

3. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT AS YOU GROW IN CHRIST?

List some characteristics that you expect to occur as God produces growth in your life.

John 15:1-17; Galatians 5:22-23
2 Peter 1:5-9 gives us a picture of growth.

4. HOW TO HELP OTHER BELIEVERS GROW IN CHRIST.

As we mature in our relationship with Christ, God has given us the privilege and responsibility of helping other people come to know Christ and grow in Him. This is the disciple making ministry Jesus has commissioned His people to invest in. Read Matthew 28:18-20.

Discipleship is an intentional friendship that helps another person grow in their relationship with Christ.

The acronym **LIFE** highlights the central aspects of a growing and healthy relationship with Christ:

Loving God
Incubating in others
Following His Word
Engaging our world

As we grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ, we look for opportunities to help others experience the power of His presence in their 1) personal life, 2) family life, 3) career, 4) ministry.

Read: Philippians 1:3-11; Colossians 1:24-29; 2 Timothy 2:1-2. What do we learn about the disciple making ministry to which Jesus has called us?

Next steps:

- Join a Bible study or small group where you can enjoy fellowship with others who are also learning more about this new life in Christ.
- Talk to someone about Christ.
Who would you like to tell about the good news of God's love and forgiveness?
- Ask a mature Christian to continue to show you and disciple you how to follow Christ in your personal life, family life, career, and ministry.
- Begin looking for ways you can encourage and serve other believers in your local church.

Growing in Your New Life in Christ



Remember: The Holy Spirit can empower you to live a Christ-directed life. As you continue to confess your sin and yield control to Christ, you will experience a deepening fellowship with God enabling you to grow in Christian maturity.

Maturity takes time — there are no shortcuts.

Our Christian life is like a tree which begins to sink deep roots while at the same time branching out and bearing fruit. As we begin to grow and draw strength from our relationship with Christ, we also begin to see the fruit of that relationship begin to be expressed in our personal lives and relationships with other people. This spiritual fruit is manifested in our character (Galatians 5:22-23). Just like mature trees can produce fruit that has the potential seeds for the future, so our lives are designed to share the seeds of the Gospel and to help others grow in Christ.

IT'S A LIFELONG PROCESS

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GROW IN CHRIST?

It means to increase in knowledge of Christ and love for Him.

Read Philippians 3:7-10. *Why did Paul count all things as loss?*

Read Matthew 22:37, 38. *There are more than 600 commandments in the Old Testament. Why do you think Jesus singled this one out?*

How would loving God with all your heart, soul and mind affect your life?

Just as it is a natural process for a child to grow in a loving relationship with a parent, so it is also natural for you to grow in your love relationship with God.

2. HOW CAN YOU GROW IN CHRIST?

If you met a guy or girl whom you enjoyed, what would you do to get to know that person better?

Communication is vital to any relationship, including your relationship with Christ. Since communication must be a two-way street, you need to let Him speak to you and you need to speak with Him.

Four principles of communication that will help you grow in your relationship with Christ as you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit:

	<u>With God (Prayer)</u>	
<u>With Non-Christians</u> (Witnessing)	CONVERSATION	<u>With Christians</u> (Fellowship)
	<u>With You (Bible)</u>	

- *God* communicates with you through the Bible, revealing His character and His will.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16,17. How would you define each benefit described? Which of those uses of the Bible would be most helpful to you right now? How has the Bible reading you have done so far been helpful in your life? Developing the pattern of reading and studying the Bible daily develops depth to one relationship with Christ and maturity to our lives. The following practices are beneficial in learning to hear from God through His Word:

Read: Daily read a passage, chapter or a section of the Bible. Repeated readings of a passage or book of the Bible will greatly increase your understanding of the text.

Research: When you encounter something you do not understand, utilize a study Bible, commentary, or Bible dictionary for greater understanding.

Reflect: Take time to prayerfully consider the implications of what you are studying in regards to your life.

Respond: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, rely upon God to help you apply what you are learning from His Word.

- We communicate with *God* through prayer, sharing your thoughts, our needs and our desire to do His will.

Read Philippians 4:6,7.

- * Pray about everything.
- * Pray specifically—so you can see God answer specifically.
- * Pray honestly—share your needs and desires to do His will (1 John 5:14,15).

How can you know if what you are praying for is really something within God's will?

- We communicate with *Christians* (fellowship) by sharing life together with other believers.

Every person in the world who is trusting in Christ alone for their salvation from sin is part of the body of Christ, which is called the church. The Bible also references a group of believers in one location which make up a local church. A healthy church is committed to worshiping Christ, teaching His Word, proclaiming the Gospel, and lifting up believers.

Just as logs burn more brightly when placed together, so Christians need each other for warmth and encouragement. There are numerous "one another" passages in the Bible that call believers to love, serve, encourage, forgive and pray for one another.

Read Acts 21-42; Hebrews 10:23-25; Ephesians 4:11-16.

Why is it important to spend time with other Christians? How important would this be in your own life now?

The Greek word for fellowship, *koinania*, means "sharing in Common." We desperately need to share our Christian experience with others who love God and walk with Him, and likewise allow them to share with us.

- We communicate with *non-Christians* (witnessing) by sharing our relationship with Christ.

Read Acts 4:12.

What would motivate you to tell another person about Christ?

SUMMARY: Read 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7. God is the source of your growth. You cannot develop spiritual maturity just by "trying real hard." As you read the Bible, pray, tell people about Christ and spend time with other believers, God will be at work in you producing fruitfulness and maturity.