

In Christ, we are growing toward God's perfect holiness and glory

If growth is important to us physically, it is even more important spiritually. As those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ and been brought into a forgiven relationship with God, we are still a long way from where we need to be in our thoughts, emotions, and decisions. What God wants is for us to “grow up” in our likeness to His character. And in Christ He has provided all that we need to experience this growth. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

It would be a mistake for us to think that this growth is optional. Certainly, we are saved by God's grace, and no amount of good works on our part could ever merit the forgiveness He has extended to us. Nevertheless, He expects us to grow to maturity in Christ, and this requires a decision on our part to cooperate with His plan for our perfection. If we're negligent or lazy, we can't depend on grace to get us to heaven (Hb. 6:11,12).

But think about what heaven will mean for those who have yielded to God's plan. *In Christ, we are growing toward God's perfect holiness and glory.* Even in this life, our highest goal ought to be maturity in Christ (at least as much maturity as is possible for us to reach in this world). But in heaven, we will have reached not just partial maturity; we will have become exactly what God always wanted us to be — and that will be nothing less than creatures who completely share in His own glory. We will be perfect representations of the glory of the God who created us.

This week, let's ponder the greatness of the goal set before us in Jesus Christ. Making no excuses and sparing no effort, let's press toward that goal. There is much work yet to be done to eliminate the remainders of our carnal attitudes, ungodly habits, and sinful actions. God has provided everything we need to become more like Him in our thinking and acting. We can improve every day in our resemblance to Christ, our elder brother. “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom. 8:29). If, in fact, we are works in progress, then we need to be making progress!

Monday: 2 Peter 1:3,4

Key Idea: It is God's will for us, as His children, to become partakers of His divine nature.

Questions for Family Growth: Having been forgiven of our past sins, what are some ways we need to begin growing in godly character? According to vv.3 in this reading, what resources are available to us to help accomplish this growth? In Eph. 4:13,16, what is our main goal in this life?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:6.

Tuesday: 2 Peter 1:5-11

Key Idea: Beginning at the point of our initial obedience to the gospel, we are to grow in godliness.

Questions for Family Growth: What are the things Peter says we must add to our faith? Why does it take “diligence” (NKJV) on our part to acquire these things? In v.8, what will happen if we do not grow in these ways? What does Peter exhort us to do in vv.10,11?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:7.

Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 3:18

Key Idea: As we grow in Christ, we are transformed into higher and higher degrees of glory.

Questions for Family Growth: What does Paul mean that we behold “as in a mirror the glory of the Lord” (NKJV)? What does he mean that we “are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (ESV)? What should be our attitude toward this process?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:8.

Thursday: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Key Idea: Our hardships in this world are a part of the process of our growth toward God’s glory.

Questions for Family Growth: Although our “outer self” is perishing, what is happening to our “inner self”? How is it that Paul can say our troubles in this world are no more than “light momentary affliction”? What is the “eternal weight of glory” that he speaks of in this passage?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:9.

Friday: Revelation 22:3-5

Key Idea: At the end of our growth process, we will see our Father’s face.

Questions for Family Growth: If our inner character has grown in its likeness to our Father’s character, how much should it mean to us to know that we will one day be with Him in heaven? Why is it so hard for us to long for this glory as much as we should?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:10.

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