

Here We Grow!

Philippians 2:12-13

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / August 29, 2021

I. Transformation isn't a special, one-time thing. It's normative in the life of any genuine Christian!

- A. We're transformed from death to life when we're saved (and that's called **positional sanctification**).

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**"

Ephesians 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus **you who once were far off have been brought near** by the blood of Christ."

John 3:3 "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**'"

- B. In heaven, we'll no longer struggle to sin less, because we'll finally be sinless (and that's called **ultimate or entire sanctification**).

Romans 8:30 "And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified."

Philippians 3:20-21 "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ **who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body**, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."

So we change teams once we're saved, and we stop sinning once we enter eternity...but what about the lifetime between having been saved and being in heaven?

II. Real spiritual growth happens when you cooperate with the Holy Spirit's work in your life.

Galatians 5:25 "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

Sanctification is "being set apart for a relationship with the Holy One, to display His character in every sphere of life."

Peterson, D., 2015. *Possessed by God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, p.24.

This is called **progressive sanctification**.

Philippians 2:12-13 “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

This might be the clearest passage in all of Scripture that juxtaposes **our responsibility to grow** in our faith with the fact that **the ability to grow comes from God** alone.

What can you do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit?

- A. You can **consistently come before the Lord on your own** to read His Word and talk to Him in prayer.

Psalms 63:1-4 “O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. ² So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, beholding Your power and glory. ³ Because Your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise You. ⁴ So I will bless You as long as I live; in Your name I will lift up my hands.”

- B. You can **place yourself in environments** where spiritual growth is most likely to occur.

- a. Gathering together in **corporate worship** saturates us in Bible teaching, and reminds us we’re part of a larger body of Christ.

Romans 12:4-5 “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

- b. Since **growth happens best in relationships** with one another, we commit to gathering in smaller numbers in **Community Groups**.

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

- c. When we need **intensive help** to overcome trials, struggles or sin, we go to a **Care Group** or pursue **biblical counseling** to bring the Word to bear on a specific area of our lives.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

III. Cooperating with the Holy Spirit means you'll not just consume, but contribute to His work in the life of our church!

- A. Help someone else grow by reading your Bible and praying with them.
- B. Join a ministry team that contributes to the corporate worship services at your campus.
- C. Ask David Michael what it takes to lead or host a Community Group.
- D. Talk to Mark Shaw about biblical counseling (and attend our CDT Conference in a few weeks!)
- E. Talk to Dave Wernz about seeing how you can be part of what God is doing through our church in other parts of the world.

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:

1. Pastor Peter said "Transformation isn't a one-time thing, but is an ongoing, normative part of the Christian life." What would you consider to be a transformational time in your walk with the Lord?
2. What is a time you can recall sensing you were cooperating with or keeping in step with the Holy Spirit?
3. What do you think of the fact that we're responsible for our spiritual growth, but unable to achieve it on our own? What do you think of being responsible for something we're unable to do?
4. Pastor Peter shared environments in which spiritual growth is most likely to occur. Which of those ought you add to your walk with the Lord?
5. How are you a contributor to what the Lord is doing in the life & ministry of our church?