

Just A Minute with Scripture

God Has a Growth Plan to Edify You

The next few newsletters will be devoted to 'spiritual growth' to encourage effectual service unto our Lord. So first, what is God's design? As we rightly divide the Word (*II Tim. 2:15*), we realize that Paul's epistles are specifically written 'to us.' It's also helpful to know his epistles are set up in a particular order to **edify** (teach): *Romans-Galatians* is foundational doctrine, *Ephesians-II Thessalonians* is advanced teaching, and I Timothy-Philemon is exhortation to set things in order in the Church with instruction to be spiritual helpers. Growth begins with understanding *Romans* foundational doctrine, along with the experience of applying it in life.

As we progress, the Spirit builds on the foundation of teaching within us, forming an '**edifice**' (structure or form of doctrine), similar to constructing a building. Romans' groundwork is vital, as everything else in Paul's epistles is built upon it. If it is faulty or contains holes and gaps, **edification** will have structural problems that affect the process to be "*stablished.*" God's goal for *Romans*: "...to the end ye may be established." (*vs. 1:11*)

Romans 1-5 teaches Justification: how to be just with God and what He has given to us. As our hope is established, we have confidence in our eternal security. God's desire for us is to grow properly. Next is our Sanctification: *chapters 6-8*. This is how to walk holy, acceptable, and profitable to God, growing in our new identity to access His power and wisdom. God's plan continues in *Romans 9-11*. This explains where we fit into God's overall plan/purpose and how Israel was set aside for a time, while God completes 'the mystery' to the Gentiles. (God will resume His promises and prophecies unto Israel after the Rapture.) Lastly, *Romans 12-16* lays forth His new form of worship and service for the Body of Christ.

To Do: Think on these things to progress spiritually. As you grow, ask yourself: "Am I using God's design to grow? Where am I? Now, make a plan to glorify God.

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Feel free to call if you have questions with any articles.

Christ Is Our Life!

If you believe that Christ died, was buried, and rose again (*I Corinthians 15:3-4*), you are just (saved) in God's sight. To God be the glory! It is by faith alone!

See yourself in a new light to live what God teaches you: "*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (*Rom. 6:11*) How will you progress?

Study Devotional of the Book of Galatians



Verses this Month: *Galatians 6:7-9*
⁷“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. ⁹And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Questions to Help Your Study:

1. How can you be “deceived” in your thinking and give examples of how God could be “mocked?”

2. Read verse 7. Describe the term “sow.” How and what does man “sow?” Explain the reaping process?
3. A saint can sow “to his flesh,” living ungodly. Think on what it means to “reap corruption.” Give a few examples from your life or Scripture.
4. A believer can sow “to the Spirit” and reap “life everlasting.” Does this mean you will have life in heaven forever or eternal fruit? Explain.
5. Provide personal examples of being “weary in well doing?” What shall we reap “if we faint not?” Does knowing this help you? How?

“...the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” *1 Thessalonians 2:13*

Questions & Answers With Deborah

Question 1: How can I endure a marriage that has so many problems?

Exalt God’s Word and His power, which can enable you to deal with things and live as who He made you. Don’t exalt the problems, your situation, nor unmet expectations. Concern yourself with **your** growth and Christ’s work in **you** (*Phil. 3:13-16*), not on your spouse’s shortcomings. Be patient, meditate, and live what God has taught you. Give your spouse grace. (*Phil. 4:8*) Apply this in life.

Question 2: My wife doesn't fill all my needs. What shall I do?

That’s exactly where God desires you to be. Why? Look to Him and not yourself or things of this world: “*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*” (*Phil. 4:19*) Trust Him! Further, God will give you the strength to endure and be content: “*...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content...I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” (*Phil. 4:11, 13*)

Make a Personal Plan... Led by the Spirit

What would it look like to be led by the Spirit? “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” (*Rom. 8:14*) It’s an individual process. Consider a few ideas to progress toward this goal:

1) Self-Awareness: Know where you are in your spiritual growth according to God’s edification plan in Paul’s epistles. (Ask someone to help if needed.)

2) Have a study plan: Use God’s way (described on p. 1) to decide where to read. Often, a saint is functioning somewhere in *Romans*. i.e. unclear in his eternal security (*Rom. 1-5*) or having trouble in his walk (*Rom. 6-8*). Choose a regular, uninterrupted daily time with God. Be wise to include these:

-**Read:** Read directly in the Word, progressing to understand and apply it.

-**Meditation:** Think on what God is teaching you in the verses to live as God desires, then evaluate how it is going in the details of your life.

-**Pray:** Use 2-way communication: **Express** thoughts, questions, and desires to God. Practice **receptive listening** unto the Spirit as He teaches the Word.

****Study:** Those new to the Bible should focus on reading. As you progress, add study (detailed investigation of topics/words. Use a dictionary/concordance.)

