

Steps to Spiritual Maturity

Introduction

1. **All Christians must move toward spiritual maturity.**
Ephesians 6:13-17

1 Peter 2:1-2 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby

2 Peter 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

2. **One is either growing in the Lord or dying in the Lord.**
3. **We would be very concerned about a little child who did not grow.**
4. **Let the Bible tell us four major steps to spiritual growth.**

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Prepare Our Hearts

1. **Before we can mature spiritually, we must prepare our hearts to serve God.**

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he....

Proverbs 4:23 **Keep your heart with all diligence**, For out of it spring the issues of life.

2. The parable of the soils tells us about the four kinds of hearts man can have.

Luke 8:4-15

- A. Stoney Ground
- B. Wayside Ground
- C. Thorny Ground
- D. Good Ground

What kind of ground are we?

3. Why should we prepare our heart?

- A. **Because there is no way we can truly serve God if we are not 100 percent devoted to Him and have a longing desire to be with in eternity.**

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God with **all your heart**, with **all your soul**, with **all your mind**, and with **all your strength**.' This is the first commandment.

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet **you obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

4. Other passages teach us the necessity of preparing our hearts.

Proverbs 23:12 **Apply your heart to instruction**, And your ears to words of knowledge.

Proverbs 23:15 My son, if your heart is wise, My heart will rejoice....

Proverbs 23:17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, **But be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day**;

Proverbs 23:19 Hear, my son, and be wise; **And guide your heart in the way**.

Proverbs 23:26 My son, give me your heart, And let your eyes observe my ways.

- A. **Are we truly preparing our heart? What are we allowing to enter our heart?**

We Are to Seek the Law of the Lord

1. We must be determined to seek fully the law of the Lord.

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart **to seek the Law of the Lord**, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

2. The Bible gives us several principles pointing us in the direction of God's law.

Proverbs 23:23 **Buy the truth, and do not sell it**, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.

Psalms 119:10 **With my whole heart I have sought You**; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

Psalms 119:127 Therefore **I love Your commandments** More than gold, yes, than fine gold!

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, **a worker who does not need to be ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. **Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me**; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

We Must Do the Commandments of God

1. **A prepared heart that is determined to seek the law of the Lord will want to DO all that the Lord has instructed.**

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and **to do it**, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

2. **It does us absolutely no good to claim to be religious, yet not do what God has asked of us.**

Luke 6:46 But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' **and not do the things which I say?**

1 John 2:3-4 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. **He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar,** and the truth is not in him

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, **that they may have the right to the tree of life**, and may enter through the gates into the city.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Test all things; **hold fast what is good.**

James 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

3. **Some commandments may seem hard to us. Yet, if we truly love the Lord, and our real goal is to be with Him in heaven forever more, then we will do anything we have to do to ensure our salvation.**

- A. **Notice what was instructed to those of Ezra's day:
Ezra 10:2-4**

We Must Share the Truth With Others

- 1. We can be so thankful for our salvation that comes as a result of preparing our, seeking God's law, and doing it. Now, we need to share the hope of salvation with others.**

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and **to teach statutes and ordinances** in Israel.

- 2. The Bible is shows us that we need to be individuals who strive to "seek and save the lost" just as Jesus did.**

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, Go into all the world and **preach the gospel to every creature.**

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to **faithful men who will be able to teach others also.**

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but **bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

Conclusion

- 1. If we are not growing, we are dying.**
- 2. Our growth, or lack of it, is something we cannot hide – from God or others.**
- 3. At the judgment day, it will be too late to be concerned with our spiritual growth.**
- 4. The rich man in Luke 16 was worried and concerned about his brethren back on earth. He wanted them to grow into what God wanted them to be. However, for him, it was too late.**
- 5. We do not want to wait and be like him.**
- 6. It is our choice – may we make the right choice before it is everlastingly too late.**

