

Let us look at Step 11, Lesson 2, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 11 – Prayer – We seek through prayer and meditation to know God’s Word and grow in Christ, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

As we went through lesson 1 of Step 11, there were four technical parts to approaching Bible study – preparation, observation, interpretation, and application. **Tonight, in this lesson**, we will be focusing more on less tangible elements of our participation in the maturing process: meditation and growing in Christ. While the first may seem active and the second more passive, in tonight’s lesson it will be clear that we believe both are active.

First, let us consider the aspect of meditation. If your mind tends to picture an image of far eastern religious leaders sitting with folded legs, palms of your hands facing up, emitting a low hum as smoke rises from burning incense, then you at least have a general idea of the meaning of the word meditation. From a spiritual standpoint, the fact is meditation is a mental exercise whereby we focus our thoughts and attention on specific truths and actively consider them in a purposeful fashion. God specifically says that we will be blessed for time spent in meditation.

Psalm 1:1-2, “Blessed is the person... ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law, he meditates day and night.”

For many, environment is an important contributor to the ability to focus the mind.

Psalm 4:4b, “... ponder in your own hearts on your beds and be silent.”

Some prefer to minimize distracting elements by meditating in the privacy of their own rooms.

Matthew 6:6a “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.”

Some prefer to surround themselves with the beauty of God’s creation.

Psalm 121:1-2, “I raise my eyes to the mountains. From where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.”

We believe that meditation is an important part of feeding your relationship with God. It requires discipline. We live in a world that is busy, self-serving, and routine; and it takes real determination to set aside time every day, or every week to quiet your heart before God and simply ponder His Word.

Psalm 37:7a, “Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for him...”

Second, we should discuss the matter of growing in Christ as an active pursuit of His people. Growth, by nature, is a passive response to the activity of life that builds maturity. It is that activity we want to address. There is so much that we could discuss, but we recognize that spending time in the Bible and in prayer are the basic works that grow you in Christ. Think of them like diet and exercise for your soul.

When you think about physical growth, there are certain measurables. You gain height, weight, features change, etc. Mental growth also has indicators like, ability to reason, desires for independence, or moving toward selflessness.

1 Peter 2:2-3, “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

In our spiritual lives, we also tend to chart the maturing process. Below is something of a growth chart for your faith. If you want your spirituality to be strong, healthy, and productive; feed it with daily portions of God’s Word, and focused prayer.

Infancy:

- ✓ Acceptance of the plan of salvation, but doubts, questions, or uncertainty remain.
- ✓ May struggle to identify right and wrong, but feelings of guilt persist.
- ✓ Does not fit in with old friends and awkward around new friends.
- ✓ Interest in spiritual matters, but uncertain who has the answers.
- ✓ The Bible is mysterious, and daunting.
- ✓ An unbalanced perspective of God. He is either too harsh and scary or too loving and kind.

Toddling:

- ✓ You have a general knowledge of the Bible, but struggle to find specific things.
- ✓ The relationship with God is spotty. Sometimes it is great, sometimes it's not.
- ✓ There is a growing comfort with other Christians, but a general discomfort around non-Christians.
- ✓ You understand the need to make a disciple, but struggle to know what that means, or how to do it.
- ✓ You are learning from knowledgeable people, but you aren't sure if some are on the right track or not.

Adolescence:

- ✓ You are familiar with God's Word and can locate books, themes, and major doctrines with relative ease.
- ✓ You are learning, but sometimes struggle with pride in your spirituality.
- ✓ You are teaching someone, and that has accelerated your growth.
- ✓ You are attempting to live a disciplined life but find that you often fall short of your goals.

Adulthood:

- ✓ Discipling several people.
- ✓ Active in service and/or leadership in your church.
- ✓ Have learned humility, generosity, kindness, love, justice, and grace (though there is still room to grow).
- ✓ Passionately and regularly spend time in the Word of God and prayer.
- ✓ Know your responsibility in God's work, and you do it with joy.

Consider and Confess:

1. Do you take time to "be still and know that I am God"? If so, how much time in a week do you commit to meditation, study, prayer? If not, commit to a time of day, and a length of time.
2. Do you have a place where you like to meditate? If so, how often are you there in meditation? If not, we encourage you to find such a place today.
3. As you consider the summaries from above, where would you place yourself on the growth chart? What can you do to keep growing and maturing?
4. Knowing all of God's Word is an impossibility, so we should at least commit to learning something new from the Bible every time we are in it. Are you learning?
5. Prayer and Bible study are a discipline, like exercise, or eating right. Do you have a plan for disciplining yourself with those two things? If so, what does it look like? If not, we challenge you to build one.
6. Measuring spiritual growth is not as important as growing more like Christ. Are you becoming more like Christ?

Looking Forward:

In our next lesson we will be taking time to discuss the matter of prayer in greater detail. For most Christians, prayer is the greatest need. We do not do it enough. We struggle to know how best to do it. We feel inept, frustrated, or too lazy, but know we need to do better. We want to take a practical and helpful look at this part of our spirituality and improve.