

Grace Evangelical Free Church
Issues & Answers: 12 Keys to Your Spiritual Growth

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18)

It is incumbent on us to grow spiritually. It is all of God and all of grace, but it is not passive—it is active. Abraham grew in his faith (**Romans 4**). According to **Luke 2:52**, **“Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”**

Genuine spiritual growth always results in a better grasp of our own weaknesses and a greater reliance upon God's strength. So, here 10 keys to spiritual growth. Basic? Perhaps. Necessary? Absolutely!

1 - Know you are saved.

Spiritually, you cannot grow if have not surrendered to Jesus as Savior. What Jesus did, we can't do. What Jesus accomplished, we can't achieve. What Jesus gives, we can't earn. We are saved by grace alone! Believe in the finality of Jesus' death (it was full and perfect, you can't add to it). Believe in the trustworthiness of Scripture: **“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).**

#2 - Immerse yourself in Scripture.

There must be a steady, constant intake of the Word of God: **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16).** The more we put it into practice, the more we grow as Christians. Not pouring ourselves into the Word of God is not an ability issue or an aptitude issue; it's an obedience issue. We will never advance beyond our steady diet of God's Word. What are some basics you need to know?

- Know the essential story line of the Bible: Christ in every book
- Basic biblical doctrine (trinity, who Jesus is, the character of God, the Gospel, resurrection, etc.)
- Our Christian duty (what does God require of me as I determine to live the Christian life?)
- Godly examples in the Scripture (what can we learn from their lives?)

#3 - Grow to love and worship God.

As we grow in our relationship with the Lord and our devotion to Him and for Him, He becomes more precious and glorious to us. Just a sliver of comprehension of our union with Christ ought to lend itself to heart-felt worship: **“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16).**

#4 - Live in obedience to Christ.

Not according to our own agenda, but according to the Word of God and obedience to Him. **1 Peter 1:2: “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”** Obedience is of utmost importance. Every step of growth in the Christian life is a step of obedience. Where there is no obedience there is no spiritual growth.

#5 - Be filled with the Spirit.

If you love Jesus, it's because the Spirit proclaimed "Come forth!" to your dead heart. Like sap moving through the vines of a branch, so the Spirit is in the life of a Christian. **Ephesians 5:18** instructs us: "...**be filled with the Spirit**" meaning controlled by, led by, energized by, and growing in and by the Spirit. We are to walk in the reliance, power, direction, and enablement of the Spirit. We are totally dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit to mature, develop, and grow in Christlikeness.

#6 - Resist the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The world = the evil system that dominates life as we know it. The things of the world don't seem expendable because we haven't found Christ supremely valuable: "**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him**" (1 John 2:15).

The flesh = living sinfully, by our fallen human nature (**Romans 7**) which must be put to death: "**But I discipline my body and keep it under control**" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

The devil = remind him you are in a child of God. Put on the full armor of God (**Eph. 6:10-18**); never put your guard down.

#7 - Be in close fellowship with other Christians.

Satan attaches more importance to godly fellowship than we. Since union is strength, he does his best to separate. We are in the world – but who has access to your ear and heart? Those need to be strong Christians: "**Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another**" (**Proverbs 27:17**).

#8 - Be in prayer before God.

"**But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed**" (**Luke 5:16**). If Jesus needed focused prayer in solitude, how much more do we? Humbling ourselves, we learn dependence and trust by giving Him all our concerns, submitting to His call and affirming His rightful place in our hearts and minds.

#9 - Come to the Lord's Table.

Keep the cross of Christ and His shed blood central in your life: "**And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers**" (**Acts 2:42**).

#10 - Have a place of service; share the gospel.

Marks of spiritual growth are exercising your gifts, edifying the church (**1 Peter 4:10**) while being a witness of what Christ had done for you (**1 Petr 3:15**).

#11 - We grow the most in our present trials.

Don't cringe at what God has destined for you: "**that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this**" (**1 Thessalonians 3:3**). Our greatest lessons are most often learned in the school of affliction. These are not optional electives but required classes: "**You received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit**" (**1 Thessalonians 1:6**).

12 - The phrase "keeping short accounts" refers to the practice of not allowing unresolved sins or grievances to accumulate. As noted in **Psalms 32**, unconfessed sin leads to misery and spiritual disconnection. Regular confession maintains a clear conscience thereby a healthy relationship with God. Practice daily reflection (take time each day to reflect on your actions and thoughts, identifying any that need to be confessed); immediately confess (rather than lingering, prevent a backlog of unresolved issues); forgive others (foster healthy relationships, aligning with Jesus' teachings on reconciliation).

This is spiritual growth!