

Spiritual Growth  
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This month, I've been asking my congregation to offer suggestions on a biblical text or topic that they'd like to hear about. Recently, someone wanted to hear about spiritual growth. When they came to a saving faith, they had entered a spiritual race on route to heaven, but they wanted to know more about what running the race looked like and how to gauge if they were making progress. With that topic in mind I turned to the first chapter of Colossians. In that letter, Paul writes to a group of believers, who did not want to just settle on being saved, but wanted to grow in their faith. From their enthusiasm and Paul's prayer for these people, we learn a few things about what spiritual growth looks like.

One thing Paul prayed was for the Colossians to please God in every area of their lives; that's one of the marks of a growing Christian. A growing Christian seeks to please God at work, at home with their family, in school, in recreation, in the morning, afternoon, evening and so on. Its not to say that we will please God in all those areas, but that its our desire to do so. A good question Christians should ask to gauge their spiritual growth is whether or not they are honestly seeking to please God in all the areas of their lives.

Paul also prayed that they would increase their knowledge of God; that's another tell-tale sign of a growing Christian. Christians who have been saved by God's grace, should seek to learn more about their Savior. We should study God's word, learn about how God worked in the lives of people long ago and see how God's age-old dealings with those people are still lessons for us today. We should also keep our eyes open to how God is at work in our day to day experiences; sometimes we can learn lessons about God even when the bible is closed.

Finally, we learn from the example of one particular member of Colossian church; a man named Epaphras. Epaphras had been saved after hearing Paul preach the gospel and then went on to share the good news with the Colossians. His willingness to not only grow in his faith, but to help others is a third example of what it looks like to grow spiritually. At some point in our walk with the Lord, we will be able to help others in their walk. Sometimes, it might be answering tough questions, other times it might mean sharing our testimony, but a growing Christian is one that helps others to run the race.

I would encourage everyone to join us this Sunday evening for the annual Cedar Springs Community Thanksgiving Service, held at Pioneer Church, starting at 6PM. It will be a service of Praise, Thanksgiving and hearing testimonies. It will also be an opportunity for us to grow together.