

Lesson 1: Understanding Spiritual Growth

"The egg is no chick by falling from the hen, nor man a Christian till he is born again."

John Bunyan

Introduction

All spiritual experience is related to Life.

Lifeless things cannot grow. Only living things can grow. God wants us to grow.

(Ezekiel 11. 9)

In Depth Study

I. The beginning point of spiritual growth is to be spiritually born again.

Spiritual growth must begin with spiritual birth.

To have a proper understanding about spiritual birth we need to understand spiritual death.

a) What is spiritual death?

- Spiritual death is NOT physical death.
- 'Spiritually dead' means to be an enemy of God, to be unreconciled to God. (Romans 3.23 , 5.10 , 6.23)
- Spiritual death is a condition of being alienated from God because of sin. (Colossians 1.21-22)
- When we are spiritually dead, we are cut off from His temporal as well as eternal blessings.

b) How can we be spiritually alive?

- By believing and receiving Jesus as our personal Savior (John 1.12)
- We must believe Jesus is Lord and embrace Him personally. (Romans 10.10)
- John 3
- Acts 2.36-41
- Those who believe in Jesus must be baptized.
- Baptism is an expression of submission to the Lordship of Christ.
- Being 'born again' moves us from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive.

II. The results of being 'born again':

When we are 'born again' at least 4 things happens to us:

a) Our sins are forgiven. (1 Peter 2.24)

- As sin causes death, either we have to die or we have to accept Christ, Who substitutes His death for ours. (Ephesians 1.17, 4. 32)
- b) *We have new life in Christ.*
- We do not merely turn over a new leaf. But Christ gives us a new life. (2Cor 5.17)
 - We partake in the nature of Christ. (2 Peter 1.3-4)
- c) *The Holy Spirit comes to indwell the believer. (Romans 8.9; 1Cor 6.19; John 16.8; Philippians 2.12, 13)*
- d) *We become the part of God's family. (Ephesians 2.19-22)*

III. The secret of spiritual growth is to understand our position in Christ.

- a) *Being 'in Christ' means that we are 'joint-heirs' with Him and recipients of the eternal kindness which God intends to bestow on His children.*

Note: The phrase 'in Christ' or related terms occur 27 times in Ephesians alone.

- b) *Being 'in Christ' means to be 'one with Christ', to be 'fellow travelers' with Him on an eternal journey.*
- Our position in Christ is the basis of all spiritual growth. (John 15.5) Without Christ we cannot grow into maturity and produce fruit. (Rom 6.4)
 - Our position in Christ will help us to understand and believe that Christian life is possible, progressive and powerful.
 - The process of spiritual growth is about believing that we really ARE who the Bible says we are in Christ.

Discussion

1. "How good you are has nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not you go to heaven". How do you respond to this statement? Why?

2. Explain in your own words what it means to be a Christian?

3. How important do you think it is to understand your position in Christ?