

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS

LESSON 3

GROWING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Have you ever seen a baby who does not grow? The writer has seen one and it is sad to see. An 18-year-old boy played in a large crib with balloons. He could neither walk nor talk. He was just as helpless as a baby. He was about the size of a four or five-year-old child. We say, "How terrible." Yet, how many Christians are like this in their Christian life? They do not know how to talk about the things of God. They are always sinning. They have not grown up in their Christian life.

When we trust Christ as our Saviour we are born again. We are like new-born babies. 1 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that we have received new life. This life must grow just like our human bodies grow.

We are happy when we have a new child come into our home. As that child grows, we are proud of his first words and his first steps. He is our child and we are looking for the time when we can have fellowship with him. God is looking for the time when He can have real fellowship with us.

THERE ARE SIX PARTS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

1. WE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

When we are first born we are not born into the family of God.

Are we first born into God's family? 1 John 3:8,10.

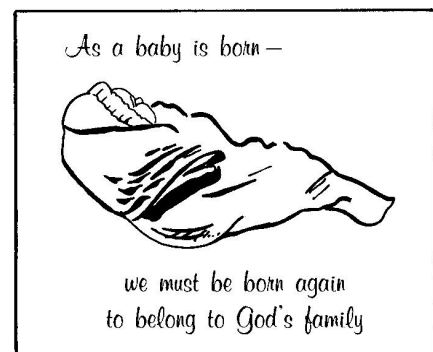
When we are born again, in whose family are we?

John 1:12

We enter into God's family as soon as we believe in Christ.

How long does the life last that we receive in God's family?

1 John 5:11,12



Now that we have received that life, what is to happen to it? If it does not grow, there is something very wrong. Some people may say they are Christians, yet they never grow to be like Jesus Christ. They have no desire to be like Christ. Normal life will want to grow. Anything that wants to grow needs food.

What must a person do in order to live a Christian life?

2. A BABY IN CHRIST NEEDS FOOD

One way to know if we are really children of God is to see how much we want to know about the Bible. If we have no interest in the Bible, there is a good chance that we are not children of God.

What does the Bible say we need to have to grow?
Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2

After eating, a child needs to be quiet so that the food he has eaten can be used to make his body strong and healthy. The Bible is spoken of as milk and meat. The Bible is a powerful book that can do wonderful things in the lives of those who read it. In fact, without the Bible, a child of God cannot grow.



What is the Bible like? 1 Peter 2:2

Hebrews 5:12

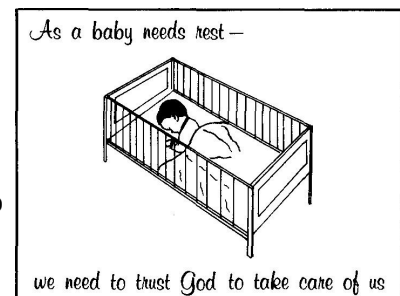
To get the most out of the Bible we should choose to read in a quiet place. In this place God can speak to us through His Word. Here we can really think and pray about the things we are reading. In this way we can learn what God wants us to do. We should always be asking **"What is the Bible telling me? What does God want me to do?"** We learn to ask for the things that God wants to give us. It is here we learn what Jesus Christ is like. As we learn these things we can use them in our daily living. We will grow.

We should have a set time each day. Many people find the early morning hours are the best time for this quiet time. Their mind is clear and fresh. There is not a lot of activity to bother them. There are others who like to spend the late hours at night with the Lord. They find their mind clearer at that time. It makes no difference when we take time to be with the Lord. But we should spend at least 15 minutes or more every day with the Lord in this quiet time.

Now we have learned that a person must be born again to live a Christian life. How can God's child grow?

3. A BABY IN CHRIST NEEDS REST

In order to grow well, a child needs lots of rest. We must learn to rest in God. To rest in God is to trust Him to take care of our body, soul and spirit. We listen carefully to what He says. We



do what He asks us to do. We let God help us work out our problems without getting upset and without complaining. As we feed on the Word of God we will find it easier to rest in God. The more we learn about Him the more we will trust Him.

Psalms 37 tells how we can rest in the Lord.

Read Psalm 37:3. How can we have peace?

When we believe that God really loves us, we will know that He takes care of us.

Read Romans 8:28. How do things work out for those who love Jesus?

All things work out for the best to them that love God.

What does Psalm 37:4 tell us to do?

This verse tells us to be glad in the Lord. When a father goes away from home for a long time, his little child misses him. When he comes home, the little child is very happy. The child wants to talk to him. He wants to play with him. He stays close beside his father as much as he can. We say that the child takes delight in his father. Do we feel the same way toward our Heavenly Father? Are we trying to stay as close to Him as we can?

What does Psalm 37:5 tell us to do?

When we really trust in the Lord, we will know that He will not lead us into any place that is not good for us. When we really trust in the Lord, we will go wherever He wants us to go. We will do whatever He wants us to do. This is committing ourselves unto the Lord.

What does Psalm 37:7 tell us to do?

