

Reading: 2 Peter 1:1-8

Topic: The Importance of Personal Growth

INTRODUCTION: Inside our bodies are individual cells which grow and reproduce to _____ our body healthy and _____, and likewise, each individual member of the Body of Christ needs to have the desire to _____ and contribute to the health and strength of the church.

I. GROWTH OR STAGNATION?

A. Stagnation:

1. There are certain things that one does that will guarantee spiritual stagnation and lack of _____:
 - a. Neglect of the basic spiritual disciplines – daily _____, daily reading of the _____ of God, not going to the _____ of God to worship with the Body of Christ. I Tim. 4:13,14, 2 Tim. 1:6
 - b. Due to the above action – instead of having a life of spiritual _____ production, the dominant visible actions that will be revealed will be the _____ of the carnal flesh. Gal. 5:19-21
 - c. Some people have served the Lord for a long time, but have made little or no _____ spiritually because of not giving attention to what would make them _____ and advance in God. 2 Pt. 1:9

B. Growth:

1. Just as there are certain things that will guarantee stagnation, so also there are certain _____ that will guarantee steady and progressive _____:
 - a. Daily applying the basic spiritual disciplines of _____ and the _____ of God, and making it a point to get to the House of God regularly to be with the _____ of Christ. 2 Pt. 1:8
 - b. A desire and a _____ to learn about how to _____ and develop ourselves to be better and more effective in our _____ with God. Mt. 5:5
 - c. A teachable spirit – some people unfortunately develop a know-it-all attitude and think that they _____ more than anyone else, thus they do not really _____ at all even though they think they do, but when one has a teachable spirit, they will _____ and go places in God. 2 Tim. 3:8

II. GROWTH & CHANGE:

A. No Change = No Growth:

1. Just observing how babies grow to become toddlers, then _____ and then they become teens, young adults and finally arrive as _____ adults – this is a lesson in growth and change. Eph. 4:14,15
2. The growth requires change – larger clothes, larger shoes, larger bed, etc. and everyone _____ this change as normal and part of _____, thus it is in the spiritual – growth = change.

B. Basic Things To Change:

1. Attitudes – If one desires to grow and _____ spiritually, certain attitudes will have to change in order to progress and become strong in the Lord. (submission) I Pt. 5:5
2. Thinking patterns – We develop certain habits and thinking patterns in our _____, and many times they are _____ instead of positive, thus these thoughts hinder faith and progress. Pr. 23:7
3. Direction – once we fix our bad attitudes and poor thinking patterns, we need to take a _____ direction and get out of the negative ruts that keep us stuck and unable to _____ ahead. Ecc. 9:10

III. CHALLENGES TO OUR GROWTH:

A. Problems Arise:

1. Whenever one decides to make changes to advance and _____, problems and opposition will be on hand to try to discourage the progress. I Cor. 16:9
2. Growth does come with problems, just as growing children also bring problems and _____ to parents, but the parents accept those problems and _____ with them.

B. Our Reactions:

1. When the problems come, our reactions to them are going to _____ whether or not we will use the difficulties as stepping _____ to move up or stumbling blocks to fall over.
2. There are two main reactions to problems:
 - a. Complaining, murmuring, back-biting and anger, all of which solves _____. Ex. 14:10-12
 - b. Inspiration and greater _____ to meet the challenges at hand. Ex. 14:13

C. Personal Growth:

1. One wise author wrote about personal growth stating this, "Success begins the moment that we understand that life is about _____. 2 Th. 1:3
2. Nothing pleases God more than to see _____ taking place in the personal lives of each _____ of God, for when that happens, the _____ will also grow. Ps. 92:12, Jn. 15:8

CONCLUSION: Another writer penned these words, "Life is about moving, it's about change and when things stop doing that, they are _____!" Individual _____ and change is a must if we are to move forward and be with God's advancing church.