

Question: What does charcoal, hopelessness and redemption have in common? (Jn 18:18, 21:9) – YOU CAN HEAL- your brain can heal!

The phrase "green thumb" refers to a natural talent for growing plants and is often used to describe someone who is particularly skilled at gardening. (handling of clay pots Dyeing theory – Gardener theory chlorophyll)

Viewing Jesus as a spiritual gardener with a "spiritual green thumb" provides a rich metaphor for understanding His ministry and teachings. It emphasizes His role in nurturing, healing, and growing in faith. Just as a gardener patiently tends to their plants, Jesus cultivates spiritual growth, bringing life, healing, and transformation to all who follow Him.

I. Introduction

- A. We all understand what it means to grow physically - Something amazing about seeing life literally grow and develop is satisfying. (I recently planted a Ficus tree) – Vinnie & Micah**
- B. However, defining spiritual growth is a bit more difficult to define and to measure than physical growth. Defined: it's a process over time that we undergo in becoming Christ-like. It takes years to grow into adulthood and it takes a full season for fruit to ripen - the same is true for the fruit of the Spirit- it takes time to mature with good flavor. Pre-mature fruit not developed flavor yet! (We can be 45 years old and act like a child – knowledge and years and even experience does not equal maturity)**

James 1:4 But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be ²perfect and complete, lacking nothing. – Takes time!

- C. The objective of Spiritual growth is more than modified behavior, or outward growth; it is transformation of character, habits . Its manifesting a Sp reality – (not ethical or religious, spirt to spirt).**

It's a dynamic process that cannot be forced or coerced, we cannot make it happen but we can hinder its progress.

Phil 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until ^athe day of Christ Jesus.

II. So how does spiritual growth occur? – Auxano- "To grow!"

Lk 12:27 Tells us to consider the lilies, how they grow, they don't toil or spin –Currently over \$48.7 billion in anxiety treatment costs annually

- A. 2 key elements to growth – "Charis & Gnosis"**

2 pet. 3:18 "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 of eternity. Amen.

1. **Charis is the Spiritual reality-favor of God-** the Sp condition & expression of a life that is governed and touching the power of the Spirit.
2. **Gnosis is the intentional accumulation of knowledge of scripture,** theology, doctrine & principles of the word of God.

- B. God uses a variety of tools in our lives in order to grow us into Christ likeness**

1 Co. 3:5-8 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

(Paul is communicating some principles about Spiritual maturity- God is the author of growth- we shouldn't focus on the implements- we may know the stories but are we "Auxano-ing" in the principles)

1. God is the author of growth and maturity – He knows what we need – He know whats buried in us, covered up through years of survival, success, denial and growth
2. God uses different people and circumstances to grow us spiritually- (plant and water) – process, pull, provoke and provide for our growth.
3. The most productive growth comes from what we believe about the tools that God uses – **These folks had**

some assumption and some preferences about what they needed and wanted -bested suited for them

a) **Believing about God-Word "Gnosis"= This is the content side of our faith - the objective truth about who God is. (These objective markers allow our experiences to take root and have a lasting effect)**

b) **Believing in God-Spirit "Charis"= This is the experiential side of our faith**

Our present experiences do not determine the fruit of our maturity- neither a "dystopian perspective or a utopian perspective will produce the fruit spiritual maturity and a reality of the Spirit- we need both time and process and repeated engagement of the Spirit- Touching the Spirit

C. **Our spiritual growth often through both, process and event!**

D. **Process is that part of our growth that requires time, patience and repetition.**

1. During the process is where Unseen needs are being met.
2. We are tested during process- True spirituality involves pain and joy- suffering and happiness
3. We will be constantly tempted to shortcut the process if we dont value the principle of time/process

James 1:1-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be 2perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Jn. 12:24 ...unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain

4. Process is the most misunderstood and misused tool /vehicle that God uses.
 - a) Can we hinder the process? or stunt our growth...? - resist the breaking /enlarging process
 - b) We ask the Lord to relieve us of pressure, pain, attack and expect deliverance to come in an act of God's sovereignty and when it doesn't we are upset and depressed
 - c) We must change our thinking - God want to make us over comers - he wants to expand us.
5. God will use the various events in our lives if we can learn to process it correctly
 - a) **Surrender** to God wholeheartedly
 - b) **Believe** that He wants the best for you- quit interviewing self and circumstances
 - c) Continue to **be responsible** with core Christian actions... Engage w God- spiritual reality

III. Ministry questions:

- A. **Will you commit today to intentional Spiritual maturity**
- B. **Trouble areas that need to be reinterpreted by God**
- C. **Would you like to experience God today-receiving a touch from the Spirit.**