THE DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

I. The <u>Prize</u> of Spiritual Maturity:

A. To know God intimately to the fullest measure (John 17:3, Ephesians 3:14-20).

B. To be like Jesus Christ in every aspect of your life to the fullest measure (Ephesians 4:11-15).

C. To be useful and productive in your service to God to the fullest measure (Romans 7:4, John 15:5).

D. To develop a life that reflects love for God and Love for others to the fullest measure (John 14:21. 1John 2:3-11, 4:7-21).

II. The <u>Particulars</u> of Spiritual Maturity:

A. We are to develop godly thinking patterns and motives (Romans 12:2).

B. We are to develop godly desires (Matthew 6:19-22, Colossians 3:1-5).

C. We are to develop godly communication patterns (Ephesians 4:29).

D. We are to develop godly behavioral patterns (Ephesians 4:17-32).

E. We are to develop godly relational patterns (Colossians 3:12-14).

F. We are to develop godly serving patterns (John 13:1-17).

III. The <u>Process</u> of Spiritual Maturity:

A. God is saving ***<u>souls</u>*** from the power, penalty, and soon the presence of sin

(Ephesians 2:1-10, Colossians 1:12-14).

B. God is maturing ***<u>Saints</u>*** into the image of Jesus Christ

(2Corinthains 3:18, Romans 8:29-30).

C. God is using the ***<u>Church</u>*** through evangelism to save souls

(2Corinthians 5:18-20, Colossians 1:3-6).

D. God is using the ***Church*** through discipleship to mature saints into the image of

Christ(Matthew 28:18-20, Ephesians 4:11-15).

E. God is working inside of you (Philippians 2:13).

1. He is challenging your thoughts (Philippians 3:13-15).
2. He is convicting you of sin (Philippians 3:13-15).
3. He is revealing the truth about life to you (2 Corinthians 2:9-16, John 16:8-13).
4. He is giving you power to live, to serve, and to enjoy life (2 Peter 1:1-10).

5. He is guiding you into His will (John 16:13).

6. He is changing you into the image of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 3:20-21).

F. As God is working within your heart, you are to respond accordingly (Philippians 2:12)

G. There are ***six steps*** that demonstrate that you are responding accordingly as God is working inside of you. These steps result in spiritual maturity taking place in your life.

1. ***Realization*** - One comes to see truth and understand how it applies to their life (2Timothy 2:24-26).

2. ***Remorse*** - One comes to feel godly sorrow in relation to their sin and desire to make things right with God and others accordingly.(2 Corinthians 7:10).

3. ***Renounce*** - One comes to confess their sin to God and to others when appropriate (Psalm 32:1-11, James 5:16).

4. ***Repentance*** - One comes to turn away from their sin towards God and towards others accordingly (Proverbs 28:13, 2Corinthians 7:10-11).

5. ***Renewal*** - One comes to meditate on the truth so that he/she may learn the new direction by which he/she is to obey God and love others accordingly (Ephesians 4:17-23).

6. ***Replacement -*** One comes to obey God and love others in the area where he/she has disobeyed God and been unloving towards others (Ephesians 4:17-23).

H. Each ***step of change*** is worked out through ***stages of spiritual growth*** (2 Timothy 3:16).

1.Teaching Stage: The Holy Spirit guides, convicts and enlightens your mind through the Word of God, the Body of Christ, circumstances, and prayer

(John 16:8-13, 1Corinthians 2:9-12, Hebrews 4:12, 1John 4:4-6, 1Peter 4:12-13,

Romans 8:26-27) (Realization occurs as a result.).

2.**<u>Conviction Stage</u>**: God begins to focus your attention in particular areas of life convincing you that change is necessary. (Philippians 3:14-15, 2Corinthians 7:10-11)

(Realization and Remorse occurs as a result.).

3.**<u>Correction Stage</u>**: You make a decision to abandon a sin issue and begin a new thought, word, or action trusting God's power to make things function accordingly

(2Corinthians 7:10-11, Proverbs 28:13-14) (Renounce and Repentance occurs as a result.).

4.**<u>Training Stage</u>**: As you are responding to God's conviction you are seeking to put to practice what God has commanded in His Word

a. By the power of God you are walking in harmony with God in areas where you were once disobedient.

b. You are experiencing victory: a deeper fellowship with God and with others

(2Peter 1:1-11, Proverbs 12:13, 24:16, John 8:31-32, Luke 8:4-18,

Ephesians 4:11-13, 1John 3:1-3).

(Renewal and Replacement occurs as a result.).

I. The Church is to help each member through each step and stage by:

1. helping members look closely at and work hard on having a ***thought life, motives, and desires*** that are pleasing to God as God's Word commands (Romans 12:2-3, 2Corinthian 10:3-5, Matthew 6:19-22, Colossians 3:1-5).

