

speaking to God's people

freegiftfromgod

bible studies

Subject: **Growing in the Word**

Scripture

Introduction

Commentary

In the last Bible Study we looked at what it means to listen to Jesus. And that is the first important step to growing in the word of Jesus Christ.

If we are not first listening, we cannot hear, and if we don't hear we cannot absorb, and if we don't absorb we cannot grow.

The word of God is food for the Spirit. Just as we will die for lack of food to our bodies, so too we will die spiritually if we do not absorb and "eat" the words of God.

When Jesus said that man should not live by bread alone, this is what he was talking about. We need the word of God so that we can live and be sustained in the spirit.

So today let us look at that process of growth. What to study and how we are taught by God.

Matthew 13:1-9	<p>In the parable of the sower we see a first insight into growing in the word. The sower, who represents Jesus, sows his seed as Jesus sows the word of the gospel into the world.</p> <p>Jesus then classifies those who hear the word into four groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Those who have the word taken from them before it even takes root▪ Those who hear and receive it with joy, but wither at the first sign of adversity▪ Those who take the word but allow other things to get in the way and so do not grow▪ And those who embrace the word and it grows in them and they in it to maturity <p>To grow in the word we need to be part of that fourth group. We need to embrace the Lord's teachings and so learn and grow to maturity in Christ Jesus.</p> <p>But how will this occur? Well we need to use the tools that Jesus has provided us.</p>
Ephesians 4:11-14	<p>The Lord has given gifts to the church so that we can learn to grow in the word. It is the Lord's desire that we do not remain as children in this world, but through the working of his gifts in each of us and in the Church we can become mature. We see this as part of His plan in these scriptures:</p> <p><i>11 And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,</i> <i>12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,</i> <i>13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;</i> <i>14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.</i></p> <p>These are the gifts of God for the purpose of ministry. And what is the purpose of these ministries? To bring each of His people to "mature manhood" in Jesus Christ. He wants us to be mature and so he has provided the means for that to be achieved.</p> <p>And even more, it is not something we do alone as we do not have to rely on ourself or other men.</p>

<p>2 Corinthians 3:18</p>	<p>The gifts to the Church are one thing, but the Lord has also offered gifts to each of us as individuals when we come to him. In relation to growing in the word, the most important of His many gifts is the gift of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>It is the work of the Holy Spirit within each of us to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ. And we see that he does that slowly. He says in this scripture:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.</i></p> <p>Just as we walk with Jesus and that means we take one step at a time, we are also being transformed into the image of God from, "...one degree of glory to another." That is, we are being transformed slowly, one step at a time.</p>
<p>Romans 12:2</p>	<p>The mechanism of this spiritual transformation is a transformation of the mind. Paul wrote about this in this way:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.</i></p> <p>The growth that we are seeking is growth in the spirit. This is what growing in the word is all about. It is how we are changed to be like Christ Jesus so that we think as Jesus thought. So that his ways are our ways and so that we can make decisions based upon truth rather than emotion and human weakness.</p> <p>It is growth in the word that will bring us to maturity in Christ. And it is the Holy Spirit who will teach us.</p>

<p>John 14:26</p>	<p>Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as a gift to his followers before he left the earth. In that promise he told us part of the role that the Holy Spirit would play in our lives. He said this:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.</i></p> <p>It is the role of the Holy Spirit to teach us all things. By that he means all the things that pertain to the life in the gospel and what will bring us to maturity in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>But we too have a role to play in this work. For Jesus also said the Holy Spirit would, "...bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."</p> <p>How can the Holy Spirit bring to your remembrance something that you do not have in your memory? So it is our responsibility to take in and learn the word of God. We are to study His word so that it is there ready for the Holy Spirit to bring to our remembrance when we need it.</p> <p>And there is an interesting scripture that Peter wrote which points to this important requirement for he promised to make the word available.</p>
<p>2 Peter 1:12-15</p>	<p>Peter made these comments that are interesting for in them he showed that it was important the message was not lost after the first disciples passed away. It is evident that he was ensuring the word of God would be available to subsequent generations so that we could all learn. And I am certain that this work he indicated was not just his own words but the words of God who has guarded the teaching of the New Covenant throughout the ages and down to today.</p> <p>Even so, Peter's comments here are interesting as he says:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>12 Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.</i> <i>13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to arouse you by way of reminder,</i></p>

	<p><i>14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.</i> <i>15 And I will see to it that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.</i></p> <p>As Jesus said, it is the Holy Spirit that would bring all things to our remembrance. Peter then says he would remind us of the teachings of Christ while he lived, but also he would ensure that these things were available for recall after he had passed away.</p> <p>Now I don't know what he did, but certainly somebody collected the writings of the early apostles and teachers of the church and ensured that these things made it down to us. We know that the early letters of the apostles were copied and re-copied many times to ensure they were circulated throughout the church and those letters became our bibles today.</p>
So what next?	<p>So this is just a taste of the need to learn and grow. We need to study the word that Peter and others ensured would come down to us. We need to be led by the Holy Spirit to learn these words and we need to make use of those in the church who have been given the ministry gifts to teach and preach so that we can learn and grow and be part of that fourth group Jesus mentioned in the parable of the sower.</p> <p>So I put this to you, will you seek out the word so that you can grow? Will you seek the gift of the Holy Spirit to teach you and lead you? Let me know as I am here to help in any way I can. May God bless your search.</p> <p>So now it's your turn. What would you like to add to this conversation? Send me an email (link below) or engage with me on Twitter (@JohnBLemmon) and lets have the discussion continue. Feel free also to send this to others so they can join the conversation, as there is so much more I could add, but then that leaves nothing for you to say. I hope this has added value to your own walk with Christ.</p>

This Bible Study has been brought to you by www.freegiftfromgod.com. It is a brief look at this subject and can be greatly expanded upon. I would be happy to hear any thoughts or additions you may wish to share, as well as any suggestions for other studies in the future. If you would like to make any comments or suggestions, please feel free to [email me](mailto:john@freegiftfromgod.com). I hope you found something of value here.