

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Directions of Spiritual Growth

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Once we receive the word of God in our hearts; it is designed to produce fruit in our lives. Bearing fruit will vary with each individual (*Matthew 13:23*). But bearing “much fruit” is one identifying characteristic of a true disciple of the Lord: “*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples*” (*John 15:8*).

As the growth process must take place between the seed stage and the fruit bearing stage in the vegetable kingdom, spiritual growth must occur in order for the disciple to bear much fruit. And as we see in our flowering trees and shrubbery, the direction they grow is also important. Let us take note of the essential keys to proper spiritual growth.

We must grow downward.

As establishing a good root system is essential to healthy plants, being rooted in the teaching of Christ is mandatory to proper spiritual growth. Jesus warns us, “... And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he

stumbleth” (*Matthew 13:20-21*).

Paul exhorts the brethren in Colossae to “...walk in Him, rooted and building up in Him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (*Colossians 2:6*). Living a productive spiritual life in Christ demands being rooted in the word of God which produces and builds up our faith. As one studies and learns the truth of the gospel, his or her heart is strengthened with conviction. The new babe in Christ who digs deeper in God’s word will soon know what he or she believes, and by referring to Scripture, the new Christian will know why he or she believes it.

We must also grow upward to the standard of Christ.

Completed revelation gives all the opportunity to “... attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (*Ephesians 4:13*). As the proud parent with an anxious child carefully places a ruler to measure a child’s progress in height, the growing babe in Christ places Jesus before the new Christian as the standard for proper spiritual growth. Being focused, he or she will not waste time in playing the foolish game

of comparing or measuring ourselves with others who commend themselves (*2 Corinthians 10:12*).

What a challenge at day’s beginning and a pleasant thought at days’ end: “*I have become more like Christ today.*” Such a one is growing according to the appropriate standard.

Finally, we must continue to grow all the way to heaven.

There is not a time we are allowed to go dormant, and cease growing into God’s eternal kingdom. “As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile thereby unto salvation” (*1 Peter 2:2*). We cannot coast, allowing weeds of sin to find root in our hearts, but grow, due to the nourishment of God’s word until we are saved in heaven. If we lose the longing for God’s word, and fail to grow in the excellence of virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love, we will fall, missing the abundant entrance into God’s eternal kingdom. We do not slip into heaven, but grow into heaven.

May the day we die catch us growing in deeper conviction, focusing upward to Christ’s standard, and improving in virtuous character This is proper growth...into eternal Heaven!