

Section 6: How do I grow in my relationship with Jesus?

Dealing with my Sin:

What is sin? Sin is when we do, think, or desire something that is not in harmony with God. When we sin we are not living in harmony (or fellowship) with God. Sin is not only actions that are inconsistent with who God is but it is also *motives*, *intentions* and even *values* we hold that are inconsistent with who God is. Our sinfulness will be primarily revealed to us by the Holy Spirit as we interact with the Word of God.

There are two ways that we confront our sin which keeps us in a healthy, growing relationship with Jesus:

- **Repentance:** Repentance is when we recognize our sin and turn away from it to abandon it.
 - ✚ Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."
 - ✚ Acts 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord
- **Confession:** Confession is when we agree before God and others that our ungodly behavior is sin.
 - ✚ 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
 - ✚ James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Note: A church community is a safe place where you can confess your sinfulness and receive prayer. For private sins it is best to share them with another believer in the church who is the same gender and with whom you have a close relationship.

Living by the Spirit: When a person puts his faith in Jesus Christ and becomes a child of God, the Holy Spirit begins to interact with that person in a very intimate and powerful way. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that a person walks by faith in Christ and becomes more like Jesus Christ.

Several important roles that the Holy Spirit plays in the life of a believer are:

- **Indwelling:** The Holy Spirit lives within (or dwells in) the life of the believer. This presence of the Spirit is God's permanent presence with us and He will never leave us.
 - ✚ Ephesians 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.
- **Teaching:** The Holy Spirit will teach the believer by revealing spiritual truth to the person and empowering him or her to accept it. The Holy Spirit will also teach us how to walk with Jesus by empowering us to live by faith.
 - ✚ John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
- **Filling:** The believer is filled with the Spirit when he or she submits to His control. We allow the Holy Spirit to control our actions, thoughts and direction in life.
 - ✚ Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Section 6: How do I grow in my relationship with Jesus? (Continued)

Bible Reading:

- ✚ Psalm 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. 10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. 12 Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.
- ✚ Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
- ✚ 1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Principles for Reading the Bible

1. Steadily read on through the Bible

You can start with the New Testament or read some from the Old Testament and also something from the New Testament. Don't let difficult (hard to understand) passages stop you.

2. Act based upon what God is saying to you through your readings

As you read pray, "Lord, please speak to me" or "Help me to do what I hear you saying to me."

3. Share what God is teaching you and how God is changing your life and thinking when you meet together with the church.

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Prayer: *Intimate fellowship with the Living God is crucial to grow as a believer.*

✚ Psalm 63:3-8 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

Prayer Pattern: ACTS (acronym: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication)

Often times our prayers tend to be focused on what God will *give* us or *do* for us. Following this pattern will help balance our prayers so that they are God focused and honoring.

Adoration: Tell God in prayer how you adore Him. He is worthy of adoration.

- Song of Solomon 1:4 ..We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to **adore** you!
- Psalms 96:9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

Confession: Confession is necessary for us to continually walk with God in a close relationship and to stay sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

- 1 John 1:9 If we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Thanksgiving: Tell God why you are thankful to Him. Thank God for things such as:

- how He is teaching you
- how he is changing your life
- answered prayers
- your salvation
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Supplication: This means to ask God for things. God desires for us to depend on Him in all things. God enjoys when we ask Him for things in our daily life.

- Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
- John 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything **in my name**, and I will do it. (see 15:7)

Listening to God: In your time of prayer, set aside time to actually listen to what God is saying to you. This may be difficult but it is important to sit quietly before God.

✚ Psalm 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God..."

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Community (Church): *Believers grow by being committed to a community of believers.*

- ✚ Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...
- 1) In the above verse, what were some believers doing and why does Scripture confront them?
 - 2) In the above verse and in each of the verses below, tell why it is important for the believer to be with the church in order to grow as a Christian? (*Circle the key word in each verse*)
- ✚ 1 Corinthians 14:26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, *everyone* has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.
 - ✚ Ephesians 4 [*God gave every believer different spiritual gifts and abilities*] 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up
 - ✚ Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Ministry (Gifts): *Believers grow as they use their gifts to minister to others in the church.*

- 1) According to the verse below, which believers have been given spiritual gifts?
 - ✚ 1Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
- 2) According to the verses below, what are believers a part of and why is this important?
 - ✚ Romans 12:4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.
 - ✚ Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
- 3) According to this passage below, what happens when all the members of the body are actively using their gifts? (see verse 13)
 - ✚ Ephesians 4: [*These spiritual gifts are*] 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Summary: The body grows together. Every member is needed to use their gifts. Believers will mature in their relationship with Jesus as they are actively using the gifts God has given them.