

The Ten Basic Steps: Step #1: The Christian Adventure

Lesson 3: Five Principles of Growth

Objective: To understand the essentials of Christian growth and put them into practice.

Read: James 1:18-27 , Matthew 26:31-75, I Corinthians 12:12-27, Acts 26:12-29.

Memorize: II Timothy 2:15

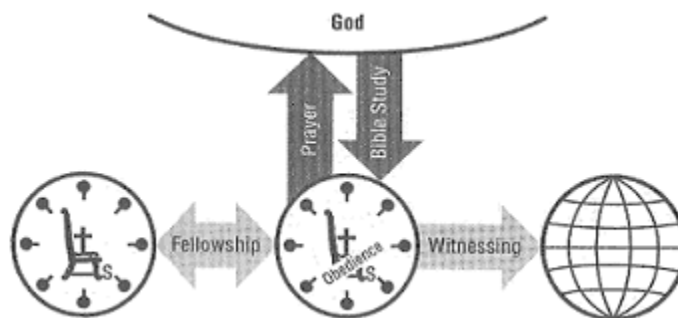
1. We Must Study God's Word
2. We Must Pray
3. We Must Fellowship with Other Christians
4. We Must Witness for Christ
5. We Must Obey God
6. Life Application

You made the most important decision of your life when you chose to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. At that moment you were born into God's family, and you received everything you need to live the abundant Christian life.

But that does not mean you are as spiritually mature as someone who has walked with Christ for many years. The Christian life is a process that begins with an act of faith and is lived by faith.

What do you suppose would happen to a child who doesn't grow properly in his physical body? In his emotional life? In his spiritual maturity? Just as physical life requires air, food, rest, and exercise, so does spiritual life require certain things for growth and development.

This lesson deals with five principles of Christian growth. The first two, *We Must Study God's Word*, and *We Must Pray*, help us deepen our relationship with God. This could be called our vertical relationship. Through the Bible, God communicates to us; through prayer, we communicate with Him.



The next two principles, *We Must Fellowship with other Christians*, and *We must Witness for Christ*, help us reach out to others. This could be called our horizontal relationship. In fellowship, we communicate with other Christians about our Savior and the bond He gives us with one another. In witnessing, we communicate with non-Christians. We tell them about Jesus, what He has done for us, and what He desires to do for them.

Principle Five, *We Must Obey God*, is the core of growth. As we obey Him, we experience increasing joy, peace, and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and fellow believers. We also become increasingly more mature in our Christian walk.

If you follow these principles, you can be sure that you will grow toward maturity in Christ.

Read James 1:18-27

You would not think of going without physical food for a week or even a day, would you? It is necessary for physical life. Without food, we become weakened and eventually may become ill. Lack of spiritual food produces the same results in our spiritual lives.

1.) What is the food of the young Christian? (I Peter 2:2)

▲ In what ways have you made it a consistent spiritual diet? Read Psalm 119. Write down several ways God's Word can help you in your daily life.

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2.) Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." How did He say we should live and be nourished? (Matthew 4:4) Have you applied this to your life? Describe how it nourishes your spiritual life.

3.) List the two characteristics of the workman God approves, according to II Timothy 2:15. What steps have you taken to make these characteristics true in your life?

4.) What did Jesus say about those who read and believe God's Word? (John 8:31-32) What does this mean to your way of life?

5.) When does the man who is spiritually mature meditate on the Word of God? (Psalm 1:2-3) How can you do this in our hectic, pull-apart world?

6.) In what specific ways do you expect God's Word to affect you?

Principle One - We Must Study God's Word

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Principle Two - We Must Pray

Read Matthew 26:31-75

Have you ever considered that you have immediate access to the most powerful Person in the universe? Whatever you need, whatever the time, you can call upon Him. His calendar is cleared to be with you. His schedule is open for your appointment; His full attention is devoted to you.