2. helping members look closely at work hard on ***communicating*** in ways that are honest and edifying to others as God's Word commands (Ephesians 4:29).

3. helping members look closely at and work hard on walking in ***behavior*** that is consistent with Christ's Character as God's Word commands

(Ephesians 4:17-32, 5:1-17, Galatians 5:16-26).

4. helping members look closely at and work hard on ***relating*** to others in ways that demonstrate the love of Christ as God's Word commands

(Romans 12: 9-21, 13:8-12).

5. helping members look closely at and work hard on ***serving*** others in ways that will bear their burdens and meet their needs as God's Word commands

(Ephesians 4:11-16, 1Peter 4:10-11).

6. leading individuals into:

Membership – individuals would be lead to join a local church that they may experience love and enjoy the blessings of God-honoring relationships.

Maturity – individuals would be lead to get involved in discipleship courses in a local Church that would lead them into loving God, loving others on a consistent basis and living a life that reflects the character of Christ.

Magnification – individuals would be led to come to appreciate, value and adore the character of God through heart-felt genuine worship of Him in a local Church.

Ministry – individuals would be led to join a ministry where they can develop in bearing burdens and meeting needs according to the various relationships they will develop through the local Church.

Missions – individuals would be led into supporting the Church in sharing and defending the Christian faith.

V. The <u>Procedure</u> for Checking Spiritual Maturity

A. Examine your thinking patterns (Romans 8:5-8, Romans 12:2).

B. Examine the things that motivate you to live, to work, to serve, etc. (Matthew 6:21).

C. Examine what you believe to be true about yourself (Proverbs 23:7a).

D. Take notice of what you discuss consistently (Luke 6:45).

E. Examine your behavior/attitudes (Galatians 5:19-22).

F. Examine your lifestyle (2 Timothy 2:19, 2 Peter 1:1-10).

G. Take notice of how you spend your time (Ephesians 5:8-17).

H. Take notice of what you are producing in life (Luke 6:43-49, Galatians 6:7-10).

I. Examine the company you keep and their effect on you (1 Corinthians 15:33, Psalm 1:1-3).

J. Take notice of what you are trying to accomplish or obtain (1 Timothy 6:6-12, Matthew 6:19-34).

K. Take notice of how you relate to people (1 John 1:5-2:11).

L. Compare all these things to Christ only (Hebrews 12:1-3).

VI. The <u>Pitfalls</u> that Stifle Spiritual Maturity:

A. Consistently yielding to the tricks of Satan (1John 2:14-16).

B. Listening to worldly wisdom rather than to God's wisdom (James 3:13-18, Proverbs 8:1-36).

C. Holding grudges against others (1 John 2:9-11).

D. Wallowing in sin (1 John 2:1-6 Proverbs 28:13-14).

E. Not dealing with the issues of your heart (Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:14-23, Matthew 23:23-26).

F. Focusing on fleeting pleasures instead of pleasure evermore (Prov. 21:17, Ps 16:11).

VII. The <u>Product</u> of Spiritual Maturity

A. Consistently feeding on and developing in wisdom that comes from God (Hebrews 5:11-14, 1 Corinthians 2:1-3:2).

B. Evaluating things from a biblical perspective (1Corinthians 14:20).

C. Able to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:11-14).

D. Pursuing the prize of becoming like Jesus Christ, anticipating the coming of Jesus Christ and the new heavenly body gained from Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:12-21).

E. Not caught up or manipulated by false doctrine (Ephesians 4: 13-14).

F. Love growing and increasing (Ephesians 4:11-16, 1Corinthians 13:4-8).

G. Walking consistently in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (Galatians 5:16-25).

H. Putting off a life of sin and putting on a life or right living through the power of God within (Ephesians 4:17-32, Romans 8:1-14).

I. Growing in moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Peter 1:1-11, 1 John 2: 3-11).

VIII. The Plan for Spiritual Maturity

A. We are to learn fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith.

B. We are to learn how to walk in the fundamental disciplines of the Christian Faith.

C. We are to learn how to walk in the fundamental duties of the Christian Faith.

D. We are to learn how to live according to our demographic in the Christian Faith.

Doctrines To know about	Disciplines How To:	Duties How To:	Demographics How To:
God Bible Christ Man Sin Salvation	Confess Sin Repent of Sin Study/Meditate on the Word of God	Bear Burdens Meet Needs Proclaim the Gospel	Function In Marriage As a Man As a Woman
Holy Spirit Church Last Things Angels Spiritual Leadership	Forgive Others Apply Truth Serve Others	Defend the Gospel Give Monetarily to support the Church	Function As a Senior Citizen As a Young Adult As a College Student
Spiritual Gifts Sanctification Old Testament New Testament Stewardship Judgment/ Rewards	Pray Worship	Corporately Fellowship & Worship	Function As a Teenager As a Child