



GROWING IN JESUS

By Bill Subritzky

When I was born-again I did not realise that I was beginning a journey that would dramatically change my way of living. It was not to be so much of an outward change but rather an inward change. Yes, there were external things that happened but the major change that occurred related to my way of thinking as well as the people I fellowshiped with and my relationship with Pat and with my children. **I needed to be transformed from the person whom I was to the person whom God wanted me to be.**

The born-again experience does cause an immediate transformation in our life. Suddenly Christ becomes real and we come into an awareness of spiritual matters which was previously unknown to us.

That is why the Bible says, "**The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**" (1 Corinthians 2:14.)

When we make our full commitment to Christ we become aware of His presence in our lives.

However, God has a deeper work which He wants to do in our lives. He wants us to become the image of Christ. He wants to transform our very nature and mould us into His image.

This work is called **sanctification**. It should be an ongoing work in our lives. It is a work of God that is to be carried out in our lives until the day we leave this earth. It is a process.

When we are born-again we need to understand this process. Immediately after I was born-again I made a decision to turn 180° from darkness to light from the power of Satan to the power of God.

In ministering to others I often find that this has not happened. They have only turned 10° or 20° or 30° or slightly more degrees towards the light and therefore there is a great struggle in their lives between light and darkness; the desire to follow God and the desire to follow the ways of the world.

God wants us to realise that He has sanctified us at the cross of Jesus Christ. I.e. to set us apart to Himself. **"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10.)**

If we are going to grow in our faith through Jesus Christ we must grasp the immensity of what Christ has done for us at the Cross.

That is why the apostle Paul says that we have to "work out" our salvation with fear and trembling. Obviously there is a work to be done in our lives. God will do this work as we submit to Him. Submission to God is the key.

The Apostle James says, **"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4.)**

This means that we are not to follow the sinful ways of the world. It does not mean that we are to be enemies of people but rather of wrong habits, wrong desires, lusts etc.

James also says that we are to draw near to God and He will draw near to us. (James 4:8). The closer we draw to God the more we will realise His holiness.

As we begin to read the Word of God and apply it a major change begins to occur in our lives. The revelation of God's love for us grows stronger each day and we understand His great concern for us as His sons. There is no gender in the spirit; we are all sons of God.

We then begin to grasp the holiness of God and if we want to hear His voice and have answers to our prayers we need to draw close to God.

This will mean giving up many of our old habits and no longer associating with those who would lead us astray. It means putting God first in our lives every moment of the day. It means regularly communing with Him in prayer and supplication as well as being an active participant in a Bible believing church.

When I became a believer in Christ and read His Word, I realised that God had set me apart and sanctified me. If I wanted to hear His voice I had to walk closely with Him.

I now find that as I pray for people I realise that the Holy Spirit is giving me clear directions step-by-step as to how I should pray and what is the root of the problem in the person's life.

I realise that Jesus by the Holy Spirit is within me and walking with me. **As Psalm 16:8 says, "I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."**

This is true also of every born-again believer and we need to believe and act upon that belief.

It is wonderful to walk with God thereby growing in Jesus! We have been sanctified by God. Let us walk in that sanctification.

God has done His part. It is now up to us to appropriate this wonderful gift from God.

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