



THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

If you saw a child 3 years old who had not grown one inch bigger or one pound heavier since the day he was born, what would you think? Would you say the child was well? Would the child's mother and father be concerned? You would say the child was sick, and the parents would be very concerned if the child had not grown at all in three years. What does God think when He looks at a Christian born into his family by baptism 3 years ago who has made no spiritual growth? If that Christian does not know any more, does not understand any more, does not do any stronger work than the day he was baptized, will God say he is well? You know He will not.

Growth is necessary for human bodies. When a child's body does not grow, he is seriously sick. Growth is just as necessary for our spiritual bodies. When a Christian does not grow spiritually, he is seriously sick. Scripture emphasizes the importance of that growth. Christians at Thessalonica were praised for having a growing faith (*II Thessalonians 1:3*). Peter instructed Christians to grow in grace and in knowledge of Christ. Paul emphasized the importance of spiritual growth in *Ephesians 4:11-15*. The purpose of the leaders of the church was to perfect (mature) Christians, care for Christians, and edify (encourage) the church. Christians must grow until they are no longer spiritual children easily deceived by false doctrines. They are to "grow up into him (Christ) in all things". Their goal is to become spiritually mature as Jesus. Steady spiritual growth is necessary.

For a person to grow physically it takes food and exercise. It also takes food and exercise for a Christian to grow spiritually. Read *I Peter 2:1,2*. When a person is baptized, he is a newborn spiritual baby. He needs to begin "eating" the "milk" of the word of God daily. The word of God is the Christian's spiritual food. A Christian cannot grow without learning the word of God. Read *I Timothy 4:7-8*. A Christian gets spiritual exercise by practicing godliness. By doing the good things he learns he is exercising his spiritual body. Doing godliness will give the Christian a better life on earth, and it promises him life in heaven. A Christian who practices godliness will grow -- the Christian who does not cannot grow.

Grow to full spiritual maturity. "Feed" on God's word by study. Exercise your spiritual body by doing God's work.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. If a Christian does not grow spiritually, he is _____.
2. What does *Ephesians 4:14,15* say about spiritual growth?
3. What 2 things are necessary for physical growth?
4. What 2 things are necessary for spiritual growth?
5. What is the Christian's spiritual food?
6. What is the Christian's spiritual exercise?
7. What profit is there in godliness?
8. What will happen to a Christian who does not eat his spiritual food or take his spiritual exercise?