

# **New Christian Study**

By Walter D. Huyck Jr., D.Min.

[www.thischristianjourney.com](http://www.thischristianjourney.com)

## **Week Four** **Spiritual Growth Essentials, Continued**

### **Before You Begin This Study**

- Pray for God to bless your study time and fellowship today.
- Quote the memory verse to your study partner.
- Talk about the Devotions you read this last week and the Spiritual Insights, Prayers, and Applications that were gleaned from these devotions.
- Discuss any question that you might have as a result of your daily Bible Reading.
- Discuss your Sermon Notes.

### **This Weeks Memory Verse**

***Joshua 1:8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

### **A Spiritual Growth Essential - The Church**

Often, when dealing with new Christians, it seems as though they don't hold a very high regard for the Church of Jesus Christ. I think that they are mistaking the religious schemes of mankind for the Church of Jesus Christ. They have seen those

that have used religion for their own personal gain, and have decided that they want nothing to do with that kind of religion, and I don't blame them.

The truth is that the Church of Jesus Christ is not about religion at all, it's about relationship. You see religion is that which mankind does to make one feel good about himself toward God. Christianity is about developing in the personal relationship that God established with you at the moment of your salvation. When you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior you became a child of God (John 1.12). Basically, the Church is here to help you as you spiritually develop in this relationship, to allow you to help others as they in turn strive to spiritually mature as well, and to lead those who are outside of this divine relationship into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Bible discusses this truth in various passages such as **1 Corinthians 12.12-31. Read this passage before you go on in this study.**

Here the Church is described as a body composed of various members. Each of us is a member of the body, and each of us is important in our own way to the body. We each have different gifts, talents, and capabilities. However, every member is vitally important to the body as a whole. Another very important truth presented in this passage is that each member is placed into the body by the Holy Spirit, at God's discretion (vs 18).

Just consider that for a moment, you are a part of the Body of Jesus Christ by divine appointment, and this body is the Church (vs 28).

**Read Ephesians 4.11-16 before going on in this study.**

In Ephesians 4.11-16 we are told that God has also given the Church its leaders. They are given to equip the Church to perform its ministry. They are to teach, guide, and nurture the Church to be all that God intends for it to be. They are also supposed to protect the Church from false doctrine by establishing the Church upon the truths of God Word. Ultimately, they are to teach each member of the Church how to nourish and support the other members in the Church (vs16).

I have heard many that call themselves Christian proudly proclaim, "I don't need to go to Church, I can worship God on my own!" Certainly, we can worship God wherever we are, but the Church is about so much more than just worship. It is also about **fellowship, discipleship, evangelism, and ministry**. The truth is, an individual can not fulfill all of the aspects of the New Testament Church on their

own, some of these essential ministries require an assembly, and Jesus Christ called that assembly the Church (Matthew 16.18).

Whenever someone says, “I don’t need the Church” they demonstrated that they do not understand how Jesus feels about the Church. Consider,

***Ephesians 5:25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ himself for it;*

How much does Jesus love the Church. He loves it so much that He died for it. Christian’s who say they don’t need the Church are not demonstrating a spiritual maturity, they are instead showing how immature they really are. Remember, spiritual maturity is all about learning to be Christ-Like, and you cannot say you are like Christ and disregard that which He deeply loves.

**God's children need to realize that a Christian apart from the Body of Jesus Christ, or the Church can never experience spiritual fulfillment.** Much of what makes us a mature Christian can only be gained through the Church. Now, this does not mean that everyone in the Church always does the right thing, or makes proper decisions. Remember, we are all constantly growing in our relationship with God. At the same time don't allow a few mistakes to separate you from the fulfillment that God provides through His Church Body.

There is another situation that has developed in our American Christian culture. It seems that many Christians feel that they can easily move from one Church body to another, at their will; these are often referred to as “Church Hoppers.” Anyone that holds to this idea ought to read 1 Corinthians 12 again. **The Church is not described as an organization, but as an organism.** The members of the Church could no sooner sever themselves from the body that God has placed them in, than they could easily sever their arm from their own body. Just because things may have gotten tough in your congregation does not mean you should just leave, you need to stick it out, and do all that you can to bring your Church through its dilemma.

The Church is essential in our growth towards spiritual maturity. We ought to guard our feelings about the Church. We need to always remember that the Church is the Body of Jesus Christ, not our personal social entertainment. God must always be the head of the Church. If He is, then the Church as a whole will develop into the ministering body it needs to be.

