

Accelerating Our Spiritual Growth, Part 3

September 27, 2009 Pastor Bill Bump

I Thessalonians 5:11 (LB) So encourage each other to build each other up, just as you are already doing.

FOUR REALITIES OF LIFE THAT IMPACT OUR GROWTH:

1. PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT...DECIDE TO APPRECIATE THE DIFFERENCES

Romans 12:10 (CEV) Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself.

Romans 14:1 (Mes) Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

We come from different backgrounds and we each have our own history to deal with.

2. PEOPLE CHANGE...DECIDE TO DO SOMETHING NEW

II Corinthians 5:17 (LB) When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!

To keep growing we are going to have to keep changing.

Mark 2:22 (CEV) ...New wine must be put into new wineskins.

Jesus says if we want to continue to grow, we've got to give our lives some space to expand.

3. PEOPLE HIDE...DECIDE TO TAKE A RISK

James 5:16a (LB) Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

People who stop hiding find the greatest growth in their lives and make the greatest impact on others.

II Corinthians 4:2 (Mes) We refuse to wear masks and play games. We don't maneuver and manipulate behind the scenes. And we don't twist God's Word to suit ourselves. Rather, we keep everything we do and say out in the open, the whole truth on display, so that those who want to

can see and judge for themselves in the presence of God.

4. PEOPLE SIN...DECIDE TO FORGIVE

II Corinthians 2:7 (CEV) When people sin, you should forgive and comfort them, so they won't give up in despair.

Colossians 3:13 (NLT) You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

The fact of life is that people are going to hurt us, and that hurt is either going to hinder our growth or it's going to help our growth, depending on how we deal with forgiveness.

We invite you to look over the verses in your sermon notes this week and ask and answer the following three questions (You are encouraged to get a notebook to record your thoughts.):

1. What does the verse say?
2. What does the verse mean?
3. What does the verse mean to me personally?