

Sometimes We Grow and Don't Know It

by David Wilkerson

Spiritual growth is a secret, hidden thing that God is working in our lives, even in the midst of struggle.

Scripture: Hosea 14:5, 2 Thessalonians 1:3

Topics: "Perseverance in Faith", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

David Wilkerson emphasizes that many believers are unaware of their spiritual growth despite their earnest efforts in prayer and seeking God. He reflects on the hidden nature of spiritual progress, comparing it to the unseen growth of plants, and reassures those struggling with sin that they are indeed growing through their battles. Wilkerson encourages believers to recognize that even in their struggles, they are being strengthened and refined by God. He draws parallels with the Thessalonian Christians, who were surprised by Paul's acknowledgment of their growth, highlighting that spiritual growth often goes unnoticed. Ultimately, he reminds us that God is at work in our lives, even when we cannot see it.

Transcript

Some believers can tell you all about their spiritual growth. And you can clearly see the changes in their lives. They testify to you about how the Holy Ghost has vanquished the enemy for them, and you rejoice with them in their victory.

Yet these kinds of Christians are the exception. Most believers are totally unaware of any spiritual progress in their lives. They pray, read the Bible and seek the Lord with all their hearts. There's no obstruction to spiritual growth in them.

But they can't discern any growth in themselves. I'm an example of this type of believer. I know I walk in the righteousness of Christ, yet I never sense I'm making progress. In fact, I occasionally get down on myself whenever I do or say something un-Christlike. It causes me to wonder, "I've been a Christian for years. Why don't I ever learn?"

I think the Thessalonian Christians were stunned when they heard Paul's glowing assessment of them (see 2 Thessalonians 1:3). They probably thought, "Me, growing exceedingly? Paul must be kidding."

Yet Paul knew that spiritual growth is a secret, hidden thing. Scripture likens it to the unseen growth of flowers and trees: "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon"

(Hosea 14:5-6).

God is telling us, "Go to the lilies! Just try to watch them grow. I'm telling you by day's end you won't see any growth whatsoever. But know this; I water the lily every morning with the dew I send--and it's going to grow." The same is true of most spiritual growth. It's imperceptible to the human eye!

When some people get saved, they never seem to struggle with a besetting sin. They testify, "The moment I came to Jesus, the Lord took that temptation out of me. And I've been free ever since." I know many former drug addicts who've had this experience.

But for multitudes of Christians, it's a different story. Years after their conversion, an old corruption has broken loose in them--something they hated and never wanted to see again. Yet no matter how hard they struggle, that one remaining lust simply won't let go. Over time they grow discouraged. Their soul cries out, "How long, Lord? When will this chain ever be broken?" And eventually the devil comes to them, saying, "You'll never make it. You know there's no way you could grow spiritually in this kind of condition."

Take heart, friend--I've got good news for you. You are growing in the midst of your struggle! In fact, you may be growing by leaps and bounds because of your struggle.

Rest assured--if you have the fear of God in your heart, you're going to emerge from the storm much stronger. You see, when you're doing battle with the enemy, you're exercising and calling forth all the graces and powers of God. And even though you may feel weakened, those graces and powers are strengthening you. For one, you're becoming more urgent in your praying. And, second, you're being stripped of all pride. So, the storm is actually putting you on "spiritual guard" in every area of your life!

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