

# 10 SIGNS THAT SHOW SPIRITUAL GROWTH

By Rev. Dr. Jerry Schmoyer ©2014

Each time I visit my grandchildren they seem to have grown larger  
I can measure their height and see just how much they have grown  
It's important for children to keep growing physically  
It's important for adults to keep growing spiritually as well  
However it's not as easy to measure spiritual growth as it is physical growth  
There is no measuring stick to show how one grows in their faith  
And there is no measuring stick to see if a church is growing spiritually either

Sometimes we look at the numbers of people in a church to tell if it is a healthy church  
However numbers of attendance can't tell about spiritual growth in a church  
God doesn't look at the size of a church  
We don't know the size of any the churches mentioned in the Bible

So, then, how can we tell if a person or a church is growing spiritually?  
How can we tell if we are growing spiritually?  
God commands us to grow  
2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus  
Christ.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to tell if you, or your church, are  
Growing

## 1. Do you yearn more and more for heaven, think about it, etc?

***Philippians 1:21-24 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.***

***Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men ... while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,***

The older Paul got the more he thought about heaven. That is a sign we are growing spiritually.

As you grow spiritually, you will think more about heaven and look forward to it more and more. When we are new Christians heaven is a nice but vague place, but the closer we get to God the more we look forward to being in heaven with Him.

As we become more like Jesus this world and the things of it are less important. The sin and suffering become more and more distasteful to us. We think often of heaven being in perfection with God for eternity?

The things of this earth fade but our heavenly home becomes more and more real.

Do you yearn more for heaven than you used to? That is a sign you are growing spiritually.

## **2. Are you becoming more loving in how you treat others?**

***Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."***

***1 John 4:20-21 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.***

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus taught about the importance of treating others with love.

Do you find you re becoming kinder to people, more patient and compassionate that you were? Are you more sensitive to the needs and hurts of others? Do you ache for others trials and difficulties?

Do you find you are genuinely interested in others? That you are more willing to do what you can to help those in need?

As we become more like Jesus we love others as He loves – totally and unconditionally. That’s how He loves us. Its only natural that as we grow to become more like Him we find ourselves loving people more .

Are you becoming more loving in how you feel about and how you treat others? That is another sign that you are growing spiritually.

### **3. Are you more aware of God’s work in your life?**

***Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.***

***Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.***

When Nehemiah went into the land and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, he gave the credit to God

As we grow we will recognize God’s hand in our life more and more. At first we see the big things He does, but as we grow closer to Him we start noticing that everything that happens.

Do you give Him credit for the little things as well as the big things in your life? Are you more aware that He is in control of all that happens, the difficulties as well as the good things? Are you less willing to give self credit quicker to give God credit?

As we grow we become more aware of how much we need God. He doesn’t need us to do His work, He can get along fine without us. We could do nothing without Him, though. If God withheld His grace and help from your life, what would it be like?

Are you becoming more and more aware of God working in all areas of you life? That is a sign of spiritual growth.

### **4. Does God’s Word have a greater place in your life than it used to?**

**1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.**

**Psalms 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.**

Do you find the Bible is more important to you? Do you appreciate it and turn to it more than before? Do you remember God's promises and think of them during the day? Do you have an increasing number of favorite Scriptures you turn to in difficult times?

Is the time you spend reading the Bible more and more precious to you? Are the truths you read in the Bible having a greater influence in all areas of your life? Do you find your life changing to conform to what God says in His Word?

As we grow so does our appetite. That is true of children, and its also true of Christians. All growing things need a source of food, and the Bible is the food source for our soul.

Do you find your love of the Bible growing? Is it more influential in your life than it used to be? If so, that is a sign of spiritual growth.

## **5. Is your worship more God-centered and frequent than it used to be?**

**Job 1:20-21 Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."**

**Psalms 100 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. 2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations**

The older Abraham got, the more often we see him building an altar to worship

Worship = focus God, not make me feel good (God feel good)

Do you find yourself worshipping more than you used to? Does praise to God naturally come to your mind throughout the day? Do you feel closer to God than you used to when you worship?

Do you find yourself thinking of God and His greatness more than you used to? Does worship naturally flow from you throughout the day when you think of His love for you or all He has given you? Do you feel more closely connected to God when you worship than you used to? This is a good sign you are growing spiritually.

## **6. Are you more sensitive to sin than you used to be?**

***Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.***

Joseph in the Old Testament ran from Potiphar's wife to keep himself pure

As young Christians we are aware of things that are sin, things we shouldn't think or do. But as we grow closer to God we begin to see sin in more and more areas of our life. We start recognizing that our selfish motives and prideful attitudes are sin. We become more and more aware of how far we fall short of God's perfection. Instead of becoming more and more like Jesus we feel less and less like Him.

