

Three Keys to Spiritual Growth

The Bible is more than a book about theology or a story about eternal life when we die. It also offers us the wisdom we need to live victorious, peace-filled, joyful lives on earth.

Jesus says in John 10:10 (NIV), “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” This verse is not only talking about enjoying life when we go on vacation or when something delightful happens; it’s also talking about the fact that God offers us the ability to relish ordinary, everyday life.

If the only time we can enjoy ourselves is when something exciting happens, we will miss out on the joyful, abundant life Jesus died to give us. But if we learn to live according to God’s Word, which requires study and obedience, we can savor each day.

One reason Paul’s epistle to the Colossians is so important for us to study is that it is all about Jesus. The theme is the headship of Christ and the primary lesson of the four chapters is to put Jesus first all the time, above and before everything else.

Colossians 1:28-29 (NIV) says, “He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.”

Paul concludes Colossians 1 by declaring that Christ is the one he proclaims – not himself, not anyone else, but Christ. He teaches wisely, with one goal in mind: to “present everyone fully mature in Christ.” This should be the goal of anyone who teaches and preaches the Word of God, and also everyone who

has a personal relationship with Jesus.

There are many ways to grow in Christ but I want to focus on just three of them here. All of them relate to the way you spend your time with God, time in God's Word and time with the right people.

Time with God

There is nothing better than one-on-one time with God. During this time, you can read, study, pray and talk with God, or simply sit in His presence and rest in Him. I once heard that people can be as close to God as they want to be; it all depends on how much time they are willing to put into their personal relationship with Him. Spending time with God is not a religious obligation; it is a rare and wonderful privilege.

Time in God's Word

I encourage you to invest a lot of time studying and meditating on God's Word.

Investing time in God's Word as part of your everyday life is one of the best things you can do for your spiritual growth. In fact, it's an absolute necessity. The Word will guide you, encourage you, give you wisdom and give you the confidence you need to face each day.

Spending time in God's Word does not always mean reading the Bible. You can also read books that help explain the Bible or that offer teaching on a particular subject about which you are interested in learning more. You can also listen to podcasts, watch good sermons on television or learn from various kinds of social media outlets.

Time with the Right People

If you really want to grow spiritually, you will need to spend time with people who can help you, people who are also hungry for the things of God. Make a priority of being around people

who will build you up in your faith, not people who will try to pull you away from it. Think and pray about the types of people you need in your life as you walk with God, and ask God to bring them across your path and help you build godly relationships with them.

If you have friends who are tearing you down and bringing too much temptation into your life, you may find it necessary to separate from them for your own good.

I want to encourage you to consider practical ways you can begin spending more time with God in prayer, in His Word and with people who encourage you to become as close to God as you can possibly be. These three keys will make all the difference in your ability to enjoy your life every single day!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's teaching resource A Bible Study of Colossians Action Plan. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

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