Prayer is the inspiring experience of conversing with, and praising God as our loving, heavenly Father. Few experiences can equal prayer in empowering us and lifting us above our problems. But prayer is not just an "escape hatch" for us to get out of trouble, please ourselves, or gain our selfish ends. Rather, it is inviting Him to talk to us as we talk to Him. There is more to prayer, but this is basic to true prayer. Study the above passage and answer the following questions:

- 1.) What was Jesus' command in Matthew 26:41 and why did He command it?
- 2.) Why did Peter fail to resist temptation?
- 3.) What is the most serious result of Peter's prayerlessness? Think about your own life. What has been the result of prayerlessness in your life?
- 4.) How did Christ experience inner power to face the severest test of His life?
- 5.) How often are we to pray? (I Thessalonians 5:17)

Prayer without ceasing involves conversing with our heavenly Father in a simple and free way throughout the day. Our prayer life should be such that we come to know the Lord Jesus in an intimate, personal way. Our prayer life becomes effective as our relationship with Christ becomes more intimate.

"I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." (John 14:13-14)

List ways you can increase the amount of time you spend in prayer.

Principle Three - We Must Fellowship with Other Christians

Read I Corinthians 12:12-27

Fellowship is spending time and doing things with others who love Christ. Several logs burn brightly together, but the fire goes out if one is placed alone on the cold hearth. In the same way, Christians need to work together or the fire of enthusiasm will go out. Fellowship is vital for Christian growth. That is why active participation in church is so important.

- 1.) As God's children, what should we not neglect? (Hebrews 10:23-25)
- 2.) According to the above verses, what should we do for one another? In what ways have you done them recently, and for who?
- 3.) The new believers in Acts 2:42 continued steadfastly in what four things? Why is each one so vital to spiritual growth?
- 4.) In what ways do you profit from Christian fellowship? Be specific.
- 5.) Answer the following questions below:

Why is it important that a Christian be part of a small group with other Christians sharing the Word of God? Why is it necessary to work out conflicts with members of your Christian circle? What can happen if you don't? What steps can you take to resolve conflict with others? (I Peter 3:8-11)

Principle Four - We Must Witness for Christ

Read Acts 26:12-29

A witness is a person who tells what he has seen and heard. He shares his own personal experience. Anyone who has a vital personal relationship with Christ can be a witness for Him. Witnessing is the overflow of the Christian life. A vital Christian life is contagious. As our lives are filled with the presence of the Lord Jesus, we cannot help but share Him with those with whom we come into contact.

- 1.) In Romans 1:14-16, Paul tells us his own attitude about sharing the Gospel with others. Using his three "I am's" as the keys to the passage, describe his attitude in your own words.
- 2.) Compare your own attitude concerning witnessing, with Paul's. (Colossians 1:28)
- 3.) What did Peter tell us in I Peter 3:15 that we should always be ready to do? Where and when can you do this?
- 4.) What was Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8. How is this promise shown in your life today?
- 5.) Name at least three people to whom you are impressed to witness to in the power of Christ. Prayerfully ask God to show you ways to share your faith in Christ with each one.

It is the privilege and responsibility of every Christian to reach his world with the message of Christ. If you would information on how to witness effectively for Christ, please visit this web site:
www.campuscrusade.com.

Principle Five - We Must Obey God

Read Romans 6:14-23

The key to rapid growth in the Christian life is obedience to the will of God. Knowing the principles of growth is of no value unless we actually apply them to our lives. To be disobedient to the one who loves us and who alone knows what is really best for us would be sheer folly. Remember, He is even more desirous than you are that you have an abundant life.

- 1.) What did Christ teach concerning the possibility of serving more than one master? (Matthew 6:24)
- 2.) How much should you love the Lord? (Matthew 22:37)
- 3.) How can you prove you love Him? (John 14:21) How have you done this today? This week?
- 4.) What will be the result of keeping Christ's commandments? (John 15:10-11)
- 5.) What is God's standard of life for those who say they are abiding in Christ? (1John 2:6)
- 6.) Where do we get the power to obey God? (Philippians 2:13) What happens if we try to obey God's commands in our own efforts?
- 7.) In light of Luke 6:46-49, why do you think obedience to Christ is imperative for your life?

Life Application

On this chart, list the five key principles of Christian growth, a key verse relating to each one, why it is essential to spiritual maturity, and at least one way you can apply each principle to your own life.

PRINCIPLE	KEY VERSE	WHY ESSENTIAL	HOW TO APPLY

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