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Need for Spiritual Growth

Many years ago, I overheard a discussion between a few preachers. At the time, I didn't fully understand it, but now I see how important that conversation was. One minister said the spirit of God in us is complete at salvation, while another insisted the spirit must grow. I had no idea then that this would become one of the main lessons the Holy Spirit would teach me. Understanding this is vital, it can save you years of struggle while walking out your calling.

Some believe we must pray in tongues, meditate on the Word, and worship, because we have to grow into our fullness. Others teach that the spirit is already complete, fully grown, at salvation; we only need faith to believe it, and as we identify with that complete spirit, we can walk in God's fullness. They both teach that praying in tongues helps the Holy Spirit reveal the truth of who you already are. My hope is to bring clarity to this subject so it can guide you in your future and in your calling.

Most believers struggle to understand what actually happens when we invite Jesus into our hearts. Many describe it as a glowing light inside them. For me, it was Pastor Dave's endless teaching on the born-again nature that began to bring clarity (you can hear his messages at daveroberson.org). Through them, I learned that at salvation I did, in fact, receive a brand-new spirit, the very nature of Christ, which replaced my old nature of sin.

I used to imagine I had a "little Jesus" living inside me, running around in some spiritual kitchen or bedroom. The truth is, He gave me His righteous nature, but not His individual nature. The same nature that raised Him from the grave is now in me, causing me to be born of God. John 3:6-7 says, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"*

What a picture of salvation! The first time, you were born into the family of Adam. The second time, you became a new creation, born from above. Now you are part of a new family where God is your Father, and His nature dwells in your inner man. So, are we complete, then? Do we accept this truth and walk it out? These are the very questions I wrestled with for years. I often struggled with verses like Colossians 1:9-10: *"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"*

Clearly, growth in knowledge doesn't happen instantly. 1 Peter 2:2 says, *"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."* This verse perfectly describes us at salvation; we are like little babies. When my son Harrison was born, he was complete with all his fingers and toes, but his little mind had no knowledge, nor could he help around the house. Only as he grew and matured did he begin to understand and take on responsibility.

Too many preachers push young believers into kingdom work before they are ready, sending out babes to struggle and fail. Faith alone is not the path to your calling. Victory comes through maturity and the growth of your inner man. Yes, your new nature is eternally complete in righteousness, it will never grow or

shrink. A billion years from now, you will be just as righteous as you are today because of the nature of Christ in you.

But your inner man must grow. As you spend time in the prayer closet, you mature in wisdom and strength. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:11: *"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."* As a good father, I focused on helping my son grow and learn before giving him adult responsibilities. In the same way, your Heavenly Father is guiding you, first maturing your inner man from an infant to a child, and finally to a man. You cannot identify yourself out of immaturity, you cannot believe yourself into maturity. Nor can you believe away the brokenness of the flesh.

God wants His children to grow and mature into their fullness. Faith is the foundation for all things of God; however, revival in our generation will also require maturity. God waited for Jesus to mature before He brought Him forward into ministry. It was eleven years after Paul's conversion that the Holy Spirit separated him and Barnabas for the first apostolic journey.

I believe it is an important part of our Christianity to be active in the ministry of the gospel. It is a wonderful work to share our testimony and the truth of God the moment after our salvation, still, that should not be our focus. We can do both, be involved in kingdom business as we set our sights on this path of spiritual maturity.

The Holy Spirit has a calling for you! You have an important role to play in His plan for this generation. He will help you every step of the way to mature and grow into all that He desires for you. As you pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit will teach you line upon line the very mysteries of God and bring forth the exact will of God. Religion has taken the children of God and distracted them with good works to keep them from the prayer closet so that they will remain immature. Be diligent, be steadfast, and trust what the Lord is doing in you as you spend those beautiful moments with Him.

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