

4. Fellowship

Introduction

A baby is born. Ten years later, it is still the *same size* and *maturity* as when it was born! Your immediate reaction is:

- “Wow. He’s still so cute!”
- “Well ... I guess some babies grow slower than others.”
- “Get this kid to a doctor ... NOW!”

It doesn’t take a *Doctor* to figure out that the baby in our story is not normal. *Normal babies grow and mature.* It is *abnormal* not to!

When God placed His *Holy Spirit* in you at the moment you trusted Christ for Forgiveness, you were “*born again*” spiritually. *Instantly*, you became *a member of God’s eternal family*, a “*new creation*” in *Christ*, created to *grow* to maturity and *destined to glorify Christ* through your life.

❖ **Read 2 Peter 3:18 :**

*“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.”*

2 Peter 3:18

The next four lessons will teach you *principles* that will help you *establish a lifestyle* that will promote *spiritual growth* in your Christian life. As in the physical world, *growth takes time*, and *attaining spiritual maturity requires patience*. But if you will *discipline your life* and *apply these principles*, spiritual growth will be the inevitable supernatural outcome!

“Strength in Numbers!”

The First Principle to ensure Spiritual Growth is to establish strong relationships with other growing Christians.

On Fire for Jesus!

Even as coals burn hotter longer when piled together, in the same way Christians who join together in *Spiritual Fellowship* will *stoke* one another’s faith in God, and *inflame* each other’s love for Him!

Here are a few reasons why we should join ourselves together in Christian Fellowship.



1 Peter 1:23
John 1:12
2 Corinthians 5:17
2 Corinthians 6:18
1 Peter 2:2

Encouragement

*“Let us not give up meeting together,
as some are in the habit of doing,
but let us encourage one another and
all the more
as you see the Day approaching.”
Hebrews 10:25*

- ❖ **Underline** what we are *not* to do according to *Hebrews 10:25*.
- ❖ **Circle** the words “*give up*”. The words mean to “*completely abandon*” or “*utterly forsake*”. Christians are *forbidden* to forsake meeting together. **‘Giving up’ is not an option!**
- ❖ **Underline** what action we are *to do*.
- ❖ **Circle** the word “encourage”. The word is the translation of a *Greek* word that means “*to call alongside*”, and presents the beautiful picture of a person encouraging another while walking side by side together. We often find it easier to *criticize*, or *shame*, or *judge* another person who does not measure up to our standards, but God asks us to **encourage**, to *stand alongside*, those who are wavering.

Inspiration

*“Do not be misled:
‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”
1 Corinthian 15:33*

- ❖ **Circle** the word that describes what we should *not be* (*1 Corinthians 15:33*). The word “misled” means to **be led astray from the truth!** We find this admonition throughout the Bible, perhaps because we have a habit of thinking we know the way, even *after* God has told us the correct way!
- ❖ **Circle** the **word** that describes the **effect** of “*bad company*” on “*good character*”. The word “corrupt” means to *defile* or *destroy*.

Have you ever met people who, thinking they could help other people deep in sin, have instead been *drawn into sin* themselves? Life is full of examples of Christians who chose to remain with *bad company* only to find their faith *corrupted*.

“Do not be misled”! We will become like the company we keep! If our goal is to grow spiritually and become a mature Christian, then we must spend time with Christians who are growing spiritually to maturity!

 **MEMORIZE!**

“Never Give Up!”

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL
Shortly after the end of World War II, **Sir Winston Churchill**, who had just led England as Prime Minister through its Finest Hour during the war, was invited to speak to a gathering eager to hear his words of wisdom. Known for his eloquence and wit, the audience was prepared to be treated to a feast of words. They sat in rapt attention as the great orator strolled to the podium and, like a drum beat, repeatedly exhorted the crowd, **“Never give up, Never give up, Never give up, ...!”** After several minutes and the final cadence, he turned and took his seat before a stunned crowd.

 **MEMORIZE!**

 Matthew 24:4
Proverbs 13:20
2 Peter 2:17-22

- ▶ **In what** specific ways does *bad company corrupt* good character?
- ▶ **In what** ways can *good company* inspire good character?

Restoration

*“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin,
you who are spiritual
should restore him gently.”
Galatians 6:1a*

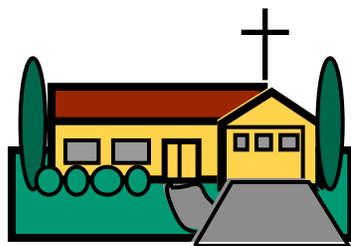
- ❖ **Circle** what can happen to the *unsuspecting* Christian. (*Galatians 6:1*)
The word “*caught*” means *to be entrapped by surprise*.

Have you ever found yourself in trouble and needing help, but *unable* to find someone to call? Nothing is more frustrating and dangerous! Like getting caught in a strong ocean current, Christians can find themselves being swept away by sin’s temptations. **Fortunate is the Christian who has a spiritual friend who will not hesitate to jump in and rescue him from danger!**

- ❖ **Underline** what “*spiritual*” Christians (*those filled with the Holy Spirit*) are to do with their fellow Christians *caught* by sin. (*Galatians 6:1*)
- ❖ **Circle** the *word* that describes *how* they are to restore their fellow Christian. ~ Too often we can be *harsh* and *judgmental* with other Christians caught in sin, but here we are exhorted to be *gentle*.

Gently: The word “*gentle*” is a translation of the same *Greek* word from which “*meek*” is translated. A person who is “*meek*” is one who is *humble toward God*. This *humility* comes from the realization that God is the Creator and we are simply His creation! This keeps us from the pride that would hinder us from helping other Christians caught in sin!

Application



- Meet regularly with other Christians who desire to grow in their faith.**
(*Acts 2:44-47*)
- Join a Church that honors God and teaches His Word, and attend faithfully.**
(*Hebrews 10:25*)
- Become involved in your Church’s ministry.**
(*Ephesians 4:11-12*)
- Support your Church’s ministry financially through regular giving.**
(*Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Corinthians 9:7*)

Satan Our Adversary

 2 Corinthians 2:11
Luke 22:31
Ephesians 6:11-12
1 Peter 5:8

When you became a Christian, Satan became your enemy. He continually schemes to entrap you in Sin.

- ▶ **Think back** on sins you regularly commit. Can you see how Satan may have entrapped you into committing them?
- ▶ **What** can you do to avoid being caught in habitual sins?

 Acts 1:14
Acts 2:42
1 Timothy 5:17-18
1 Thessalonians 5:12
1 Corinthians 16:1-2