

Working Out

Philippians 2:12–13 (NIV)

Key Truth

Salvation is not the finish line of the Christian life—it is the starting line. Once we have been born again, God calls us into a lifelong process of becoming more like Christ. We have an active role in that process: **as we work out our salvation, God is at work within us.**

Getting Started

When you hear the words “**work out**,” you probably think about exercise. Working out requires effort, consistency, and intentionality. You don't become stronger by sitting on the couch hoping it happens.

Paul uses similar language when he tells believers:

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

— Philippians 2:12–13

Paul is **not** saying that we work *for* our salvation. Salvation is God's gift through faith in Christ. Instead, once we have received that gift, we actively participate in the spiritual growth God desires to produce in us.

Icebreaker

What's something you've become better at because you consistently practiced or worked at it over time?

1. Work Out Your Salvation

Read

- Philippians 2:12–13
- 2 Corinthians 3:18

Discuss

Being born again begins a lifelong process Scripture describes as **sanctification**—being transformed to become more and more like Christ.

Paul describes believers as being transformed “from one degree of glory to another.” Spiritual growth is a process, and we have an **active part** in that process.

When Paul says to “work out” our salvation, there are two ideas involved. First, spiritual growth requires effort. It isn't something we approach passively. But “working out” also carries the idea of discovering and bringing to fuller expression what God has already given us.

The sermon compares salvation to a Swiss Army knife. You may receive the entire knife at once, but over time you discover everything it contains and how useful it is in different situations. In the same way, as we walk with Christ through different circumstances, we discover more of the depth, power, and blessings contained in the salvation God has already given us.

Discussion Questions

1. What's the difference between **working for** your salvation and **working out** your salvation?
2. Why can it be tempting to take a passive approach to spiritual growth?
3. What have you discovered about your relationship with Christ through a difficult or unexpected season of life?
4. In what area of your spiritual life do you need to become more intentional?
5. What does spiritual maturity look like to you?

2. God Is at Work in You

Read

- Philippians 2:12–13
- Galatians 5:22–23
- 2 Corinthians 3:18

Discuss

Our active participation in spiritual growth does not mean that transformation ultimately depends upon our own strength.

Paul says that while we are working, **God is working in us**.

God changes us from the inside out. He works in us “**to will**”—changing our desires—and “**to act**”—changing the way those desires show up through our actions, words, and choices.

Spiritual growth is described in the sermon as a partnership between us and God, **with God taking the lead**. We do what He has called us to do, trusting that He will accomplish what only He can do.

Over time, that inward transformation should become visible. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, faith, love for God's Word, and love for others begin to emerge as evidence of God's work within us.

Discussion Questions

1. How does knowing that God is working in you encourage you to keep pursuing spiritual growth?
2. What is the difference between trying to change yourself and cooperating with what God is doing in you?
3. Where have you seen God change not only your actions but also your desires?
4. Think of someone you consider spiritually mature. What qualities in that person's life stand out to you?
5. What evidence of God's work would you like to see become more evident in your own life?

3. What Does Spiritual Growth Look Like?

As we work out our salvation and God works within us, spiritual maturity should become increasingly visible.

The sermon identifies **four traits of a fully devoted follower of Christ** that Calvary desires to see developing in believers.

A Biblically Rooted Believer

Our beliefs **and our behavior** are shaped by God's Word rather than culture, social media, or the voices around us.

A Deeply Connected Friend

The Christian life was never intended to be lived in isolation. We need meaningful relationships within the body of Christ where believers encourage, sharpen, support, and care for one another.

A Missions Minded Servant

As we become more like Jesus, we increasingly notice the physical and spiritual needs around us and desire to meet them. Christ came not to be served but to serve, and His followers should develop that same heart.

A Faithful Disciple Maker

The Great Commission belongs to every follower of Christ. As we grow ourselves, God calls us to come alongside others and help them grow in Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Which of these four traits do you see God developing most clearly in your life?
2. Which one needs the most intentional attention right now?
3. What influences besides Scripture are most likely to shape our beliefs and behavior?
4. Why are relationships with other believers essential to spiritual maturity?
5. Who has God placed in your life that you could intentionally help grow as a follower of Christ?

4. Have a Plan to Grow

Read

- Philippians 2:12–13
- Galatians 6:7–9

Discuss

Wanting to grow spiritually isn't the same thing as having a plan to grow.

The sermon uses the example of deciding to run a 5K. Crossing the finish line may be the goal, but you need a training plan to get from where you are today to where you want to be.

In the same way, if we want Christlike qualities to emerge in our lives, we need intentional practices that help us “work out” our salvation. The sermon describes Calvary's discipleship pathway through three practical steps: **Lead Yourself, Be Led, and Lead Others.**

Lead Yourself

Take personal responsibility for your spiritual growth. Develop spiritual disciplines—practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth.

The sermon specifically identifies:

- **Bible reading and study** — reading not merely for information, but for transformation.
- **Prayer** — intentionally spending time in God's presence and developing our relationship with Him.
- **Worship** — regularly gathering with the body of Christ.

Be Led

Put yourself in relationships where other believers can speak into your life.

Spiritual growth happens best in community. That requires effort: showing up, being vulnerable, allowing others to know you, and being willing to receive encouragement and guidance. Life Groups provide one practical environment for those relationships.

Lead Others

Eventually, spiritual growth should overflow into helping others grow.

This is where we **exercise our spiritual muscles**. God has given each believer abilities and spiritual gifts to use in serving others and helping them become fully devoted followers of Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the three—**Lead Yourself, Be Led, or Lead Others**—needs the most attention in your life right now?
2. Which spiritual discipline has had the greatest impact on your growth?
3. What makes consistent Bible reading and prayer difficult, and what could help you become more consistent?
4. Who currently has permission to speak honestly into your spiritual life?
5. Where are you currently using your gifts to serve and help others grow?
6. What's one specific step you could take this week rather than simply saying, "I need to grow"?

Growing for the Good of Others

Working out physically isn't only beneficial to you. Being healthier can help you become a better spouse, parent, friend, coworker, or leader.

Spiritual growth works similarly.

Growing in Christ certainly changes **you**. You experience more of the joy, peace, and other fruit produced by the Spirit. But your spiritual growth also affects everyone around you.

Your spouse. Your children. Your friends. Your coworkers. Your students. Your teammates. The people you serve.

Your spiritual growth isn't only for you.

Final Discussion

Are you working out?

If you have been born again, where are you actively participating in the work God wants to accomplish in you?

And perhaps the more practical question is:

What is your next step?

Maybe it's beginning a consistent time in God's Word and prayer. Maybe it's getting connected to a Life Group. Maybe it's moving from simply attending church to serving and leading others.

Whatever that next step is, don't approach your spiritual growth passively.

Do the work God has called you to do, trusting that God is at work in you.

Memory Verse

Philippians 2:12–13 (NIV)

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the gift of salvation and for giving us new life through Jesus Christ. Thank You that salvation is not the end, but the beginning of a lifelong journey of becoming more like Christ. Help us take responsibility for our spiritual growth and faithfully do the things You have called us to do. As we work out our salvation, remind us that You are at work within us—changing our desires, our actions, and our character. Show each of us our next step, and give us the faith and discipline to take it. Use our growth not only to change us, but also to impact the people around us for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.