3) Have a goal to apply the Word: As you progress through a section, such as *Romans 6-8*, realize the goal is not ‘just’ gaining knowledge or consulting a good Bible teacher or commentary. Knowledge puffs us up. (*1 Cor. 8:1*) Man-made resources are to supplement personal time in Scripture. As you read Scripture, it’s an intimate one-to-one learning process over a lifetime. Listen to the Spirit carefully to respond by faith: “*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*” (*1 Cor. 2:10*) Think on this, apply it, and reflect to readjust if needed.



Emotions and the Word of God by Erin Young

Emotions are a natural part of the human experience. There is absolutely nothing wrong with showing or having them. But how are we to handle our emotions when it comes to understanding Scripture? *Proverbs 28:26: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered."* *Proverbs 12:15: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."* When we view the Bible through the lens of our own emotions and experiences, we often lose understanding in what is actually being taught.

It is not our understanding we should lean on, but God's. *Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."* *1 John 3:20: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."* We cannot always rely on our own thoughts to guide us and show us the Truth of everything. *Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* *Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it."*

To truly understand how we are to study and look at Scripture, we must look at God's directions for studying that are written 'to us,' which can be found in *2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

Questions & Answers With Deborah

Question 3: My parents don't seem to understand me though I'm an adult now.

Consider that you're each in a 'role transition' and under spiritual construction. Whether an adult child or parent, you're still learning, growing, and making mistakes. Grace & charity are the answers.

How can you respond in love and grace? Think on and study these examples to apply in situations. 1) *Rom. 5: 6-10* says God loved us and died for us, who were without strength, ungodly sinners, and enemies. 2) Paul was hounded by his own countryman, yet he wished himself "accursed from Christ" for his kinsman. (*Rom. 9:3*) His God-appointed ministry was to the Gentiles, yet Jews considered them 'dogs.' His ministry was to love the Gentiles to Christ, so he became a living sacrifice. What can you learn from these examples?

Question 4: I am sad and discouraged. Is Satan robbing me of my joy?

What I have learned is that this is one of Satan's biggest goals. He does it in many ways and often without saints knowing. For years he was successful in my life, but I finally realized what was happening and decided to allow Christ in me to change it.

How? Self-awareness with "yielding" to the Spirit's leading by Christ the Word. This process enables us to "let" God be our wisdom and power. We are to focus on the Word, not the problems, and be thankful. The flesh will then be put in the background and the Spirit can lead.

Think on this: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof...but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (*Rom. 6:13*) "Let not sin reign..." "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." (*Rom. 6:12,14:19*) "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (*Rom. 8:6*)

To Do: Choose to yield, let, and be!

Maturing or Just Kicking Back?

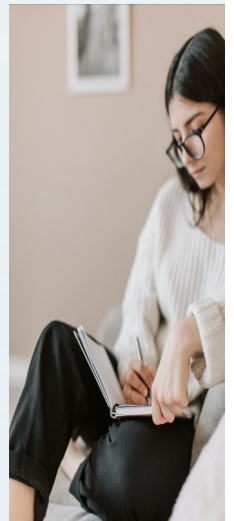


“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (II Corinthians 3:17) In this context, we are freed from the law to embrace learning to walk by faith, trusting Christ in us. God through Paul explains the role of the Spirit in our spiritual maturation process. As saints, this is important to understand, as we also play a role and have responsibility. As we have discussed, we’re to ‘yield,’ ‘let’ the Spirit lead in teaching/convicting us, and then ‘be’ who we are in Christ.

Christ gives us great liberty in our journey of faith and desires that we have an eternal ‘spiritual transformation.’ (Rom. 12:2) That is why Paul, in patient, parental love, took the time needed to correct and re-teach saints of Corinth and Galatia the fundamentals: *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19)* Let the Word dwell in you to enable God to form Christ in you.

As we know, we are to be *“led by the Spirit,” (Romans 8:14)* which also teaches us Christ the Word: *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29)* Over time, in our journey, Christ is formed within us. It is not just pieces of Bible data in our brain, but the living Word conforming our inner man unto Christ’s image: *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (II Corinthians 3:18)*

The tendency will be to use this liberty for an *“occasion of the flesh”* and not as servants of God, sitting back and coasting, kicking our feet back to wait for the Rapture. However, God wants so much more for us. What we do here is critical and a wondrous opportunity to access all the blessings God has designed for us. We can be distracted or fear may even take us over, causing us to be driven by the flesh. It does not want to be uncomfortable, live differently from the world, nor be pushed out of it’s comfort zone. Yet we are called unto this liberty to learn and walk in love as who we are. God in us is our power and wisdom to do it. *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” (Gal. 5:13)* We’re to learn what God teaches and then walk it out in the details of life, serving with charity and being consistent with our position in Christ.



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