

Studies in Christianity Spiritual Maturity #2

S#1.

Getting Started

S#2.

Text : **II Pet. 1: 2-11** ; **Eph. 4: 7-16**

A. Everyone who comes into the body of Christ comes in as a baby.

S#3.

1. A baby is dependent upon others for its survival.
2. Whether milk or solid food, a baby must have its food provided
3. As the baby grows and transitions to solid food his food must be mashed.

B. We expect that our babies will grow.

S#4.

1. We anticipate that they will learn to control their bodily functions.
2. We require that they develop emotional control.
 - a. Temper tantrums are not tolerated.
 - b. Selfishness is discouraged and interactive play is encouraged.
 - c. We ease them into dating to prevent their being dominated by hormones.
3. We know they have reached maturity when they :
 - a. have learned to delay gratification.
 - b. learn to consider others ... Love puts other above self.
 - c. are able to control their tongue. (*cellphones set this back years*)

C. Our last lesson made certain observation about maturing spiritually.

S#5.

1. God requires that all of His children grow and spiritually.

I Pet. 2: 1 – Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, **2** like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, **3** if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

S#6.

2. Spiritual growth has a benefit to the Christian; it prevents his/her falling away.

Eph. 4: 14 – As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

S#7.

3. Unlike physical growth, spiritual growth doesn't just happen; it takes work.

Phil. 3: 12 – Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

S#8.

4. Like earthly parents, God monitors the growth of His children on a time table.

Heb. 5: 11 – Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, **S#9.**
since you have become dull of hearing. **12** For though by this time
you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to
teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and
you have come to need milk and not solid food.

- C. The Apostle Peter admonishes us to apply great diligence to maturing. **S#10.**

II Pet. 1: 5 – Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith
supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,

I. First make the commitment to separate one's self from all evil influences. S#11.

- A. If one is to be transformed by a renewed mind, he must commit to change. **S#12.**

- Rom. 12: 2** – And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed
by the renewing of your mind,
- II Pet. 1: 5** – Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith
supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,
- The first step in spiritual growth is to separate from one's worldly lifestyle.

Eph. 4: 17 – So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you **S#13.**
walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their
mind, **18** being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the
life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the
hardness of their heart;

- B. God requires an alternative set of values right from the start. **S#14.**

- Col. 3: 8** – But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, **S#15.**
and abusive speech from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another,
since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, **10** and have
put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge
according to the image of the One who created him — (cf- **2 Cor 5:17**)
- Christianity is one's life or it is nothing; it does not mix with worldliness.
I Pet. 2: 1 – Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and
envy and all slander, **2** like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of
the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

- C. The first step in spiritual maturity is to surrender one's life to Christ. **S#17.**

- II Cor. 5: 14-15** – For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this,
that one died for all, therefore all died; **15** and He died for all,
so that they who live might no longer live for themselves,
but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
- II Cor. 5: 20** – We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making **S#18.**
an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

II. Spiritual growth requires individual effort, but is not a solo project.

S#19.

A. When one is saved he is immediately added to the body of believers.

1. When one is baptized his sins are washed away, he's saved, he's added to the church

- a. **Acts 2: 38** – Peter said to them, " Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;

S#20.

- b. **Acts 2: 41** – So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

- c. **Acts 2: 47** – And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

2. God places each individual saved person into His church.

I Cor. 12: 18 – But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

S#21.

3. The same act that removes one's sins places him INTO Christ.

Gal. 3: 27 – For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

S#22.

B. That body of believers has a function in the process of maturing babes in Christ.

1. The elders of the church are guardians of the souls of all who are born again.

Heb. 13: 17 – Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

2. The entire leadership of the church exists to help the members develop.

Eph. 4: 11-13 – And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

S#23.

C. Every member in the body of believers has a responsibility to every other member of the body of Christ.

S#24.

1. **Eph. 4: 15-16** – but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

S#25.

2. We teach and admonish one another

Col. 1: 28 – Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

S#26.

III. Spiritual maturity is built on a foundation of knowledge.**S#27.****A. All true faith grows out of knowledge.**

1. **Rom. 16: 26** – the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, **S#28.**
26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith:
2. **Rom. 10: 17** – So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

B. Not all knowledge leads to faith; one must have a heart to receive it.

1. Hearing the gospel will judge people's hearts, i.e., will clarify character.
I Cor. 1: 18 – For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **S#29.**
2. Some people read the word but are not receptive to spiritual things.
II Tim. 3: 7 – Captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
3. Some people hear the gospel proclaimed but are not open to receive it.
Heb. 4: 2 –For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they **S#30.**
also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

C. We are commanded to grow in knowledge so we will grow in faith.

II Pet. 3: 17b-18 – Be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 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 ...

D. The “true knowledge” is commanded because it is the key to both spiritual maturity and spiritual survival.**S#31.**

1. “True knowledge” is one of the points of emphasis of the Epistle of II Peter.
II Pet. 1: 2-3 – Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.
2. It's logical for one to add knowledge as he tries to conform his life to God's standard
II Pet. 1: 5 – Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith **S#32.**
supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge.
3. Without knowledge one's life will be useless and unfruitful.
II Pet. 1: 8 – For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

E. One increases his/her knowledge to improve his understanding and to improve this moral standing before God, not to prepare for debate. S#33.

1. II Tim. 2: 14-15 – Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. S#34.

2. This is what the Apostle Paul prayed for the church at Philippi.

Phil. 1: 9-11 – And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. S#35.

CONCLUSION :

A. Being “born again” is to restart one’s life as a totally “new creature.” S#36.

1. “Old things passed away; behold, new things have come”
2. The Christian is to be “transformed” into something different.
3. Christians may no longer walk “according to the course of this world.”

B. In order to walk as God has called us to walk, we must learn the paths of righteousness. “What is truth?” S#37.

1. Knowledge must be acquired (added), comprehended and expanded upon.

Eph. 5: 8 – Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ... 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. S#38.

2. It is through studying the scriptures that one learns how to please God.

Heb. 6: 10-12 – For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. S#39.

INVITATION :

A. How are you progressing on your walk with God ? *Are you stalled or pressing on?* S#40.

B. Have you strayed from the path ? S#41.

C. Have you not yet started your journey ? NOW !

S#42. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**II Peter 1: 2-11**

2 A Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; **3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. **4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. **5** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, **7** and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Ephesians 4: 11-16

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.