Has this study changed your opinion about the Church?

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What will you do to guard your attitude about the Church?

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### **A Spiritual Growth Essential - Sermon Notes**

We all have the same basic human problem. It's called forgetfulness. We all have the tendency to forget those things we hear or learn. Hence, we must make special provisions to help us overcome our retention deficiency.

Learning to take Sermon Notes and keep a Spiritual Journal will help you to remember the things that you would otherwise forget. A study conducted by the United States Air force revealed that after 72 hours, we normally remember:

- Only about 10% of what we hear
- Only about 30% of what we read
- About 50% of what we hear and read
- About 90% of what we hear, read, and do!

Therefore, taking sermon notes and keeping a spiritual journal will help you to remember what God is doing in your life. In addition to this study, we know that taking sermon notes helps you to:

1. Focus as you listen.
2. Remember what you hear.
3. Apply the message to your life.

#### 4. Share the truth's with others.

I always suggest that as you study and grow in your Christian Journey that you record what you learn in a way that you could use latter to teach someone else. If you have not already realized it, God does not always intend for you to be the disciple (student), there will come a time when God will want you to be the discipler (teacher). As you read the New Testament you will find this truth repeated time and time again. Jesus taught the disciples and then sent them to teach the next generation of Church leaders. It is a process that has continued since the beginning of the Church and will continue until Christ returns in glory.

Learn with the intention of teaching others.

### **A Spiritual Growth Essential – A Quiet Time**

If you would become the Spiritual Christian that your Heavenly-Father wants you to be, you are going to have to learn to set aside the most important 20 minutes of your day to make that goal a possibility. This time is called a personal Quiet Time and it will become the most important time of your day.

A Quite Time consists to the essential elements of your spiritual growth. A good quiet time will incorporate:

- A time of prayer.
- A devotional time
- A journal time
- A daily Bible reading time
- A meditation time.

It is recommended that this daily quiet time be placed at the first part of you day. By placing your daily quiet time early in your day you will be giving God you best, and you will be focusing yourself on God throughout your day.

Our Lord gave us an example to follow concerning the best time of day to hold a quiet time. The New Testament records:

**Mark 1:35** *And in the \_\_\_\_\_, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

From this text we learn that our Lord made it a point to meet with His Heavenly-Father the first thing in the morning. He also made it a point to get away from life's distractions for his daily appointment with God; Jesus went to a solitary place.

Another thing we learn for our Lord is that He made His time with His Heavenly-Father a priority. Notice:

**Luke 5:15-16** <sup>15</sup> *But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.* <sup>16</sup> *And he \_\_\_\_\_ himself into the wilderness, and prayed.*

Regardless of what seemed to be pressing upon our Lord He made His time with God a priority. If you are going to grow as a Christian, and become the spiritually mature individual that God wants you to be, then you are going to have to decide that your spiritual growth is a priority for your life. You are going to have to make a commitment and follow it through.

Those who climb the Cone of Spiritual Growth are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Those who are willing to do what it takes to live for and walk with God. The most effective way to accomplish this in your Christian Journey is through a purposeful and structured quiet time, early in your day.

By the way, don't allow your quiet time to be the only time in your day when you talk and walk with God. It is common for those who start their day off with God to find themselves talking, and fellowshiping with God throughout their day. There is nothing more exciting than when a child of God realizes the presence of God all the time.

Will you write a personal commitment to begin the practice of a quiet time at the beginning of each day?

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**Your assignment for the next week:**

1. **Read Your Bible every day** Continue to read where you left off last week. Read at least one chapter a day, every day. Read with purpose, not speed. Be prepared to discuss any question you might have next week.
2. **Read The Daily Devotion** in the devotion guide that accompanies this study there are no more boxes for recording your Spiritual Insight, Prayer or Application. Now, you will need to write your spiritual insights, prayer, and application in your Spiritual Journal.
3. **Attend Church Sunday and take Sermon Notes in your Spiritual Journal.** Try to hear and record the preacher's major points and thoughts and record what meaning the sermon may have had for you personally.
4. **Read The Prayer Pages in your Spiritual Journal.**
5. **Memorize the Memory Verse** – Joshua 1.8 and be prepared to quote it to your Study partner next week.