

Living Word Fellowship Church

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Series: "Grow and Glow"

Steps to Spiritual Maturity

Lesson 2

The Challenge Once Saved

Spiritual Infancy

I. A Summary Biblical Outline of Moving from Salvation to Spiritual Maturity

A. Salvation is either past, present, or future:

1. Past salvation of sinner -- this is regeneration from being a sinner to being holy. We are a brand new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and the Spirit working in us when we are committed to working out our salvation (Philippians 2:12-13) guides us to holiness (Ephesians 3:16-19; 4:12-13):
 - a) Titus 3:5. *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."*
 - b) Eph. 2:5&10. *"God made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved."*
 - c) Rom. 8:24. *"For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?" (NASU)*
2. Present salvation of a saved person:
 - a) Salvation means that once our sins are forgiven and we are in Christ (Rom. 6:1-5; Col. 3:1-3), we are willing to live in submission to Him, so that we can stand before Him practically pure through the obedience of His Word (John 14:15; 1 John 2:4-6).
 - Titus 2:14 - *"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."*
 - 1 Tim. 4:16: *"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will saved both yourself and those who hear you."*
 - Phil. 1:19: *"For I know that this shall turn out for my salvation through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."*
 - Phil. 2:12: *"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling."*
 - Rom. 6:6-7: *"...knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." NASU*
 - Rom. 7:15-23 – Paul's struggle.
3. Future - consummation salvation to eternal holiness at death or the rapture – (glorification):
 - a) Hebrews 9:27, 28 - *"And in as much as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgement; so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, to those who eagerly await Him, for salvation."*

- b) 1 Peter 1:5. "... who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- c) Rom. 13:11. "And this do (love your neighbor) knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed."
- d) 2 Tim. 4:18. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will save me for His heavenly kingdom."

II. Present Salvation – Growing from the Flesh to Spirit

- A. The fundamental issue to overcome to be transformed (transition from lesson #1): there is a constant war between our sin-infected flesh and the Spirit of God who now lives in us (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16-24). The Holy Spirit quickens our spirit, making us into a brand-new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). This transformation provides us the inner strength (Eph. 3:16-17; Titus 3:4-8) to work out our salvation (Titus 3:4-8; Phil. 2:12-13). The inner strength comes when we maximize the work of the Holy Spirit as discussed in Lesson #1 Roman numeral III C.
- B. As we engage in the work of the Spirit, we will encounter ourselves and Satan. This is because sin and carnality are still present in all believers (Rom. 7:21; 1 John 1:8,10). This is because our flesh has been trained to sin (Rom. 8:12-13) before we got saved. Our sinful state is as follows:
 - 1. Our flesh is full of sin; *"Wretched man that I am! Who will cut me from this body of death"* (Romans 8:24):
 - a) The flesh has a natural tendency to influence us to be rebellious towards God (Rom. 7:18). This is because the world is under Satan's control (1 John 5:19), and he has structured the world (the word world means a rebellious mindset designed to oppose God) to oppose God (Gen. 3:4-5; 1 John 4:3):
 - Satan controls the world by providing a materialistic life (1 John 2:15-17).
 - Satan structures the world to teach principles that oppose God so that the world rebels against God (Eph. 2:1-2). This is in the form of human wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6; James 3:13-15).
 - A person who is introduced into church leadership prematurely can become influenced by Satan (1 Timothy 3:6).
 - He seeks to destroy the believers or stagnate their spiritual growth (so they remain in the flesh) by causing these believers to be overwhelmed with 'worries, riches, pleasures, and anxiety (Luke 8:14; 1 Peter 5:8).
 - Satan can impact the truth through false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-3).
 - Satan will seek to deceive the church with counterfeit miracles (2 Thess. 2:9, 11).
 - Satan throws roadblocks in front of the believer to impede the progress of the gospel of Christ. (1 Thess. 2:18)
 - If we live in the flesh, Satan can influence us to live a prideful life and become a liar (Matthew 16:21-23; 1 Peter 5:6-8; Acts 5:1-11; John 8:44).
 - 2. The flesh is wicked (Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:16-19). The members of the flesh can lead us to sin if we do not willfully commit them to righteousness (Romans 5:12-14).
 - a) The mind can be worldly (Romans 12:2; Eph. 4:17), leading to a carnal mindset (Eph. 4:18-23; Hebrews 5:11-13).
 - b) The eyes can lead us to sin (Matthew 6:22-23).
 - c) The tongue never got saved (James 3:2-22). If we control it, the Spirit of God can guide us to a life of righteousness (James 1:26).

