

## Lesson 8 of 8: How can we continue in the faith and grow spiritually?

- I. Spiritual growth is a journey not a destination. It is a building process that requires commitment which results in Godly love through diligent assurance of faithfulness.
- We're to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. We build on our faith and are courageous when we choose to know and do the Lord's will while giving up ours.
    - **2 Peter 3:18** <sup>18</sup> *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*
    - **Luke 9:23** <sup>23</sup> *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*
  - Spiritual growth is a process that requires diligence in every stage. One cannot grow spiritually unless they have first committed themselves to the previous stage.
    - **2 Peter 1:5-10** <sup>5</sup> *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;*
- II. The study and practice of sound doctrine is essential for spiritual growth. Notice 2Peter 1:5-10 above. Faith and knowledge is at the base of spiritual growth.
- Both knowledge and faith are produced through sincere, regular study. The importance of studying the word, sound doctrine, is emphasized in the New Testament.
    - **Romans 10:17** <sup>17</sup> *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
    - **1 Timothy 4:13** <sup>13</sup> *Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*
    - **2 Timothy 3:16-17** <sup>16</sup> *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
  - Teaching sound doctrine will bring forth a stronger faith in both the teacher and those being taught.
    - **1 Timothy 4:6** <sup>6</sup> *If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.*
    - **1 Timothy 4:16** <sup>16</sup> *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*
  - Being obedient to sound doctrine will enable one to have fellowship with God while being able to recognize teaching that is of false doctrine.
    - **2 John 9** <sup>9</sup> *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*
    - **Ephesians 4:14-15** <sup>14</sup> *that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—*
    - **Hebrews 13:9** <sup>9</sup> *Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.*
- III. Spiritual growth is a product of a life that is committed to working for the Lord.
- Christ is our ultimate example and came to earth to work and do the will of the Father.
    - **John 4:34** <sup>34</sup> *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*
    - **John 9:4** <sup>4</sup> *I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.*
  - The apostle Paul taught us to be diligent in laboring and working for the Lord by teaching the word of God and serving others.
    - **1 Corinthians 15:58** <sup>58</sup> *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*
    - **2 Timothy 4:2** <sup>2</sup> *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*
    - **Galatians 6:10** <sup>10</sup> *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*
  - Serving others and evangelizing is doing the work of a Christian; however, Jesus will deny those who were disobedient to His doctrine even if they worked for him.
    - **Matthew 7:21-23** <sup>21</sup> *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*
  - Those seeking to follow Christ will at times fall short in doing good to others; however, upon hearing the commandments of Christ, one can never fall short on becoming saved by believing in Christ, repenting, confessing He is the Son of God, and being baptized into Jesus for the remission of sins.
    - **Hebrews 5:9** <sup>9</sup> *And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,*
    - **John 3:18** <sup>18</sup> *He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*
    - **James 2:19-20, 24** <sup>19</sup> *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! <sup>20</sup> But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (...) <sup>24</sup> You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*
    - **Revelation 3:19** <sup>19</sup> *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*
    - **Matthew 10:32** <sup>32</sup> *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.*
    - **Mark 16:16** <sup>16</sup> *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*
    - **Acts 8:36-38** <sup>36</sup> *Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" <sup>37</sup> Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." <sup>38</sup> So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*
  - We come in contact with the blood of Christ at the point in which we are saved through baptism; furthermore, our access to His blood then allows us to be forgiven for the times we acknowledge and ask for forgiveness of our sins.
    - **1 Peter 3:21** <sup>21</sup> *There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*
    - **Romans 6:3-6** <sup>3</sup> *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*
    - **1 John 1:7** <sup>7</sup> *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*
    - **1 John 1:9** <sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- IV. Living by sound doctrine through obedience to Christ will transform one's life into that of a mature Christian.
- Keeping the commandments of God includes worshiping Him in spirit and truth. In obediently worshiping God as He has commanded us to worship, we will learn how to love, how to teach, and how to grow spiritually while being encouraged to remain obedient by hearing the truth of God's word proclaimed.

