

FIVE KEYS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

BISHOP SAMUEL R. BLAKES

Spiritual growth isn't just about showing up in a building on Sunday morning; it is about what happens in the trenches of your mind on Tuesday afternoon. When you are carrying the heavy weight of emotional scars, past trauma, and unresolved pain, growth can feel completely impossible. The enemy wants you stuck in a self-sabotaging mindset, convinced that your history of hurt dictates your future potential. He wants you circling the same mountains of bitterness and anxiety year after year. But God has called you to outgrow the spaces and the mindsets that used to hold you captive.

We know we are supposed to grow, but the frustration in the church often comes when we are told what to do without being taught how to do it. Spiritual growth requires intense intentionality. It is a daily surrender, a daily tearing down of mental strongholds, and a deliberate rebuilding of your life on the foundation of the Word of God. If you are ready to break the cycle of emotional stagnation and step into the resilience God created you to walk in, here are five practical, life-applicable keys to actively accomplish spiritual growth.

1. CHANGING YOUR DIET: FEEDING THE SPIRIT OVER THE FLESH

1 Peter 2:2 KJV

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

We have a habit of feeding our trauma, feeding our fears, and feeding our doubts, while completely starving our spirits. If you want to grow, you have to change your mental and spiritual diet. You cannot consume hours of negativity, gossip, and fear-based media, and expect to produce a life of faith and peace. The "how" of this key is found in your daily routine. You do not just read the Bible to check off a religious box; you read it to intentionally replace the lies of your past with the truth

of God. Start small. Take one scripture a day, write it on an index card, and speak it out loud when your emotional triggers rise up. When the flesh tells you that you are ruined, you feed the spirit by speaking the Word out loud until your mind lines up with God's reality.

2. UPROOTING MENTAL STRONGHOLDS: THE PRACTICE OF SURRENDER

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 KJV

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

You cannot grow spiritually if your mind remains anchored in emotional defeat. Unhealed trauma builds strongholds—invisible fortresses of self-doubt, insecurity, and wrong attitudes that block your spiritual progress. How do we uproot them? By learning to talk back to your own mind. You must stop letting your thoughts run unchecked. When a self-sabotaging thought tells you that you are unlovable, or that you are going to fail just like last time, you must literally cast it down. You say out loud, "No, I surrender that thought to Christ. I am the righteousness of God." You accomplish growth by actively interrupting your own negative thinking patterns and refusing to entertain thoughts that contradict God's grace.

3. CULTIVATING A CLIMATE OF HONEST PRAYER

Philippians 4:6 KJV

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Prayer is not a performance for the church crowd; it is your ultimate lifeline for emotional healing. When you are dealing with deep pain, sometimes you do not have the energy for fancy, theological words. Growth happens when you bring your raw, unfiltered, bleeding mess to God. How do you do this practically? You stop waiting until you feel "spiritual" enough to pray. You talk to Him in the car on the way to work. You cry it out in the shower. You turn your emotional triggers into prayer alarms. Every single time you feel overwhelmed by a memory or paralyzed

by anxiety, let that feeling be the exact trigger that forces you to open your mouth and invite God into that moment.

4. SEVERING TIES WITH STAGNATION

Proverbs 13:20 KJV

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

You cannot heal in the same environment that broke you, and you cannot grow around people who are perfectly comfortable with your dysfunction. Some of the wrong attitudes and emotional weights we carry were caught like a virus from the company we keep. If you want to grow, you must audit your circle. The "how" of this step requires courage. You have to establish boundaries. You must distance yourself from conversations that feed your bitterness, complaining, and victimhood. Intentionally place yourself in the company of believers who challenge you to trust God, who hold you accountable, and who speak life over you even when you are hurting.

5. EMBRACING THE PROCESS WITH PATIENCE

James 1:4 KJV

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

In our culture, we want instant deliverance, microwave healing, and overnight transformation. But God often chooses incremental development. Healing from deep trauma and growing in spiritual maturity takes time. Do not self-sabotage your progress just because you had a weak moment or a bad day. How do you walk this out? You learn to give yourself the same grace God gives you. When you stumble back into an old emotional habit or react out of anger, you repent quickly, get right back up, and refuse to wallow in guilt. You track your progress, not your perfection. Celebrate the small victories—like holding your tongue when you used to curse someone out, or choosing to sleep in peace when you used to stay awake in a panic.

Spiritual growth is not an accident. It is the hard-fought result of daily, deliberate choices to surrender your pain and trust God's process. The scars you carry today

are simply proof that you survived the battle; they do not have the authority to dictate your future. Take these five keys, apply them relentlessly to your daily routine, and watch how the Holy Spirit transforms your mind, heals your broken places, and accelerates your growth. Keep walking, keep fighting, and keep believing. Your greatest days of spiritual resilience are just ahead of you.