

Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation Through Growth

Series: First Corinthians

Bible Text(s) Used

1 Corinthians 3:1–7; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:24; Romans 8:1–2;
Matthew 16:24–25; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Philippians 1:6

Spiritual Stagnation Happens When We Stop Growing

Pastor Mike reminds us that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church out of love and concern. Though they believed in Christ, they had stopped progressing spiritually. Paul described them as "infants in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1ⁱ), meaning they were spiritually alive but immature. This teaches us an important truth: salvation is the beginning of the journey, not the end. God saves us not only to forgive us, but to transform us through a lifelong process called sanctification—becoming more like Jesus.

Spiritual growth requires humility and surrender. Jesus Himself said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24ⁱⁱ). The cross is not only where we begin our faith—it is the path we continue to walk. When we resist correction, hold on to pride, or settle into old patterns, we limit what God wants to do in our lives.

This point encourages us to examine ourselves honestly. God never stops working, but growth requires our willingness to yield. As Paul reminds us, spiritual maturity comes as we continually submit ourselves to Christ and allow His transforming work in our lives.

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Reflection Question: How is God inviting you to grow or surrender more fully to Him in this season?

Spiritual Growth Is Hindered by Jealousy, Division, and Self-Focus

Paul confronted jealousy and strife among the Corinthians, saying, "For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh?" (1 Corinthians 3:3ⁱⁱⁱ). Their divisions revealed that their focus had shifted from Christ to human leaders. Paul corrected them by reminding them, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6^{iv}).

Jealousy and comparison remain common struggles today. These attitudes reflect what Scripture calls 'the flesh'—our old sinful nature. But through Christ, we have been given a new identity. Paul explains, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24^v).

When we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us instead of our old nature, we experience unity, peace, and spiritual growth. This transformation happens as we daily surrender to God through prayer, Scripture, and obedience.

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The Way of the Cross Leads to Renewed Power and Spiritual Vitality

The cross is the center of our faith and the source of our spiritual power. Paul declared, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20^{vi}). This means our old life no longer defines us—Christ now lives through us.

Pastor Mike reminds us that many believers live spiritually in 'low power mode.' They are saved, but not fully experiencing the joy, boldness, and strength God provides. Yet Scripture reminds us, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1^{vii}), and "the word of the cross... is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18^{viii}).

No matter how stuck we may feel, God invites us back. He does not condemn us but restores us. When we return to Him in surrender, He renews our strength and leads us into deeper spiritual maturity.

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Closing Thought

The cross remains the source of forgiveness, transformation, and power. As we surrender daily to Christ, He faithfully shapes us into His likeness. "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion" (Philippians 1:6^{ix}). Spiritual growth is not about perfection, but continual surrender and trust in the One who saves and transforms.

ⁱ 3 But I, brothers,^[a] could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

ii ²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

iii ³ for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

iv ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

v ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

vi ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

vii ⁸ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ^[a]

viii ¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

ix ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.