

# Your Spiritual Growth

*(all the principles here are taken from the book Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem)*

This document is designed to help you better understand how you grow as a follower of Christ. You may use this document to discuss spiritual growth with your group, with your family, or to study individually.

First, it is good to understand what it means to grow. This process of growing spiritually is called **sanctification**. *“Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.”* - Wayne Grudem

## Why should you want to grow and what are the rewards of growth?

- The desire to express your love for Jesus. (John 14:15)
- The desire to keep a clear conscience before God. (Rom. 13:5; I Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:3; 1 Peter 3:16)
- The desire to be a vessel for noble use by God. (2 Tim. 2:20-21)
- The desire to see unbelievers come to Christ through observing your life. (I Peter 3:1-2, 15-16)
- The desire to receive present blessings from God on your life and your ministry. (I Peter 3:9-12)
- The desire to avoid God’s displeasure and discipline on your life. (Acts 5:11; 9:31; 2 Cor. 5:11; 7:1; Eph. 4:30, Phil 2:12)
- The desire to seek greater heavenly reward. (Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 19:17-19; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10)
- The desire for a deeper walk with God. (Matt 5:8,; John 14:21; I John 1:6; 3:21-22)
- The desire that angels would glorify God for your obedience. (I Tim 5:21; I Peter 1:12)
- The desire for peace and joy in your life. (Phil. 4:9; Heb. 12:1-2)
- The desire to do what God commands because his commands are right, and you delight in doing what is right. (Phil 4:8; Ps. 40:8)

## Important stages of your sanctification.

1. It begins when you are born again (at regeneration).
2. It increases throughout your life.
3. It is never completed in this life. It is completed at death (for our souls) and when Jesus returns (for our bodies).

## You and God cooperate in your sanctification.

### 1. God’s role in your sanctification.

*God’s role is primary.*

#### Specific role of God the Father.

**God causes you to want his will and gives you the power to grow.**

“for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

### **God disciplines you as his child.**

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” Hebrews 12:5-6.

### Specific role of Jesus

#### **Jesus earned your sanctification for you.**

“And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption” - 1 Corinthians 1:30.

#### **Jesus is our example.**

“looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2

### Specific role of the Holy Spirit.

*The Holy Spirit works within you to change you and sanctify you, giving you greater holiness of life.*

#### **The Holy Spirit produces the fruit in your life.**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23.

#### **If you grow you “walk by the Spirit” and are “led by the Spirit”.**

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Galatians 5:16-18

## **2. Your role in sanctification.**

*Your role is secondary. You are to trust and obey.*

### **It is passive in the sense that you depend on God to sanctify you.**

“Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.” Romans 6:13.

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living

sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” Romans 12:1.

**It is active because you must strive to obey God and take steps that will increase your sanctification.**

You are able to do this by the Holy Spirit.

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Romans 8:13.

You work out your salvation through obedience.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13.

You are to strive for holiness.

“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14

You are to abstain from immorality and practice self control.

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor. I Thessalonians 4:3-4.

You are to be involved in Christian community.

Sanctification is usually a corporate concept in the New Testament. It happens in community.”And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit includes many things that build community - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Whereas the works of the flesh destroy community - fornication, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. Galatians 5:19-23.

You are to continually build up patterns and habits of holiness.

“train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” I Timothy 4:7-8.

Some habits and patterns you are to develop are:

1. Bible reading and meditation (Ps 1:2, Matt. 4:4; 17:17)
2. Prayer (Eph. 6:18, Phil. 4:6)
3. Worship (Eph. 5:18-20)
4. Witnessing (Matt. 28:19-20)
5. Fellowship (Heb 10:24-25)
6. Service (I Cor 12)
7. Self control (Gal 5:23; Titus 1:8)

*Based on this list, discuss or write down your plans for the habits and patterns you need to develop.*

**1. Bible reading and meditation.**

*Some great tools and resources are [youversion.com](http://youversion.com) and the ESV study bible.*

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**2. Prayer**

*You can submit your prayer requests and pray for others at <http://www.westridge.com/pray/>. We also have a weekly men's prayer breakfast on Thursday mornings at 6:30 am.*

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**3. Worship**

*You can find out information about our worship at <http://www.westridge.com/worship>. Giving is also an important part of your worship. Find out about giving online at <http://www.westridge.com/give/>*

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**4. Witnessing**

*You can find out information about our missional opportunities at <http://www.westridge.com/missions/>. Also a great tool to help you with sharing your faith is the Knowing God Personally or 4 Spiritual Laws booklet.*

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**5. Fellowship**

*In addition to Sunday morning, being involved in a small group is a great way to experience fellowship. Get connected to a group at GroupLink or online at <http://www.westridge.com/groups/>*

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**6. Service**

*Using your spiritual gifts for the sake of others to help build up the church. You can find opportunities at <http://www.westridge.com/volunteer/>*

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### 7. **Self control**

If you are struggling with an addiction or need help in this area, you can find out more information at <http://www.westridge.com/gethelp/>

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