



Freedom Through Growing Up

Listen! How absurd it would be to hire a newly-graduated engineer and never give her any training or any work or any opportunities or any challenges—just a desk and a salary.

- **Tension:** Many Christians resemble that very engineer—in the family of God but totally stalled in terms of maturity and growth and usefulness. Absurd!

Definition: “Spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.” M. Robert Mulholland in: *Invitation to a Journey*. Principles:

- #1 Spiritual maturity is one of God’s main _____ for our lives. Rom 8:29
- #2 Spiritual immaturity results in multiple kinds of _____. John 8:31, 32.
- #3 Spiritual formation is a _____—it takes time and has steps. Heb 5:12-14
- #4 Spiritual formation is a _____ process. Heb 5:8
- #5 Spiritual formation is catalyzed by God through life _____. Heb 5:8
- #6 Spiritual formation requires _____ effort and attention. 1 Pet 2:1-3
- #7 Spiritual formation requires _____ to work and _____ to work. Phil 2:12, 13.
- #8 Spiritual growth and maturity are more valuable than _____. Phil 3:7-11
- #9 Spiritual formation in me is for the purpose of blessing _____. 2 Thess 1:3

Core Truth: I am obedient, fulfilled, and really happy...when I join God in the process of spiritual growth for myself and others.

Warning: When you have been a Christian for 10 to 40 years and reached a good level of maturity it is painfully easy to just camp on the plateau you have reached.

Applications—here is how we join God in one of the main things that He is up to—your own spiritual growth—taught by Pastor Jim Herrington:

- #1 Live a reflective life.
- #2 Make a permanent and severe commitment to obedience.
- #3 Live in ongoing, authentic community with others who are pursuing God.

Question: What if Michael Phelps won every race in 8th grade, quit swimming, and just waited for the 2008 Olympics to arrive—how many gold medals would he have won?

“Walking Papers”

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk each day this week.

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Here is one of the central purposes of God: to grow rescued people to look like His Son.

- **Today:** Where are you right now in the spiritual formation process? Don't yet have a relationship with God through faith in Christ? Growing? Stalled? Slipping backwards? Content on some plateau that is “good enough”? Skyrocketing upward? Lost interest? Immature? Mature? Getting there?
- **Monday:** What do you think about the statement that God is more committed to our maturity than to our ease?
- **Tuesday:** Have you thought of spiritual formation as a process? Do you know the steps in that process? Can you say you are *actively* involved in that process?
- **Wednesday:** How does God catalyze our spiritual growth through our life situations?
- **Thursday:** Why does spiritual growth require continual effort and attention? Is it any different from other processes in this requirement? How is your “CEQ” (continual effort quotient) when it comes to your spiritual growth?
- **Friday:** In the spiritual formation process what is the relationship between God's working in us and us working in us? Philippians 2:12, 13.
- **Saturday:** Why is spiritual formation more valuable than ease? Why are we tempted to pursue ease above spiritual growth?
- **Bonus Question:** What do you think of the principle that I am to grow up spiritual for the sake of blessing others? Do you see biblical evidence for it? Do you see the example of Christ living it? Have you seen a believer live that?

Note for Connection Groups: The full study guide for small group and personal study is available at: www.cypressbible.org and then click on “Get Connected” and the link is on that page.