It is very easy for us to try to do many things for the Lord. It is easy for us to be worried because things are not working out as we think they should. It is easy to get discouraged when things don't happen when we think they should. But when we rest in the Lord, we will wait patiently for Him to do things at the time He knows best. When things are not the way we want them to be, we will trust Him to work them out. We will be able to rest in the Lord.

Do you remember the three things we have learned about a new Christian?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

4. A BABY IN CHRIST NEEDS EXERCISE

A. He is made strong as he tells others of Jesus.

Another thing needed for physical growth is exercise. As a child uses his muscles, he grows and becomes strong. As children of God we share our new life with others. We grow and become strong.

What are we told to do in Romans 10:9?



It is very hard to tell someone else that we know and love the Lord Jesus. But the more we tell others, the easier it becomes. Also it will make us watch how we live. We will want to live what we are saying. This is growing. God knows that we need exercise.

B. He is made strong when he is tested.

God also allows some things to come into our life to make us grow.

What does 1 Peter 1:6,7 tell us about these tests?

Read Romans 5:3-5. What do tests work in our life? List what they do.

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-
-

Tests make our faith sure. They work patience, strength and hope in our life. As we overcome these tests and troubles, God's love is seen more and more in our life. We are growing in our spiritual life.

Write the four things we have learned.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

5. A BABY IN CHRIST NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED

As a baby needs to be protected, so a young Christian needs to be protected. We never really know the power of Satan until we are born into God's family. We do not realize that Satan will try to cause us to doubt our salvation. We do not realize that Satan will try to lead us back into sin. We do not realize that Satan blames us when we sin. Satan tells us, "Give up, you cannot live the Christian life."



We can say that a young Christian is like a child learning to walk. The child will never start walking perfectly at first. Sometimes he will fall. We do not scold him when he falls down; we comfort him and encourage him to try again. So we should help and encourage a young Christian to try again. He needs to confess his sin to God and go on with his Christian life.

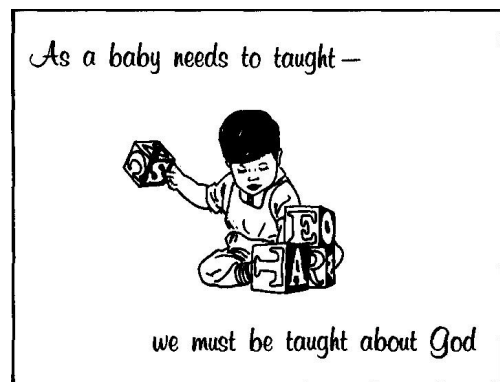
What did Jesus tell Peter in Luke 22:31,32 that Satan would do?

What would Jesus do?

Notice Jesus was praying for Peter. We should pray for the young Christians. Jesus also warned Peter. We should warn young Christians about sin and try to help them live close to God.

6. A BABY IN CHRIST NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT

A child needs to be taught. Some years ago some men found a girl who grew up in a wolf den. Because she was never taught, she could not talk. She lived and acted much like the animals with whom she lived. People could teach her only a few things even after many years. There were many things that had to be changed in her life. This is also true with a new-born baby in Christ. Before we were born again, we had been brought up in a life that did not know God. We didn't know what real righteousness was. Now as Christians we have a new life that knows God. We want to be good and righteous.



How can we live such a life? We must be taught. God knows that we have to be taught. God gives His children Someone to teach them.

Who is He? John 16:13,14

What will He do for us?

Is the Holy Spirit within us or is He outside of us? 1 Corinthians 6:19

What else has God given to us to guide us? 2 Timothy 3:16,17

God gives the Holy Spirit to us to guide us. He is inside us. He also gives us the Bible.

We should always want to grow in our spiritual life. We should have a great desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must remember, as long as we are on this earth we can grow in our spiritual life. There are very old people who have walked close to the Lord for many years. Yet they feel they could still learn more about Jesus. If these people feel this way, how should we feel?

Again, let us look at these six things carefully.

To grow in our spiritual life:

- We must be born again.
- We must have food.
- We must have rest (peace).
- We must exercise to be strong.
- Someone must take care of us.
- We must be taught.

MEMORY VERSES

Memorize: 1 Peter 2:2,3.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Do you remember what we learned? Write the 6 things needed to grow in our spiritual life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

WORDS TO LEARN

1. act - something we do or have done.
2. allow - to let someone do something.
3. activity - doing something; being busy.
4. comfort - to give relief or rest in sorrow or trouble.
5. commit - 1) to give a thing or life to someone to keep safe.
2) to do.
6. complain - to say that things are not good enough, grumbling.
7. delight - find great joy or pleasure in someone or something.
8. discourage - to think it cannot be done or to give up trying.
9. encourage - to put heart into someone; to help someone along.
10. guide - to show the way; to lead.
11. human - people, not animals.
12. normal - regular; usual.
13. patient - being willing to wait.
14. physical - having to do with the body.
15. realize - to know, to understand, to see.
16. spiritual - 1) that which belongs to the spirits, Ephesians 6:12.
2) living in close fellowship with God.
17. warn - to tell of danger.