

# Lesson 4-B: Receive the Life and Power of Christ

**Purpose:** to show the disciple how to grow spiritually and to encourage him to seek maturity in Christ

**Objectives:**

1. to show that the Christian life is a growth process
2. to show how reading the Bible and praying are important for growth
3. to define the sovereignty of God and show how it relates to the growth process

**Introduction:** As we saw the last time we got together, a Christian can walk by the Spirit by looking to God in faith to empower him. But what are some of the other means that God has made available to us to help us to grow and what does God Himself do? This is what we are going to discuss today.

**Read Romans 8:29**

Q. What is God's goal for our lives?

A. That we become like Christ.

*God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us mature so that we will become like Christ.*

Q. What are some of the other means available to help us maintain our spiritual walk and grow to maturity?

A. [Let them answer.]

**Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17**

Q. What help is the Word of God to our walk with God?

A. It teaches us God's will, points out our wrong actions, trains us to live righteously, and equips us for every good work.

Q. How is the Word of God important in helping us walk in the Spirit?

A. The Word of God is inspired by the Spirit; it teaches us how to be empowered by the Spirit and what the Spirit desires to do in our lives.

**Read 1 Peter 2:2**

Q. What should be our attitude toward the Word of God?

A. We should long for it like a newborn babe longs for milk.

Q. What is the result of spending time learning from God's Word?

A. We will grow spiritually from feeding on God's Word - just as a baby grows physically and in every other way from feeding on milk.

**Read Matthew 6:6-13**

Q. Here Jesus assumes His disciples will pray. He says, "When you pray..." (v. 6. What is prayer?

A. Communication with God.

Q. What are some things this passage tells us about prayer?

A. [Let them answer and interact on their answers.]

*Prayer, then, is not only a way to ask God to empower us, but there are many other things to pray about as well and trust Him for.*

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19**

Q. In this verse we can see that we do not automatically follow the Spirit of God. How do you think we quench the spirit?

A. One way is to actively rebel against God by deliberately doing something which we know is wrong. The other is to drift away from God through passive indifference by simply not spending anytime with Him in His Word or in prayer.

Q. The Christian life is a relationship with the living God, not a set of rules. Therefore, it has to be maintained as a relationship is maintained. How do you build a relationship with someone?

A. By spending time with that person.

Q. How does a person spend time with God?

A. By spending time in His Word (a personal letter to His people) and prayer. [Tell them we will deal with this more later in Pursuing Christ Daily, because it is so important.]

Q. Have you been spending regular time with God?

A. [Let them answer. If they haven't or if they have been inconsistent, ask them what they could do to improve. Would they like you to help them learn how to spend time with God?]

Q. How is it affecting your life? [Skip this question if they answered no to the last question, OR share how spending time with God has affected your life.]

*So far we have talked about what we can do to maintain a healthy walk with God.*

### **Read Philippians 1:6**

Q. What can we expect God to do about our continued growth toward Christlikeness?

A. God had committed Himself to bringing to perfection the good work He has begun in us.

Q. What are some of the things that we have talked about that God does to bring this to pass in our lives?

A. He has given us the Holy Spirit to empower us (Psalms 32:4, 5); He convicts us of sin through the Holy Spirit (John 16:8); He has given us a means to communicate with Him through prayer; and He communicates with us through His Word.

*God also has ways of putting pressure on us when we get away from the right path (or stop walking in the Spirit).*

### **Read Hebrew 12:7-11**

Q. What is one thing that God does to keep us on the right path?

A. He disciplines us.

Q. No one enjoys discipline, but the results are worth the price. What is the result of God's discipline? (v. 11)

A. Righteousness or right living.

Q. What does this discipline teach us about our relationship with God?

A. That we are truly His sons and daughters and that He truly loves us.

Q. Have you ever felt that God was "disciplining" you? How did you react? What did you learn? [It would be helpful to share your own experience here.]

*God not only puts pressure on us when we get away from right path, but He also brings other kinds of experiences into our life.*

**Read James 1:2-4**

Q. What does this passage say that God allows in our life?

A. Various trials

Q. What is your attitude to be toward trials?

A. Joy.

Q. Why?

A. They strengthen our faith, teach us perseverance, and bring about maturity in our lives. [Once again it would be good to share an example of this from your life.]

**Read Romans 8:28**

Q. What is another reason to be joyful about our trials?

A. Because God uses all events, even difficulties, to work for our good.

*God is more concerned about developing our character than providing for our comfort. There is no event of our lives that He does not allow for a purpose. This indicates two things about God's character. First is the sovereignty of God. God is in control of all the events of the world. The second is the providence of God; that is, He providentially allows events to affect us for our own good.*

**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

Q. What does this verse tell us to do even in trials?

A. Give thanks to God.

Q. Why can we give thanks for everything?

A. Because every circumstance we find ourselves in is from God and in His will.

*In this study we have seen that both we and God play a part in our growth toward Christlikeness. On the one hand, we need to spend time learning God's Word and building our relationship with Him through prayer. If we don't, our growth in Christ will be stifled. On the other hand, like a potter molding a lump of clay, God continues to put pressure on us, to shape us into the image of His Son even when we are rebellious or indifferent.*

**Assignment:** Read Psalm 119 and list the value of God's Word to you.

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