- d) We can decide to manage what is in our control in a godly or evil manner (hand defines what we control or have power over; 1 Timothy 2:8).
- e) How we eat should be managed so we take care of God's temple (1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19; 6:13-15).
- f) How we contact ourselves must be for peace (Eph. 6:15; Romans 15:1-6). To focus on strife is to live in the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-6).

We have been bought with a price, and our bodies belong to God; *"For you have been bought with a price: there glorify God in your body."* (1 Cor. 6:19)

3. Our minds are polluted and need to be transformed (Romans 12:2):

- a) It can follow the thinking of the world and pollute our lives (Samson; Judges 16; Eph. 4:17-21).
 - b) If we are not committed to transforming the mind, it can become "hostile towards God." (Romans 8:5-9).
- 4. When we chase material wealth, we can become controlled by the flesh (Eph. 4:19; 1 John 2:15-17) and influenced by Satan (Matt. 6:24).
 - 5. Practicing sin means obeying the desires of the flesh (James 1:14-15). We must practice righteousness through the obedience of the Word (3 John 11; 1 John 2:5; John 14:15, 21, 23).

It is a willful decision to "take off the old man and put on the new man." (Eph. 4:20-24; Romans 8:12-14). Spiritual maturity is a choice (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). Our spiritual growth is not on automatic pilot once we are saved (1 Peter 1:13-16).

C. We must constantly remind ourselves that we are dead to sin (Rom. 6:11-14; Col. 3:1-4). When sin is not addressed, it hinders our spiritual growth (John 1:8-9; 3:5-6) in the following manner:

- 1. Our words can lead to sin, grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)
- 2. When we use our bodies in a dishonorable manner (1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19-20)
- 3. Keep our prayers from being answered (1 Pet. 3:12)
- 4. Causes good things from God to be withheld (Jer. 5:25)
- 5. Robs us of the joy of our salvation (Ps. 51:12)
- 6. Inhibits spiritual growth (1 Cor. 3:1)
- 7. Brings chastisement from the Lord (Hebr. 12:5-7)
- 8. Prevents us from being fit vessels for the Lord to use (2 Tim. 2:21).
- 9. Pollutes Christian fellowship (1 Cor. 10:21)
- 10. Endangers our physical life and health (1 Cor. 11:29-30; 1 John 5:16).

D. To avoid being controlled by sin, however, we must commit to becoming slaves to righteousness (Rom. 6:15-18). *"No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in Him."* (1 John 3:9).

E. We must remember that God saved us to begin a work in us for His purpose (Phil. 2:13). It is for this reason we are His workmanship (Ephesians 2:10; Phil. 2:13), and He exposes the work that has been accomplished when He made us a brand-new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). His plan is to present us before God as His radiant church (Eph. 1:13-14).

F. At the point of salvation, the Holy Spirit provides us with the capacity to live a holy life (Eph. 1:3-4). This process involves the following:

1. Commit to confess sin (1 John 1:8-9) readily. It always begins with the Holy Spirit's conviction. It is a turning point where we can decide to seek God or remain wrapped up in our flesh.
 2. When we commit to starting as slaves (Romans 6:12-14), we commit to the battle between the flesh and the Spirit (Romans 7:14-24). We soon become so transformed by the Spirit of God (Phil. 2:13) that we take on His nature and are called sons (Romans 8:12-14). This is because we are committed to abiding in His Word by practicing it so that we may become His friends (John 15:13; Hebrews 5:14). We display His divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-8).
 3. Learning the Word of God with a heart to do it (Romans 12:1-2; James 1:19-21; 1 John 2:3-6).
 4. Be committed to serving in the local church (Ephesians 4:12-13; 1 Peter 4:7-11). Using our spiritual gifts engages the godhead in developing each believer, which includes the person exercising them (1 Cor. 12:4-6).
 5. Be committed to applying God's Word to those who dislike you (Matthew 5:43-48).
 6. Commit to be a disciple of Christ (John 13:34-35; 15:1-10).
 7. Be a witness (Matthew 28:19-20).
- G. God's focus is not only to redeem us but also to purify us so that we can become a holy nation (Tit. 2:12,14; Rom. 8:30; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).
- H. Accept trials as a growing experience (Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4). There is a crown to win for conquerors (James 1:12; Rev. 3:10; Romans 8:37), will discuss in lesson #3.

The transforming process continues in lesson #3