

Growing Spiritually

by Pastor John Fredericksen

It is kind of exciting to watch our children go through periods of growth. Parents can usually detect it. When growing, children's appetites can easily double or triple. Without being told, they often take much more time for rest or sleep. Physically, you'll soon notice your child's limbs have grown longer (making it obvious it's time to buy them new clothes--again), and their whole appearance begins to change. What is even more thrilling is when you witness a real growth in their maturity too.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to believers in Thessalonica, he could praise them by saying, **"your faith groweth exceedingly"**

2nd Thessalonians 1:3 KJV *"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;"*

Now, how did he know they were growing spiritually? It was easy, because three things were evident in them. First, he told them *their "charity [or love] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth"* No growth in this area equals little or no growth at all. Second and third, *they exhibited "patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations"* takes spiritual life and growth to react positively toward negative circumstances. But these believers were growing enough spiritually that they endured wrongs, not for doing wrong, but for the cause of Christ, and they did so without losing their cool or faith in God's care.

2nd Thessalonians 1:4 KJV *"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:"*

The spiritual growth of these believers should come as no surprise. *They had "received the Word of God...not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe"*

1st Thessalonians 2:13 KJV “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

It seems they had a real appetite for the Scriptures, regularly took time for it, and allowed the truths they were learning to transform the way they lived.

This passage should cause each of us to ask ourselves, "**Am I growing spiritually?** I ought to be and need to be growing in Christ. I'll know for sure if I'm growing in the Lord by the presence of these three qualities exhibited in the saints at Thessalonica. Am I growing spiritually?"