



APPNOTES

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Series: James: Faith That Works

1 Corinthians 13:11 As children, we did and said things that were inappropriate. The motivation behind these actions was usually steered by ignorance - not knowing better. As we grew, we learned that our childhood antics didn't cut it in the adult world. In this verse, spiritual growth is compared to growing up. Newer Christians don't automatically have spiritual maturity. They struggle with doubts, knowledge and actions. But, when we put our trust in the blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit begins to work in us to grow us spiritually. This is a long, slow process and for true growth we need both head knowledge and practical experience. We need to remain centered in Christ, trusting in Him fully and praying for Godly transformation. We'll still grapple with doubt and continue to fall short of God's perfection. But as we hold onto His promises and stay the course, we'll become less like the world and more like Christ. We grow through wisdom!

Ephesians 2:10 All my life I have struggled with my weight. I have researched and gone through every program. And while I still retain the knowledge I learned, application remains a problem. No matter how hard I think about how to become healthier, results will not come until I put those thoughts into practice. The same is true for spirituality. Head knowledge doesn't make you a Christian. When we're only hearers of the word, we are deceived into thinking that learning God's word by itself constitutes growth. This is an empty, dead faith - mere belief. This verse reminds us we need to move. God's love for us was not just something He felt, it was something He showed. The cross is a picture of God's love in action. God so loved the world that He gave! Real faith is demonstrated in real behavior. Following Jesus requires action. We grow through action!

Galatians 5:16 Ah, the expression, "the devil made me do it". I'm sure most of us have said or thought this more than a few times throughout our lives, as a way to exonerate ourselves from bad behavior. I know I have! As humans, it is our nature to find an excuse that takes away our accountability and places blame elsewhere. But, as soon as we put our trust in the blood of Christ on our behalf, we become new creations. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, help us overcome our sin, and deny our fleshly desires. We need to become less like the world and more like Jesus. Remember, faith is worthless when we claim to believe in our minds, but don't change our hearts and behavior. We

need to surrender to God's will. Humble reception of God's Word and the will to obey is essential. If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you. We grow through self-control!

Luke 9:23 We have all heard the saying, "you can't have your cake and eat it too." Growing up I heard this expression a lot! I never understood why I just couldn't have it both ways. In Luke 9:23, we are given the same message. If we want to be a disciple of Jesus, then we must deny ourselves. We can't hold onto to our worldly ways AND follow the path of Jesus. We need to choose. We can't deceive ourselves into thinking we could be Christians merely by believing the right things about Jesus. As a disciple, you not only have to believe that Christ is worth following, you also have to take steps of faith to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Him daily. A life devoted to do what's pleasing to God requires surrendering our wants and applying Christ's example to our lives. We grow through sacrifice!

1 Peter 5:10 As a child I was fearless. There was no tree I wouldn't climb, ramp I wouldn't jump, or rough sport I wouldn't play. This led to being covered in cuts and scrapes. When my Mom applied that 'awful stingy stuff' (as I called it), she told me to count to 10 and the burning would go away. 1 Peter 5:10 reminds us that our suffering will last just "a little while" before God restores us. God works through painful experiences to teach us empathy and to develop our character. No matter what we're going through during any season of our life, we're not alone. God is always on our side and we have peace knowing that we are gifted the ultimate victory in Christ Jesus. Call on God for wisdom and faith to endure in the midst of all our trials. Remember, pray hardest when it's hardest to pray. We grow through pain!

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