

# Habits of Fully Devoted Disciples II

## THE SECOND HABIT - GROWTH

Philippians 2:12-13

### A. Is spiritual growth my responsibility or God's?

#### 1. Some Christians believe "There isn't anything I can do. It's all God!"

*"I know nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will right, but I can't do it."* (Romans 7:18)

#### 2. Other Christians evaluate their growth as a testimony of their commitment

*"I am the Lord your God. Sanctify yourselves, therefore. Be holy as I am holy."* (Leviticus 11:44)

### THE ANSWER

#### A. So whose is responsible for our spiritual growth: God or us?

##### 1. Paul begins by saying, "Work out your own salvation" (That is, us)

##### 2. Then Paul says, "For it is God who is at work in you" (That is, God)

#### B. When Paul says, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling"

##### 1. Paul is saying we need a humble attitude of dependence and humility

###### a. We can control some things. Other things we can't control

###### b. But there is a third category - a both/and category

###### 1) E.g., Think about going to sleep

###### 2) E.g., Think about a field in Israel

###### 3) E.g., Think about a motorboat and a sailboat

*"The wind blows where it chooses. You hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So is everyone born of the spirit."* (John 3:8)

##### 2. Our task is to discern where the Spirit is blowing and set our "sails" to catch it

### THE APPROACH

#### A. Growth for the follower of Jesus is normative, not optional

##### 1. The truth is, everyone is in the process of being formed spiritually

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."* (Romans 12:2)

##### 2. God wants us to grow. God's wants our lives to be sanctified (holy)

*"It is God's will that you should be holy."* (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

*"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."* (Hebrews 12:14)

##### 3. Spiritual growth is a daily decision

##### 4. If we don't pursue that life now; it's unlikely we will in the future

#### B. Growth is a process not an event

##### 1. We mess up. We slip into bad behavior. We have regrets.

###### a. In 2:13, Paul outlines his strategy to deal with it: forget them

###### b. Ask the Holy Spirit what we need to learn, then move on

##### 2. Sanctification/spiritual growth is process; it takes time; it takes a lifetime

#### C. Growth is empowered by God, not by us

##### 1. Where and how is God at work in you?

###### a. Ask: "God how are you seeking to transform me in this moment?"

###### b. Ask, "What spiritual practices is the Lord using to change me these days?"

##### 2. There are a few non-negotiables for a fully devoted disciple...

###### a. A disciple engages the Scripture daily

###### b. A disciple spends time praying and listening to God throughout the day

###### c. A disciple regularly engages in worship with the community of believers

###### d. A disciple examines himself, confesses their sin, receives God's forgiveness

#### D. Growth is not self-serving or self-centered

##### 1. We pursue spiritual growth in community for community

*"Do all things without murmuring and arguing."* (2:14)

###### a. If we don't understand our growth is in and for community, we'll distort it

###### b. If we become self-focused, we'll forget all about love and service

##### 2. The ultimate test of our spiritual growth is found in a single word: love

#### F. Spiritual growth is not a self-improvement program; it is our destiny

##### 1. If we miss out, we miss out on why he died for us

##### 2. God wants us to be his disciple and love as he loves

#### MEMORY VERSE:

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Philippians 2:12-13)*

#### SOME QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON:

**When have you last shared your faith testimony?**

**What spiritual disciplines are you currently engaged in?**

**What are some significant events that have impacted your spiritually?**

**Who are some mentors, teachers, leaders, or coaches who have impacted your spiritually?**

**How is your scripture reading impacting your life? What is your favorite passage (story or character) in Scripture? Why?**

**How is God answering your prayers?**

**How have you loved the unlovable this past week?**