

## **“Where Do We Go From Here?”**

Remember the three things we must know to get from one place to another? That’s right, where we are, where we want to go, and how we’re going to get there. Now we’re going to briefly think about how to determine where we are in our growth in Christ, and some ideas for getting started increasing that growth.

To know our present spiritual condition of growth we must submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit. One of the best ways to accomplish this is through prayer. We can ask Him to tell us about ourself.

An exercise helpful for me is to ask the Holy Spirit to lead me in the confession of my sins. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9)

Of course, it’s best if we confess our sins as soon as the Spirit of God makes us aware of them on an immediate basis. This comes when we remains sensitive to the leading of God within the immediate circumstances, thoughts, words, and actions during the day.

We all can use help getting started, and a good starting point is for each of to sit down in a quiet place with some paper and pencil, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us our unconfused sins. Then, get ready to write.

Just make a short notation of each item. Do not try to force the flow of recollection, trust the Lord and simply write whatever He brings to memory. When we’re finished write the scripture verse I John 1:9, word for word, across the page(s).

Next hold them up and thank God for forgiven these sins. Tell Him He owns them, no ownership is being retained by us, and thank Him for His glorious freedom in Jesus.

Then tear up the pages and burn them possible. It's a joy to watch them go up in smoke!

Hopefully we will not have to go through this process often. Ideally, once would be enough, but use your freedom in Christ to let the Holy Spirit clean house whenever necessary. Again, immediately upon recognition of our sins is always best.

This is not a process for gaining forgiveness of our sins in Christ. That is accomplished by God in Christ, and given us as a gift when we ask for forgiveness and receive new Life in Christ. By confession we keep the lines of our communication with God free of the sin-based garbage that would otherwise collect within our mind and heart.

With this finished, drawn an analysis chart like the one below to examine the strong and weak points of our relationship with God. Again, pray for the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Be as open and honest as possible.

Avoid any rationalization of weak points. Take all the time needed. If necessary, spend a little time for several days until the list is complete enough to be helpful in an accurate manner. Realize that our strengths often have opposing weaknesses connected in some way.

*My Life in Christ*

Strengths	Weaknesses

If the Holy Spirit leads us to involve other followers of Christ, then we can ask them to share with us their perspectives concerning our strengths and weakness in our relationship with Jesus. Again, take the necessary time. Don't get in a hurry.

One question that has proven helpful to some people is this, "What did God do in your life this past week?" We can be sure that God is doing something if we are His child in Christ. If we are unaware of His work in us it is probably because we are not paying attention.

God is consistent in actively trying to help us grow. If we don't know anything about what He is doing in and through us it's probably because we aren't paying attention. That's a weakness. If we're paying attention it's obviously a strength.

We could try starting a daily journal about what God does in our life each day. If we want to take this a step further then also record the people and issues we pray about each day.

Over time, and often quite quickly we will begin to see a correlation between what we pray about and what God is actively doing in our life. We will also begin to see how much more God is doing beyond the needs of others and the issues we talk to Him about.

Be patient and seek to understand God's timing. Do not try to be in control by setting any expectations about how God is supposed to perform, or when things should happen. Remember He is the One in control; not us.

When we think we have a God-given starting place concerning where we are in our life in Christ, then we can begin to seek God's pathway for our growth in Christ. This is not meant to be a method-based approach toward our growth in Christ.

The emphasis is intended to be upon a conscious commitment to growth with some sense of direction provided by the Holy Spirit. Not a specific method. Always remain free to follow the Spirit's leading in Christ. Remember that what we need is God's leading, not our plan for growing in Christ.

We know that prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other followers of Jesus are important, so prayerfully search for a schedule God may want us to follow. This can be a helpful starting point for those of us who need that help.

Trust the Lord to lead us into His will for us. By starting the day with prayer we may find place to begin retaining a consistent attitude of prayer throughout the day. If necessary create reminders that will be seen when we first wake up. Even a piece of paper that says "Good morning Lord!" can make a big difference.

Of course, we will not always follow through as we should. We all are a work-in-progress. Remember, God has taken care of that already.

If our sins were going to stop Him from helping us, He never would have saved us. The beautiful thing to me is that God did save me even though He know all of the things that would come from my failure to obey Him. Yes, He knew everything but He forgave me anyway!

Once we have a direction we should try to stick to it unless we sense the Lord leading us to do otherwise. If we fail don't let Satan enjoy His temporary success any longer than necessary. Confess our sins immediately and go forward with our mind set "on the things above, not the things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:2)

Something else we might try is a spiritual growth partner. Someone we can share our struggles and victories with along with the Lord. Someone to pray and study with, and someone who can help to encourage us to stay on our God-given path for growth.

God can bless us greatly through the lives of other followers of Jesus. What He has for us through their lives is an integral part of our growth in Christ. (John 17:23)

May God bless each of us as we seek His will for us. My hope is this gift of sharing has been helpful for each one of us in Christ.

"For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:14-19)

May God's will be done within, and through each one of us! Thank You Jesus!

P.S. Did you see the growth Spiral in that last passage of scripture?