

I'M NEW TO EVERYTHING. CAN YOU TELL ME HOW I CAN GROW AS A CHRISTIAN?

Did you know that it's natural and expected that we grow as Christians? When we repent and place our faith in Jesus, we are born again—new babies in the Lord. *We would never expect or want babies to stay babies their whole lives, but often people don't realize God intends every one of His children to also grow into mature adults spiritually.* God, being the perfect Father, provides everything we need to grow into strong, steadfast believers. Here are some verses that show God wants us to grow as believers: 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:1; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:13-14.

Believers obey God

So, first, know that you are to grow as a Christian. The shortest answer to *how to grow is to obey God.* Whenever you find out some way you can obey Him, then do it. You will grow! Here are some verses that tell you more about growing as a Christian and obeying the Lord: John 15:8, 16; Romans 6:12-13; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Peter 1:1-2.

Believers have the Holy Spirit

Second, did you know that *God has given you His Holy Spirit to live in you to help you grow?* It's true! That's why when you do become a Christian, you notice your desire for the old ways and old sins diminishing. You don't want to do the things you used to do. You also want to do new things that you never ever considered doing before—things like going to church—and liking it; getting up early to read your Bible and pray—and liking it; wanting to live your whole day thinking about God—and liking it! That change is because God has given you a new heart and placed His Spirit in you. You are not the same person you were before. Here are some verses that teach you more about this: Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 4:13.

Believers have the Bible

Third, *God has given you His Word to help you grow.* In fact, it's the single most important resource you have, aside from His Holy Spirit living in you. The Bible tells you everything you need about God, what He wants you to do, and just how you can live for Him. Every living thing needs food, water, light, and air. For the believer, that's exactly what the Bible provides through the time you spend reading it, listening to it, studying it, memorizing it, hearing good sermons—all to help you grow. Check out these verses to learn about this important resource: Deuteronomy 32:47; Psalm 119:11, 105; Job 23:12; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:2-4.

Believers have other Believers

Fourth, *God has given fellow believers as another resource to help you grow.* God gives pastors and teachers who know more about the Bible to help you grow, which is why God tells us to gather together to hear His Word taught. You will be encouraged and strengthened in your walk when you spend time with other believers and hear what God is teaching them, how they are overcoming sin, and their delight in God's Word. God tells us not to neglect this precious resource: Ephesians 4:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14; Hebrews 10:23-25.

Believers have Repentance

Fifth, did you know you have an automatic reset as a believer? It's true! Anytime, we blow it and sin, or get off track or distracted from God's priorities for us, then doing this one thing can begin to get everything turned back to the right setting. The automatic reset is repentance. If you think a bad thought, yell at someone, spend too many days binge watching TV and not any time with the Lord, and a ton of other things, the way to get back on track is to repent.

Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to God. When you feel miserable because you know things aren't right, tell the Lord what you did, confess it to Him as wrong and sinful, quit doing the sinful thing, and ask for His help to do what is right. At first, you might not be very good at remembering to repent when you become aware of sin in your life, but if you keep practicing this important discipline, it will get easier and you will see its fruit in your life. The Bible calls this "walking in the Spirit." When we sin, we aren't walking in the Spirit (like the Holy Spirit would), yet when we confess our sin and turn away from it, we are then walking like the Holy Spirit would—we are walking in the Spirit. Here are some verses that will help you learn more about repenting and walking in the Spirit: Psalm 119:11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 5:8-10; James 4:17; 1 John 1:5-10.