

THEME: WHO I AM IN CHRIST.

TOPIC: I'M EXPECTED TO GROW.

TEXT: COLOSSIANS 2:6-7, HEBREWS 5:12-14, PSALM 92:12-14

Introduction

When we become Christians, we enter into a relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit that will cause us to grow. With the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to become more like Jesus and to become more holy.

1. God wants you to grow up (Hebrews 6:1, 2 Peter 3:18).

Your heavenly Father's goal is for you to mature and develop the characteristics of Jesus Christ. Sadly, millions of Christians grow older but never grow up. They are stuck in perpetual spiritual infancy, remaining in diapers and booties. The reason is that they never intended to grow.

Spiritual growth is not automatic. It takes an intentional commitment. You must want to grow, decide to grow, make an effort to grow, and persist in growing. Discipleship – the process of becoming like Christ – always begins with a decision.

Q: How important is the act of discipleship in a believer's walk with God?

2. God's part and your part (Romans 12:1, 13:14). Christlikeness is the result of making Christ-like choices and depending on His Spirit to help you fulfil those choices. Once you decide to get serious about becoming like Christ, you must begin to act in new ways. You will need to let go of some old routines, develop some new habits, and intentionally change the way you think.

Q: What would you consider a new way of acting?

3. Changing your default mode (Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8). To change your life, you must change the way you think. Behind everything you do is a thought. Every behaviour is motivated by a belief, and every action is prompted by an attitude. God revealed this thousands of years before psychologists understood it: "Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.

To be like Christ you must develop the mind of Christ. The New Testament calls this mental shift repentance, which in Greek literally means "to change your mind." You repent whenever you change the way you think by adopting how God thinks – about yourself, sin, God, other people, life, your future, and everything else. You take on Christ's outlook and perspective.

4. Think Maturely (1 Corinthians 14:20, Hebrews 5:12-14). We are commanded to “think the same way that Christ Jesus thought.” There are two parts to doing this. The first half of this mental shift is to stop thinking immature thoughts, which are self-centred and self-seeking.

Babies by nature are completely selfish. They are incapable of giving; they can only receive, which is immature thinking. Unfortunately, many people never grow beyond that kind of thinking.

The second half of thinking like Jesus is to start thinking maturely, which focuses on others, not yourself. Thinking of others is the heart of Christlikeness and the best evidence of spiritual growth. This kind of thinking is unnatural, counter-cultural, rare and difficult. Fortunately we have help: “God has given us His Spirit. That’s why we don’t think the same way that the people of this world think.

Q: What areas of my life do I need to stop thinking ‘my way’ and start thinking God’s way?

Conclusion

After salvation the “first order of business” is sanctification, which is another way of saying becoming a mature Christian in Jesus Christ. To properly grow spiritually a believer must decide to do so. If the believer chooses to do so, the indwelling Holy Spirit will then assist the believer in reaching higher spiritual goals.

To become like Christ is a collaboration between the believer and the Holy Spirit. One of the important actions in this process is to stop thinking immaturity (about self) and to start thinking maturely (about others).

Prayer

God, I am convicted yet again of how much my heart insists on interpreting everything through the light of my own comfort, Convenience, vanity and pride. Father I repent of those selfish mind-patterns that steer me down the paths of self-righteousness and self-pity, and ask that ‘You’ would give me the mind of Christ.