

Trust in God to Grow

by Joyce Rhoads

Listening to the radio once again, I heard the lyrics to Brandon Heath's song, 'Whole Heart'.

*'Well I called your name a long time ago
And you sprung a well from a heart of stone
But I was careful then what I let you see
Only thought you wanted the best of me
The less I trust you, the less I grow
The more you love me, the more I know
I don't have to be afraid to show all of me.'*

I was intrigued with the statement, the less I trust you, the less I grow.

Before we can grow spiritually, we must know Jesus Christ as Savior. There comes that moment in time when a person comes to the realization that they cannot function in this world without God! From that moment of awareness to the giant chasm that exists between sinful man and the Supreme God comes conviction and then repentance. Baptism both blots out all past sin and begins the Christian life with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Growth is painful! The newborn and mother know that all too well. The butterfly wrestles to get out of the cocoon. The baby bird is forced from the nest, to flap those baby wings and soar to the heavens!

From that newborn Christian to seasoned saint is a long journey nourished by studying God's Word and heart-felt prayer. Ridding ourselves of our ideas of how things should happen will allow the Spirit to reveal more of Jesus to us.

Spiritual growth involves studying and understanding God's Word. We have to be aware of just what sin is and use the power God gives through His Spirit to resist evil and look to Christ for His example of how to conduct our lives every day. Growth cannot continue without the increasing of faith and trust in God.

As we read and apply God's Word to our lives, spiritual growth begins. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, ***"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."***

Another critical piece of spiritual growth is walking in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16 ***"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want."***

Walking by the Spirit is a choice we make by allowing God to fill us, guide us and control us. Ephesians 5:18, ... ***"Be filled with the Spirit."*** We have to choose to rely on the Holy Spirit, as Romans 6:11 tells us. ***"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."*** Romans 6:14 ***"For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."*** Ephesians 4:1 tells us, ***"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."***

A spirit-led life means we demonstrate less of those acts of the flesh and more of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says, ***"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."*** The spiritual growth resulting is the Spirit working in us.

The way God works in our lives varies differently from person to person. How we grow should be measured by God's Word, not by those around us.

James 1:23-25 tells us ***"Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do."***

How quickly we grow depends on many factors. Our study of the Word and prayer is only a portion of the factors effecting spiritual growth. While on this earth God is with us through all of our trials resulting in the trust that sparks spiritual growth. Other Christians' stories of God working

in their lives can give us hope in facing our own trials.

We need to keep foremost in our minds that God has given us everything we need, not necessarily everything we want. Be thankful and praise God for His intervening in our lives.

Our love for the Father begins a life-long journey that results in glory to the Father for his

mercy and grace, since salvation is not attained on our own. If we work towards seeing life through God's eyes we see this world is not our home. God is preparing a place for us with Him for eternity!