

WEEK TWELVE

GROWTH AND DIRECTION

I press on toward the goal.
-Philippians 3:14

In this week you will be studying passages from God's Word that will help you keep on growing as a disciple, help you learn to discern God's will and help you make spiritual plans that God can bless.

Day 78 – Keep on Growing _____

1. Many seem to believe that the normal thing is for a person to grow as a Christian to a certain point and then level off. Read the following passages and see what you think:
 - a.) Hebrews 5:11-14
 - b.) 2 Peter 1:5-8
 - c.) 1 Peter 2:1-2
 - d.) 2 Peter 3:17-18
2. Look at Ephesians 3:14-19. How much is there to know? Who has learned enough?
3. It has been said that as Christians we either grow or dry up. Do you think this is true and if so why?

Day 79 - Going After It _____

Spiritual growth is something you must go after. The following are four keys to growth.

1. *Make a Decision to Grow.* Very seldom does any significant growth occur without this decision. Read Philippians 3:7-12. What is Paul's attitude toward growth? Notice especially vv. 10 and 12.

How are you answering this question right now: "In my own life, what am I willing to give up in order to grow?"

2. *Concentrate On Specifics.* Change takes place not in the vague or general but in the specific. "I want to be like Jesus!" Okay! But how?
3. *Push Yourself to Grow.* We need to be so willing to put ourselves in situations where we must grow and where we must depend on God for his help. Read 1 Timothy 4:7. Why is the word "train" an important word here? When an athlete trains what does he do? What are some ways you can be pushing yourself to grow right now? (Think about areas where growth does not at all come naturally for you.)
4. *Have A Vision for What You Can Become.* Read 2 Peter 1:3-11 and realize that you can become everything that Jesus would have you to become. What is the promise that we have in v. 3? End your time today by reading Philippians 1:6.

Day 80 – Not Growing? Take Inventory _____

1. If we are not growing then what does that mean? Read each of the following passages and complete this statement for each:

If I am not growing then it may mean that ...

 - a.) John 12:24
 - b.) Ephesians 4:15
 - c.) Philippians 3:12-14
 - d.) Hebrews 12:1-2
 - e.) 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
2. Which of these passages most describes something that is holding growth back from you? Share your conviction with someone today.

(Note: Look ahead to Day 85 in your study and make sure you can get one of the items mentioned in point No. 1 by the time you reach this point in your study.)

Day81 - Knowing God's Will _____

All of us make plans. Hopefully we have some dreams for our lives, some goals. How can we know whether or not we're doing God's will? How can we know that decisions we are making in keeping with God's will? The next four studies will deal with this topic.

1. Read Romans 12:1-2. What does this passage teach about knowing God's will? The word here for transformed is the word "metamorphosis." The usage of this word implies a radical or drastic kind of change. What are some ways in which God has had to radically change you in order to make known his will to you?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17. Sometimes God's will is difficult to discover in our lives but always we know some right things to do. It is always right to be joyful, to pray continually and to give thanks. Think back over the last week. Are there some times when this was not your attitude? Why will this attitude help you see other aspects of God's will?
3. Read Ephesians 5:8-17. How does tolerating darkness in our lives keep us from knowing God's will? Why are we being foolish?
4. Read Philippians 1:9-11. If we want to discern what is *best* then we must be letting our love abound more and more. So often, when we are struggling, when we have doubts or questions, when we don't know what God is trying to say to us, the best thing we can do is look for a way to serve someone. In what ways can your love abounding more and more?

Day82-The Importance of Plans _____

1. Read Psalm 20:1-5. From v.4 we can draw two conclusions:
 - a.) God wants his people to have plans, and
 - b.) when his people have godly plans, he wants to bless those plans.
2. Why do you think that many religious people have no real plans for their spiritual development, but at the same time have various

plans for other aspects of their lives?

3. If we don't have plans, then obviously God cannot make those plans succeed. It is, of course, possible to over-plan or to plan so much you can't possibly get to it all. But we all need plans-plans that God can bless. Write down elements in your plan for future growth in God's Kingdom.

Day 83-The Desires of Your Heart _____

1. Psalm 37:1-11. Look especially at v. 4 and make a list of the desires of your heart that you know are God's desires as well.
2. Look at v. 5. Can you give some specific examples of how you need "*to commit your way to the Lord.*" What is the promise made to you in v. 6?
3. Look at v. 8. What kind of problems do you get into if you begin to "fret" over your plans?
4. Describe the difference you want your faith to make in your life- as you make decisions and go through trials.

Day 84-Your Heart at Peace _____

1. Read Philippians 4:4-7. What words do you read here that relate to your life?
2. What is Paul saying that we can do once we have committed our present and our future to God? What is he saying God will do for us once we have made that commitment?
3. As you seek to grow and please God with a lifetime of service, you will be challenged. There will be hardships. There will be pain. There will be trouble. But look at what Jesus said about this in John 16:33. Life is difficult. Right? But what else is true? '-
4. Read about the ultimate result of your growth as a Christian in Romans 5:1-5. In what way will our "hope" not disappoint us? Read 1 Peter 1:3-5.