

FOUR STAGES OF BIBLICAL GROWTH

WHERE DO I START?

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth"

~ 2 Thessalonians 1:3

1. "Where Do I Start?"

- a. This is a necessary question to ask when there is an abundance of information
- b. Shows someone wants to be involved in learning the material, they want to work
- c. There is a curriculum that Paul has for growth, it never stops – Phil 1:9, 1Th 4:1
- d. If you're not increasing, if you're derailed or plateaued, you need to start up again
- e. It is never too late to start. It's never too soon. The best time is now.
- f. *The goal:* to do God's will, to glorify God, to grow up - 1Cor 10:31, 15:58, Eph 4:15
- g. There is a map. To get there, you must first know where you are at.
- h. Four stages of Biblical growth: salvation, establishment, sanctification, service

2. Salvation

- a. God's will is for all men to be saved – 1 Tim 2:4
- b. It is not good to assume. The gospel is where everyone starts – 1 Cor 15:1-4
- c. If you start off on the wrong foot, you won't go the right place
- d. You cannot / will not grow unless you are first saved – 1 Cor 1:18, 2:14, 3:15
- e. Growth refers to your new man in Christ, not your old man in the flesh
- f. It is not just Christ, it is what he did for you and why.

3. Establishment

- a. God's will is for all men to come to the knowledge of the truth – 1 Tim 2:4
- b. You can be saved and be saved your entire life and remain a baby.
- c. Growth at this stage means to be stabilized on right doctrine – Rom 1:11, 16:25
- d. This is where you become grounded with teaching – Col 2:7, 1 Tim 3:15
- e. Learn to believe the Bible, study the Bible, find answers, pray, know God's will.

4. Sanctification

- a. This is where you take what you know and make it real for you – 1 Thess 2:13
- b. God's will is your sanctification – 1 Thess 4:4, 1 Thess 5:16-18
- c. Christ sanctifies you, but then there is your being sanctified – 1 Thess 3:13-4:7
- d. Focus shifts from your knowledge to your inner man – Eph 3:16-19, 4:1, 5:1
- e. It requires doctrinal establishment to grow here – Col 1:9-12

5. Service

- a. More important than asking "where do I start" is asking, "what is the goal"
- b. God's will is that you serve him – Eph 3:8-10, 2 Cor 5:14-15
- c. I am talking here about full-time service – Rom 12:1-2
- d. Remember the goal, this is when you take part in someone else's growth Eph 4:16
- e. Faith (believes the truth), hope (the truth working in you), charity (truth in others)
- f. We need faithful men who will do the work. It starts with your growth.