

February 14 – It Truly is All About Relationships

“I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I to you, you will produce plenty of fruit. But separated from me you won’t be able to do anything.”

John 15:5-8 ERV

With an eagerness to have God in our lives we are on the way to building a foundation for a strong spiritual life and one that is influential for others around us.

Once the footing is in place (our desire), our spiritual growth (our life of making our home in God) is essential.

Illustration: Building a home where love is certain and expected and growth is experienced and encouraged.

Phil Rehburg has identified *5 Streams of Spiritual Growth*, which develop patterns of living in our lives, or what I would call the development of spiritual muscle memory.

5 Streams of Spiritual Growth – “spiritual muscle memory”

SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

(A love letter to encourage and inspire.)

James 1:22

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*“But don’t just listen to God’s word. **You must do what it says.** Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.”*

THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 3:6

*“Jesus replied, ‘I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but **the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.** ⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, “You must be born again.”’”*

- *The Holy Spirit is described by Jesus as the One “Who leads into all truth” (John 14:17),*
- *“He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you” (John 14:26).*

COMMUNICATION WITH GOD – PRAYER

1 Thessalonians 5:17

“Never stop praying.”

ACTIVE FAITH LIVING – (Often the biggest barrier to spiritual growth)

Romans 12:9-13

*“Don’t just pretend to love others. **Really love them.** Hate what is wrong. **Hold tightly to what is good.** ¹⁰ Love each other with **genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.** ¹¹ Never be lazy, but **work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.** ¹² **Rejoice** in our confident hope. **Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.** ¹³ When God’s people are in need, **be ready to help them.** Always **be eager to practice hospitality.**”*

SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Colossians 3:12-16

*“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, **you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.** ¹³ **Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you.** Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ **Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in***

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perfect harmony. ¹⁵ *And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.*

¹⁶ *Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.* ¹⁷ *And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.”*

As you can see, relationships are key to spiritual growth.

We begin with a relationship with Jesus.

And we develop our maturity through relationships with others.

5 Stages of Spiritual Growth:

Jim Putman, *Real Life Discipleship*

Stage 1: The Seeker – *spiritually dead. “Unbelief”*

Needs:

- A healthy relationship with a maturing believer.
 - An explanation of the gospel.
 - An invitation to receive Christ Jesus.

Stage 2: Spiritual Infancy – like babies or infants. *“Uninformed”*

Needs:

- A Committed relationship with a growing believer
 - Individual attention
 - Explanation of the basic Bible truths.
 - A model for habits and disciplines in faith

Stage 3: The Learner – the developing child. *“Adolescence”*

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Needs:

- A committed instructor
 - How to feed themselves.
 - To know who they are as a follower of Jesus.
 - How to have a relationship with Jesus.
 - What to expect from other believers.

Stage 4: The Server – the young adult. *“The Passionate follower”*

Needs:

- How to reproduce themselves in others.
- A place to serve and grow in their faith.
- A Spiritual parent available for consultation in;
 - Ministry experiences
 - On-going relationships that offer encouragement/accountability.
 - Guidance on what others expect and need as they serve.
 - Helping identify personal gifts and skills.

Stage 5: The Leader – the spiritual parent. *“The leader”*

The spiritual parent wants to intentionally and strategically lead someone to Christ, and to help new believers to develop into maturity.

Needs:

- Ongoing relationships with co-leaders.
- A church family.
- Encouragement.

As you can see, we are to be engaged in each other’s lives.

We cannot be spiritually connected to anyone without having THE spiritual connection with Jesus, Himself.

Here is confirmation from the word of Jesus as recorded by the disciple John:

[John 15:5-8](#)

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“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

We get all our resources to be everything His word commands us to be, from Jesus Christ.

*⁶Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away **like a useless branch** and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.*

⁷But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples.

This brings great glory to my Father.”

You are all invited into the warmth of God’s presence.

Jesus stands at the door of your life and pleads for you to let Him come in and establish a personal relationship with you.

When you say “yes” to Jesus, you are laying the last row of rock on your foundation for spiritual maturity – A house built by Jesus where all will see the joy and love of God.