

I. Introduction

- A. Series on the Essentials of Spiritual growth (Today – “The process of Spiritual growth”)
- B. Sp growth is the result of connection with Jesus by His Holy Spirit (God of Growth)
- C. God uses various implements to grow us but ultimately, He is responsible for the process we are responsible for obedience to the process.
- D. His process takes time along with grace and truth

II. Illustration

A customer in Europe goes inside of a goldsmiths shop to make a purchase – He found it odd that he did not see the owner or any staff- so when he finds the item to purchase, he begins to search for someone to sell him the item. He searches through the store until he notices an open door leading out to the back. He looks out and spots the man (actually a refiner). The man stood over a huge pot on top of a fire of which the man would not take his eyes off of, even though the customer called to him and tried to rouse him to come as the customer was in a hurry. ////

“Can you just leave this process for 1 minute to check me out?” No, replied the refiner I cannot take my eyes off of this metal which is gold for 1 minute, I must watch this fire. I want this gold to be pure gold, If it gets too hot it will ruin it, if it cools it could harden with all the impurities in it.

He explained that He could not leave this process nor take his eyes off of the gold until all the impurities are out and the gold has been refined.

The frustrated but interested customer asked how long will this process take? The refiner says, “I will know when it's finished when I can see my reflection in the gold”

III. Explanation

- A. As we look through the bible especially the NT we see a dominating objective; spiritual growth
- B. Every letter and epistle has this dominating idea of spiritual growth and spiritual maturity-
- C. If this is true, then we should have the same goals in mind and press into this meaning and application of the process of spiritual growth and maturity – just as the apostle Paul did! Consider

Phil 3:12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on ¹so that I may ²lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

When Christ goes after us to save us, it is far more than us to recite a prayer or attend a meeting or to have an isolated experience. For Paul there was a prize to obtain, a goal in mind! He said the only thing that has value are those things that can contribute to this prize, if it did not contribute it had no value.

This is the attitude that Paul is calling for us to have toward Spiritual maturity and spiritual growth, fullness in Christ,

Jn 10:10 Jesus said, The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and ^{1a}have *it* abundantly.

How do get this abundant life this gold ? I believe this abundance is more than a future inheritance but a process of spiritual maturity.

IV. Consider this parable – It reveals this objective of growth as a process!

Luke 13:6 He also spoke this parable: ^a“A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it ²use up the ground?’ ⁸ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ ³And if it bears fruit, *well*. But if not, after that you can ^bcut it down.’ ”

A. Vs 6 "A certain man had planted a fig tree...."

1. God planted a tree that He could take pleasure in its fruit

a) Our lives in Christ are for the glory of God -

b) We are built to grow and bring pleasure to God

1 Co. 6:19 or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

2. It should have produced - something is not working **WHY is it not working?** (three years is perfect order)

All Sp. Growth is a result of being with God

a) Genuine connection with Jesus allows Him to grow those areas of fruitlessness

Jn. 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

b) We cannot achieve Sp Growth through natural means -

1 Co. 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned

3. Consequences - cut it down, it is wasting resources

a) Repentance = 2 turns 1) turning to God 2) turning away from sin - personal responsibility

b) We can't make it happen -

B. Vs 8 "Sir, give it one more year...."

1. Jesus by the Spirit suggests another season of time-

6: 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. *(A present Spiritual reality)*

2. Dig around it- Revealing truth -

a) This revelation allows us to see areas we must grow into

b) Learning to face the truth about our own life

c) Asking

3. **Fertilize it**- God nurtures us with grace

a) Seeing this requires revelation by the Spirit

b) Must believe the Holy Spirit arranges our circumstances (as we are connected to Him)

Jn. 16:13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;

4. Give it time- Transformation and Sp Growth will flow out of a process that God has allowed
 - a) Time speaks of the redemptive opportunity we have now.
 - b) Allow this process to cultivate life and Sp. growth -

C. I want to encourage you today to allow Him to complete the work in His season. Sometimes the process is long, without understanding, don't quit!

If the altar is where you meet us
Take me there, take me there
What you need is just an offering
It's right here, my life is here
And I'll be a living sacrifice for you

You're a fire
The refiner
I wanna be consumed

I wanna be tried by fire
Purified
You take whatever you desire
Lord here's my life

If your glory wants to come in
Let it fall, we want it all
Lord your fire is consuming
Fill this place, set it ablaze
I'll be a living sacrifice for you

You're a fire
The refiner
I wanna be consumed

I wanna be tried by fire
Purified
You take whatever you desire
Lord here's my life

I wanna be tried by fire
Purifier
You take whatever you desire
Lord here's my life

Clean my hands, purify my heart
I wanna burn for you, only for You

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[THE PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH]

Take my life as a sacrifice

I wanna burn for you, only for You