

Continuous Spiritual Growth

by Dougan Clark

The sermon emphasizes the importance of continuous spiritual growth through holiness, knowledge of Christ, and the removal of hindrances such as inbred sin.

Scripture: Malachi 4:2, Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 1:10, 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Sanctification"

Description

Dougan Clark preaches about the continuous spiritual growth in the inner life of holiness, emphasizing the expansion of spiritual graces without hindrance in the sanctified heart, leading to a perpetual and eternal growth in love and maturity. He highlights the importance of removing hindrances to growth, feeding on the Word of God, and growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ to experience constant spiritual growth. Clark urges believers to seek sanctification, spiritual health, and growth in grace to thrive and serve effectively in the Kingdom of God.

Transcript

The inner life of holiness is a life of continuous spiritual growth. All the spiritual graces which were planted in the heart at conversion -- and which, during the justified state were more or less hindered in their growth and development by the presence of the carnal mind -- are now permitted to expand themselves, and to increase indefinitely without restraint or hindrance. And thus the heart of the sanctified man or woman becomes a spiritual garden -- full of luscious fruits and fragrant flowers, with no noisome weed or noxious insect to obstruct the growth or the fruitfulness, or the perfume. "A garden enclosed is my sister my spouse."

We get spiritual life as a gift of God at our conversion. We get heart-purity also as a gift at the time of our entire sanctification. Afterwards we are in a position to grow steadily and constantly unto maturity. In natural things maturity and ripeness is followed by decay and death; but in spiritual things there is no maturity attainable beyond which there may not be a farther growth, and no decay or death can ever occur unless we fall into backsliding and apostasy. As holiness is synonymous with perfect love, we may readily believe that there will never be a time on earth or in heaven when there will never be and will not be an increase of holy love. Hence spiritual growth as a part of the inner life of holiness will be continuous and perpetual while we are in the body, and it will be eternal in glory.

And yet it is true that the sanctified believer, walking year after year with God, and obeying His voice, -- trusting in Christ and walking in His foot steps -- does not attain even in this state of being to a richness of

experience, and to a development and fulness of the Christian graces which may well be designated maturity. Purity obtained when you are sanctified wholly, is perfection in nature; maturity, the result of growth, is perfection in degree, but with the paradoxical condition attached, that "still there's more to follow."

The apostle Peter, in his first epistle, uses this language, viz: "Wherefore laying aside all malice and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;" and in his second epistle at the end he says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." It is evident that the apostle -- who has been styled the "Apostle of Growth," -- gives not the slightest intimation that we can grow into grace, whether the grace be justification or entire sanctification. In the first passage quoted, he addresses Christian converts, in a justified state as "new-born babes," and admonishes them to remove all the hindrances to growth by which they are beset, and then to seek a healthy, spiritual appetite and digestion, that they may grow by feeding upon the pure milk of the word. Here then, we have the inspired conditions which are necessary to Christian growth. They are, first, Get rid of inbred sin -- for it is manifest that malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, evil speakings, are all fruits of the carnal nature, which abides even in the regenerate -- and Peter is saying to them, "Be sanctified wholly," "Destroy the body of sin," "Remove the obstructions to growth," "Feed yourselves on Bible truth," and then you will grow. In other words, they are directed to become healthy Christians, and then to take the right kind of spiritual nourishment. These two conditions being fulfilled, a rapid and constant spiritual growth is certain.

From the second quotation given above, we learn that growth in grace is parallel with and dependent upon a growth "in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." Yes, beloved, we are to be constantly growing in knowledge -- even the knowledge which is life eternal.

"That they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." O, to know more of Jesus, let that be our aim; and for that purpose let us sit at His feet and learn of Him. We can get additional knowledge of Him by a diligent study of the Word -- by prayer, and praise, by worship and communion -- by the Spirit taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us -- and as we grow in the knowledge of Him we shall always be growing in grace. Praise the Lord.

A healthy child needs simply to partake bountifully of the food which is his natural nutriment, and to have proper exercise, and he will thrive and grow rapidly and symmetrically. But if he be the subject of some constitutional disease, which affects his digestive and assimilative functions, then although you may give him his milk regularly and abundantly, yet his growth will be interfered with -- he will be dwarfish, or distorted, or one-sided, or in some way unsymmetrical and at the same time a weakling as to strength. Ah, beloved, are there not far too many dwarfish and one-sided Christians? Are there not too many weaklings in our churches, and is not the reason because their growth and development have been obstructed by the dreadful malady of inbred sin?

Several years ago I read a story like the following, viz., In a certain family twin sisters were born. One of them was a strong, healthy, well-developed child, while the other was a poor, weak, puny infant with no health and little vitality. After twenty-five years the one was a tall, vigorous and handsome young lady, while the other had never walked a step nor spoken a word. At the age of full maturity she was still an infant, and then death ended her sufferings. It was not that she had been fed and tended and cared for less than the other. It was because she had no health -she could not assimilate the food which she swallowed, and so, of course, could not grow or acquire strength. Let us suppose that in her infancy a

skillful physician had administered a remedy to her which permeated all her tissues and removed the disease from her constitution. Then she could have taken her milk and digested it -- and after awhile she would have cut her teeth, and been able to masticate and assimilate, not simply the meat of infancy, but the strong meat of womanhood, and like her sister she would have become full of vigor and able to accomplish all the duties of an active life.

The lesson is obvious. We are all born with the constitutional disease of inbred sin. "This infection of nature doth remain, yea, even in them that have been regenerated." And while it remains growth and strengthening and development must be greatly retarded. But there is balm in Gilead -- there is a Physician there -- the health of the daughter of my people may be and ought to be recovered. In the blood of Jesus there is a panacea for all spiritual maladies and for all inbred sin. Take the remedy, beloved, and be well. Take then the milk and afterwards the meat of the Word and grow strong in the Lord and "do exploits" by His power.

Listen again to the inspired words of Malachi, "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall." Notice, beloved, first you fear His name, and are therefore His children -- next you are to get healing, and that means holiness, for sanctification is to the soul what health is to the body. Holiness is wholeness. And then you are to grow up like the calves in the stall. And how do they grow? First they must be healthy calves, and secondly, they must be stall-fed. With these conditions they rapidly grow up into bullocks ready for the market. O, beloved, let us pray that the Sun of Righteousness may speedily arise upon Christians and upon Churches with healing in His wings -- and that we all may grow up with full strength and power for service. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dougan-clark/continuous-spiritual-growth/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net

