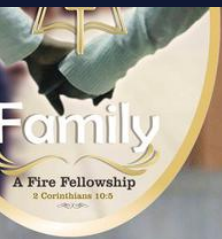


SPIRITUAL GROWTH



It is hard to ignore the emphasis that the Bible puts on growth. Growth is the process of increasing or moving up to the next level. Growth in human beings means maturing, getting to a stature that enables you to take on responsibilities, and reproduce. Growing is also the process to perfection; it is adding on what we didn't have before. Growing also involves letting go of the useless stuff.

Spiritual growth takes on a similar form as described earlier, and looking at growth in light of scripture; we can highlight some important aspects of growth. Therefore, growing spiritually takes on the following forms but is not limited to them: increasing in the things of God (see 3 John 1:2, 2 Cor 9:2), increasing in Knowledge (see 2 Pet 1:2), stature (see Luke 2:52), perfecting in the things of God (see Eph 4:13), letting things go of childishness (see 1 Cor 13:11), and renewal (see Mat 24:32)

The question that then arises is, why do we need to grow? And the first answer would be that we need to reach our full potential (see 1 Pet 5:10, 1 Cor 13:11) so that we complete our mission. David was called and anointed as a young boy but became King as an adult. Jeremiah was even called before he was formed, but he needed to mature to fulfil the mission. Jesus, full of anointing, and was already teaching since he was a child, but only started his ministry when he was 30. Therefore, it is evident that growth is needed to step into your mission fully.

Growth helps produce good fruits; only mature trees can produce fruits for others to consume. Therefore, we need to be ripe so that people can enjoy the fruits we produce. One of the characteristics of a tree whose leaves are always green is that it always give shade, implying that for you to be a place of rest for people, you need to grow (see Ps 1:3).

It is important to note that, to take possession of what is ours (see Gal 4:1), and to have access to new things, for you to enjoy new experiences, you need to grow (see 1 Cor 3:2, Heb 5:2). Your inheritance is no good to you if you are still a child of limited understanding. Growth allows you to reproduce and multiply; multiplication is not for babies. It's by growing that we can make disciples.

How then can one grow, one may ask. Growth is a two-way street, and it requires a partnership between God and man. Firstly, you must acknowledge that God is the author of your growth; that's his part; it is His grace that makes us grow. "He is the author and the consumer of our faith", says Heb 12:2.

Now our part, like plants, need good soil, water, and exposure to the sun to grow. The soil here can be referred to as the base, where you are rooted, what surrounds you, a good community, where you fellowship, surround yourself with people who love Jesus.

Water refers to purity; you can't grow spiritually without it. Let us intentionally pursue purity in everything that we do. The sun then represents the exposure to the word of God or the works of the Holy Spirit in us. Light makes all plants ready for development.

Like children, we can't live on milk forever; we need to move to solid food to grow. And some of these challenging events in our lives can be considered solid food that makes us grow. If we want to grow, we can't only eat what we want but also ingest what we need. Our father God knows better, and he can make both the happy events and the sour ones contribute to our strengthening.



To have a balanced lifestyle and growth, we have to exercise or practice physical activities. The same applies to our spiritual life; we have to work on our faith and our gifts by exercising them. Exercise your faith in front of the challenges and exercise your gifts in your community; that's how you perfect them and be in the service (see 1 Sam 3:1), and that's where you learn (see 2 King 3:11)

The paradox of spiritual growth is; growth is not getting bigger in your efforts but getting smaller and allowing God to be big in us. It's disappearing so that He can appear; it's removing our limited abilities to let the unlimited God act in us and lose our short life to take his eternal. Therefore, growing spiritually is essentially becoming a child in God's hand, which is quite contrary to human logic. All the growth objectives are reached when we let God grow in us.