Are you more sensitive to sin in your life than you were? Are you more aware of when you sin and more bothered by it? Are you less apt to give yourself credit for things you do? Do you thank God more and more for His grace in your life? Are you more appreciative of His free forgiveness than you used to be?

Becoming more sensitive to sin in your life is a sign you are growing spiritually.

## **7. Are you quicker to forgive others who hurt you?**

***Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.***

**Mark 11:25** *And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."*

**Colossians 3:13** *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

Do you find that you are quicker to forgive people than you were a few years ago? Are you less likely to argue or seek revenge against those who hurt you? Do you forgive people as soon as they hurt you and not wait for them to apologize first? Do you forgive them as soon as the offense takes place?

Jesus is our perfect example of forgiveness. He forgives us immediately and totally, even before we ask Him for forgiveness. As we become more like Him we will find ourselves being quicker to forgive others. They may hurt us on purpose or accidentally, but our first response is getting to be to quickly forgive them.

Do you find yourself quicker to forgive than you were in the past? That is a good sign that spiritual growth is taking place.

## **8. Are you becoming more aware of how great and powerful God is?**

**Psalm 19:1** *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

**Isaiah 64:8** *Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

**2 Corinthians 12:10** *That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

**Philippians 4:13** *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Hananiah, Azariah and Michael (Shadrack, Meshack, Abednigo) knew God could deliver them from the fiery furnace if He wanted, they knew He was powerful enough. They didn't know if that was His will and they were willing to do whatever He wanted, but they never doubted His power to do it if He wanted

Is God 'growing' in your life? We know God doesn't grow, He doesn't get bigger. He is as big as He can possibly be and He has always been that way. But when we grow in our faith we become more and more aware of what a wonderful, awesome,

Does God seem greater to you now than He did in the past? Are you continually seeing more and more ways He controls everything? When God gets bigger in your life your faith and trust in Him grow as well. We have big faith in a big God, but only small faith in a small God. Is your faith and trust in God growing as well? That shows that God is becoming greater and greater in your life.

If you are more aware than you used to be of how great God is, you are growing spiritually.

## **9. Is your prayer life becoming more personal and stronger?**

***James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.***

***Jeremiah 29:12-13 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.***

***Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.***

In Daniel's and Nehemiah's life we see men who prayed about every problem and thanked God for every blessing. As we grow so will our prayer life. Jesus Himself often stayed up all night praying.

Do you find yourself talking to God more than you used to? Is prayer more natural, something you do throughout the day without even realizing it at times? Does talking to God about things come naturally to you, something that automatically happens? Are your first thoughts about asking God for wisdom or talking to Him about the problem you are facing?

Do you find yourself talking to God about all kinds of things, not just asking Him to do things for you? Is your prayer more centered on God Himself instead of what you want Him to do for you? Do you feel more comfortable praying than you did in the past?

When a relationship grows people learn to communicate better. Do you find your prayer life becoming more personal and stronger? If so, you are growing spiritually.

## **10. Are you better able to recognize God's voice when He speaks to you?**

***John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.***

***John 10:4, 16, 27 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.***

***Acts 9:11-15 The Lord told Peter, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.***

Do you find yourself more interested in listening to God, in wanting to hear from Him, instead of just being interested in telling Him what you want Him to do for you? Do you recognize that what God has to say to you is much more important than what you have to say to Him?

Are you better able to recognize when God is speaking to you? Can you better tell His voice from your own thoughts and from Satan's counterfeits? Do you have a stronger and stronger desire to want to hear from Him and listen to what He says?

Do you give God credit for the thoughts and ideas, the wisdom and guidance, the conviction and comfort He speaks to you each day?

If you are better able to recognize when God speaks to you then you are growing spiritually.

## **CONCLUSION**

These 10 standards can help you see how and where you are growing. Look at each one carefully, pray about where you are at and if you are growing in this area. If you find one where you haven't been growing as you should than you can focus on that so you can grow in that area.



Remember, it is God who brings about the growth in us as we allow His Spirit to work in us (John 15:1-8) and produce His fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-26). Just as a parent oversees the maturing of his child, so our heavenly Father oversees our growth. His promise is that He will work in us as long as we are on this earth so that we continue to grow more and more like Jesus (Philippians 1:6). What a blessing and what a privilege that is. God expects us to grow, but He doesn't expect us to do it on our own. He will bring that about as we follow Him.

Give God your best, failures, etc – He will use it

***Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.***

**COMPLETION** = present process which happens to us.

Not something we do, it is done to us

***Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter (completer) of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

**AUTHOR** = "He who has begun"

**PERFECTOR** = "Carry it on to completion"

If you look at these 10 you will see where you are growing, and they may help show you where you, or your family or church, need to grow more as well.