isn't perfection through willpower, but transformation through spiritual growth. As you consistently feed on God's Word and lay aside what doesn't belong, you'll find yourself naturally outgrowing the struggles that once seemed impossible to overcome.

Quotes

1. "We have a God who loves to be loved on. What an amazing truth—that you can love on God."
2. "He is so humble that He would take former sinners—rebellious people—raise them up, and seat them with Him in heavenly places, far above all the powers of darkness."
3. "He's not like us—but we are learning to be like Him. I'll say it again: He's not like us, but we are becoming like Him."

4. “Our God calls things that do not exist as though they did. He looks at Simon and calls him Petros—rock solid.”
5. “If you’ve been born again, you have the nature of God on the inside of you. You no longer have a sin nature—a nature bent toward rebellion and sin.”
6. “It’s not your nature to do wrong. It’s your nature to do what is right—to do things God’s way. That’s who you are now.”
7. “He says, ‘Lay it aside.’ Like a garment—you put on a coat, but when you come inside, you simply take it off and set it aside. It’s not a big deal.”
8. “But if you’re not born again, it’s in you—you can’t just lay it aside. It’s who you are. You’d have to lay yourself aside, and you can’t do that.”
9. “There are things that may be hard to lay aside now—but as you continue to grow spiritually, you’ll outgrow them. They simply won’t fit anymore.”
10. “Just keep feeding. Keep growing spiritually. Stay with it until those things no longer fit your life.”
11. “Two indicators of spiritual growth: first, the things you once wore so freely—wrong attitudes, actions, reactions—start to feel tight. They become harder to carry.”
12. “Second, your spiritual appetite increases. You find yourself wanting more of the Lord—you’re feeding more on His Word and delighting in His presence.”
13. “As you grow spiritually, your appetite grows. And the old lifestyle—the old way of living—it just doesn’t fit you anymore.”
14. “When it comes to spiritual things, you’ve got to reach inside yourself and stir yourself up—to partake of the life of God.”
15. “You’re living in a world that’s trying to dumb you down spiritually—trying to mock your faith and make you feel like you don’t belong.”
16. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”
17. “When something isn’t right, ask yourself: ‘What am I missing? What needs to change?’ Sometimes you just need to look back and examine things.”
18. “The devil will try to sap your strength—you can go to bed full of joy and wake up feeling drained.”

19. “You’ve got to fix yourself a spiritual meal. Rise up and say, ‘I am born of God, and I hunger for His Word.’”
20. “There are things some Christians enjoy that I have no appetite for whatsoever. In fact, I can’t even stomach them—they turn me away.”

Verses

1. 1 Peter 2:1-2
2. 1 Peter 2:4

Summary

When you're born again, you receive God's nature and can lay aside sin like removing ill-fitting clothes. Sin is no longer part of who you are - it's something external that gets on you. Two signs of spiritual growth are that wrong behaviors become increasingly uncomfortable and your appetite for God's Word increases. The solution to recurring struggles isn't fighting harder but growing spiritually by consistently feeding on Scripture. As you mature, some sins will become so foreign to your new nature that you'll automatically reject them. The key is intentionally cultivating spiritual hunger and feeding your spirit daily with God's Word.