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- **John 4:24** <sup>24</sup> *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"
- **Hebrews 10:24-25** <sup>24</sup> *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,* <sup>25</sup> *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*
- Abiding in the doctrine of Christ will lead to obedience which involves doing good and loving others. We love others when we obey God!
  - **1 John 5:2** <sup>2</sup> *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.*
- Spiritual growth is a product of one who is being transformed daily into the image of Christ. It is a journey not a destination. The finish line is death.
  - Transforming into a mature Christian happens through the renewal of mind and constant self examination using the word of God until our death.
  - **Romans 12:1-2** <sup>1</sup> *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* <sup>2</sup> *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*
  - **1 Thessalonians 5:21** <sup>21</sup> *Test all things; hold fast what is good.*
  - **2 Timothy 2:15** <sup>15</sup> *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
  - **1 Peter 1:9** <sup>9</sup> *receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*
  - By upholding the doctrine of Christ, one begins to take on unique characteristics when compared to those of the world.
  - **Matthew 5:13-16** <sup>13</sup> *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.* <sup>14</sup> *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.* <sup>15</sup> *Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.* <sup>16</sup> *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*
- Consider these characteristics when interacting with those closest to you; such as your spouse, family, fellow brethren, friends, peers, and fellow employees. Also consider these characteristics when interacting with those who you come across for maybe just a short time in your life.
  - Love is properly defined as sincerely kind treatment toward another while expecting nothing in return for that treatment. Consider Christ's love for us.
  - **Luke 6:32, 35** <sup>32</sup> *"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.(...)"* <sup>35</sup> *But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.*
  - **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** <sup>4</sup> *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
  - **Romans 12:17, 21** <sup>17</sup> *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. (...)* <sup>21</sup> *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*
  - God will show no mercy to those who have shown no mercy. Consider your life compared to the word of God. Do you need God's merciful forgiveness?
    - **Matthew 6:14-15** <sup>14</sup> *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* <sup>15</sup> *But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*
    - **James 2:13** <sup>13</sup> *For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*
  - It has been said our thoughts lead to our words, our words lead to our actions, and our actions lead to our destiny. Do you truly think before you speak?
  - **James 3:6** <sup>6</sup> *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.*
  - **Colossians 4:6** <sup>6</sup> *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*
  - **Ephesians 4:29** <sup>29</sup> *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*
  - Attitude is everything! Our various circumstances in life mean nothing compared to what we deserve: death (Romans 6:23). Be thankful and rejoice!
  - **1 Thessalonians 5: 16, 18** <sup>16</sup> *Rejoice always, (...)* <sup>18</sup> *in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*
  - Someone is always watching you- always. What type of example are you setting for others? Who do you associate yourself with?
  - **Romans 14:21** <sup>21</sup> *It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.*
  - **1 Peter 4:3** <sup>3</sup> *For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.*
  - **1 Corinthians 15:33** <sup>33</sup> *Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*
  - As you reflect on what it means to be in Christ, consider how much of a joyous liberating life it truly is and then go out and give that life to others!
    - **Colossians 4:3-5** <sup>3</sup> *meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,* <sup>4</sup> *that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.* <sup>5</sup> *Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.*
    - **2 Timothy 4:2** <sup>2</sup> *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*
    - **Acts 5:42** <sup>42</sup> *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*
    - **Titus 1:9** <sup>9</sup> *holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*
    - **Titus 2:1** <sup>1</sup> *But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:*
- A life devoted to Christ does not guarantee a life of ease. All Christians will face various difficulties and struggles within their life that they must overcome while remaining obedient and faithful to the Lord. Joyfully enduring these trials through continued obedience will indeed bring about spiritual maturity.
  - **James 1:2-4** <sup>2</sup> *My friends, be glad, even if you have a lot of trouble.* <sup>3</sup> *You know that you learn to endure by having your faith tested.* <sup>4</sup> *But you must learn to endure everything, so that you will be completely mature and not lacking in anything.* (Contemporary English Version)
- A sincere prayer life will lead to spiritual growth. Are your prayers serious and frequent; do they consist of your concerns; do you pray to grow spiritually?
  - **1 Peter 4:7** <sup>7</sup> *But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*
  - **Colossians 4:2** <sup>2</sup> *Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;*
  - **Philippians 4:6** <sup>6</sup> *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*
  - **James 1:5** <sup>5</sup> *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*
- Once one has been saved by being baptized in Christ, they will be blessed with spiritual growth and eternal life by continuing in Christ through faithful obedience.
  - **Galatians 3:27** <sup>27</sup> *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
  - **Ephesians 1:3** <sup>3</sup> *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*
  - **Galatians 5:22-24** <sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.* <sup>24</sup> *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*
  - **Revelation 2:10** <sup>10</sup> *Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*