

How To Grow Into A Christ-like Believer (Part 2) **Ephesians 4:11-24**

Introduction:

1. Babies do not turn into adults overnight. Can you imagine putting your baby into the crib at night, and the next morning you go in and see a full-grown man scrunched up and sleeping in the crib?
 - Babies do not **turn** into adults, they **grow** into adults. It is a gradual, progressive process.
2. Last week, we learned that the Christian life is a lot like this.
 - When you accept Christ as your Savior, you begin your Christian journey as a baby Christian – as a child in the faith. Paul used the expression, “*babes in Christ.*”
 - But God desires for us to leave this state of immaturity. vs. 14
3. We learned that God’s goal for every believer is that you become a fully mature Christian that is Christ-like in all areas of your life (vs. 13). You are full of Jesus. He runs over into every area of your life. People see the character of Christ in you.
4. How do you go from a state of spiritual babyhood to a state of spiritual maturity? You must **grow!** vs. 15
5. Every Christian should be growing and changing! It is God’s plan.
6. But how does growth happen? What is the key to growing and changing? The Bible teaches us here in Ephesians 4 that there are two keys:

The first key: You must renew your mind with truth.

1. Your life can be broken down into two main divisions (if you are saved).
 - B.C. – This stands for “Before Christ.” It deals with events that happened before you knew Christ as your Savior.
 - A.C. – This stands for “After Christ.” This deals with your life after you have known Jesus Christ as your Savior.
2. Before you knew Christ, your mind was programmed to live independently of God. Like a computer, our brain records the experiences we have in life. When we come to Christ, our minds are still programmed to live this way.
 - There is no delete button that can be pushed to get rid of old thinking patterns and ungodly habits formed before we knew Christ.
 - This is why, when we get saved, we all have sinful and obnoxious aspects to our personality. They have been ingrained in us by practicing bad habits.
3. Ephesians 4:22 and 24 illustrate this perfectly.
 - Verse 22 – This is B.C. God says, “That is the old you, before you knew Jesus. Put it off. Stop living that way.” cf. Colossians 3:5-9
 - Verse 24 – This is A.C. God says, “I’ve made you a new person in Jesus Christ. I’ve given you a new life and made you a new creation. I have put my Spirit in your spirit, and it longs to do what is right and holy.” The new

man is not the old man made over. It is something new that was never there before.

4. So what is the key to putting off all the sins and ungodly habits of the old man and putting on the right habits and godly attitudes of the new man?
 - Notice how verse 23 is bridged between these two. Let's read it together.
 - Positive and lasting change only comes as you renew your mind with truth. 1 Peter 2:2
5. We must renew our minds with truth. All the lies from Satan and the world that we have believed for years must be replaced with the truth of God's Word. Notice the emphasis on truth in this text:
 - Verse 21 – hearing and being taught the truth
 - Verse 20 – learning the truth
 - Verse 15 – speaking the truth – cf. vs. 25
6. Romans 12:2 is a very helpful and insightful verse.
 - Christians can feed their minds with the world's ideas, philosophy, and entertainment (things that are independent of God).
 - At the same time, their minds are exposed to very little of God's Word – truth!
 - Guaranteed, they will battle with sin, and their growth will be stymied.
 - Why? Because we rise above the world and are transformed by truth.
 - Feed your mind with the world, and this is what you get: Colossians 3:5-8
 - Feed your mind with truth, and this is what you get: Colossians 3:12-16

The second key: You must live a life that is fully connected with other believers.

1. You need to hear the truth, be taught the truth, and learn the truth. God has given to the church spiritual leaders to help you in this process. Ephesians 4:11-12
 - Christians that are not connected to a local church miss out on this.
2. But there comes a point when you must practice the truth.
 - This is where the importance of other believers comes in. You don't grow and change on an island by yourself.
 - You learn how to practice and live truth by dealing with people.
 - Look at the virtues God wants you to grow in (vs. 25-32, Colossians 3:12-16). If I'm not building relationships with other believers, how do I learn how to forgive, etc?
3. As you experience true fellowship with other believers, some will teach you, some will encourage you, some will challenge you, and some will frustrate you. But it is all part of God's plan to grow and change you until you are practicing truth in your everyday life.
4. Verse 16 – God has compacted (united) the whole body of Christ together (fitly joined), that every member can make a contribution (supplith), and provide the energy (effectual working) needed to bring growth in each other's lives.

In Conclusion:

1. You now know God's goal for your life. God wants you to be growing, changing, and becoming more like His Son, Jesus Christ.
2. God has even showed you how, but God can't do it for you.
3. It all starts with a true desire (1 Peter 2:2). I don't believe anyone grows and changes until they want to.
4. Will you make a decision today that you are committed to growing and changing?