

LESSON 2: GROWTH

Once you are confident that Jesus is living within you and has made it possible for you to know God personally, you can begin to focus your attention on growing in your relationship with Him. You may ask, "What do you mean by 'a personal relationship with God?'" And, how can I develop and grow in such a relationship?"

Review from our last lesson:

- What was the main truth we discussed during our last lesson?
- What does it mean to receive Jesus into your life?
- How confident are you that Jesus is in your life?
- How confident are you that you have eternal life?

HOW DOES SOMEONE GROW IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

Think for a moment about a significant relationship in your life—spouse, parent, child, or a special friend.

- What kind of relationship would you have with someone if you didn't communicate with them in any way for a year?
- What kind of a relationship would you have if the other person did all the talking?

To grow in a relationship, there must be two-way communication.

In order to grow in our relationship with God, there needs to be two-way communication, as well. God wants to communicate with us through the Bible and He wants us to talk to Him in prayer.

GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH THE BIBLE

How does God speak to us today? God has chosen to speak to us through the Bible, His Word. He has given us this special, personal communication through His messengers, the writers of the Bible. He spoke through them and now speaks to us as we read what they have written.

Read **2 Timothy 3:16–17**

- Where does all Scripture (the Bible) originate?
- What are some of the purposes of the Bible?
- What does the proper use of the Bible produce in us? (verse 17)

Read **Psalms 119:9, 11**

- What happens in our lives when we read and obey God's Word?

Read **Psalms 145:8, 9**

- What does God tell us about Himself in this passage?

Read **Romans 8:28**

- What does God promise us in this verse?
- Does He promise that if we receive Christ, we will no longer have problems or difficulties in life?
- What does He promise?
- What difference can such a promise make in our lives?
- **Conclusion:** When we face a difficult experience in life, we can tell God, "I don't know why this is happening, but I know You are good, so I thank You for Your promise to use this experience in my life for good."

Read **Matthew 6:25–33**

- What kinds of needs are mentioned in this passage?
- Does God already know what our needs are? Does He care about them?
- What are we supposed to do in order to receive the promise given in verse 33?

What does God tell us in the Bible?

The Bible is a collection of 66 books written by over 40 authors over 1500 years that includes history, wisdom, poetry, law, future events, and instruction for life. God tells us many things in the Bible that will build our relationship with Him.

- He reveals who He is and things He has done so we can know His character.
- He informs us about His attitudes toward us and our actions, and the things He desires for our lives.
- He gives us promises about what He has already done for us and what He is going to do for us.
- He teaches us about life so we can avoid mistakes and make successful decisions that please Him.

WE SPEAK TO GOD IN PRAYER

Read **Philippians 4:6–7**

- How would you say the things in verse 6 in your own words?
- Does God promise He'll give you everything for which you ask?
- What does He promise? Why is that important?
- What are the three elements of our conversation in verse 6?
- Why can you be thankful, even before you know whether God will grant your request?

According to this verse, there are three elements that lead us to the peace of God:

1. Prayer is simply talking to God. Sometimes it is not easy to be honest with God. We might tell God what we think He wants to hear from us, rather than being honest about what we really think and feel. But we can talk to God in prayer as we would talk to a friend or to a close, truly loving father.
2. Supplication is our request for God to supply our need. Many people think this is what prayer is all about, but it is just a part. God invites us to ask for things, but He first wants a relationship with us personally, built through conversation.
3. We can give thanks to God because we know He is good and cares about us and our concerns. Sometimes He does not grant a request because He knows it is not good for us, or because He is planning to provide something better for us.

What do we tell God about ourselves in prayer?

Just as God tells us about Himself in the Bible, He wants us to tell Him about ourselves in prayer. You can:

- Tell Him what you have learned about His character and the confidence that gives you.
- Confess any wrong attitudes or actions, and thank Him for His forgiveness.
- Thank Him for what He has done for you and for what He is going to do for you and in you.
- Bring your plans and dreams and desires to Him and seek wise decisions that please Him.
- Finally, share your requests for His provision for yourself and for others, remembering that He loves you.

ESTABLISH A PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD

As we discussed at the beginning of this lesson, two-way communication is crucial to developing a relationship. Such communication can only be established as we spend time with the other person. This is also true in your relationship with God. It is wise to set aside a special place and time each day when you will focus on growing your relationship with God by letting Him speak to you through the Bible and also spending time talking to God in prayer.

LEARNING AND GROWING IN THE WEEK AHEAD

This week, try to spend 10 to 15 minutes each day, at the same place and time each day, developing and enjoying your daily personal time with God. You might start by reading a chapter a day in your Bible.

- Start with reading the book of John, which is the fourth book of the New Testament. It is a biography of the life of Jesus.
- Keep a pen and paper handy as you read. Ask God to speak to you as you read His Word. Write down anything God is saying to you, as well as any questions you might have about your reading, or anything that you do not understand.
- Talk to God about the things you have read and the things that are on your heart. Enjoy spending time talking to Him.
- Bring your notes and questions with you when we meet to discuss the next lesson.