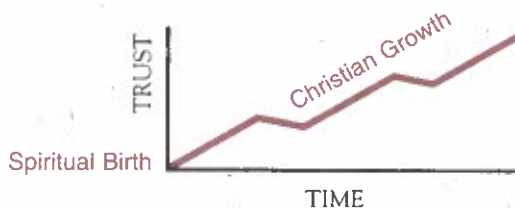


DEVELOPMENT

Previously we learned that the Holy Spirit desires to empower you to live a Christ-directed life. As you continue to breathe spiritually — exhale (confess your sin) and inhale (claim the empowering of the Spirit) — you will experience a deepening fellowship with God. This process will enable you to develop in Christian maturity.

Growth takes time — there are no shortcuts. Becoming mature is a life-long process.



Trusting God + Time = Spiritual Maturity

While spiritual maturity takes years of development in Christ, you can experience God's power and joy in your life even as a young, growing Christian.

I What does it mean to grow in Christ?

It means to increase in your knowledge of Christ, your love for Him and your obedience to Him.

Read John 17:3. *What does Jesus say is the essence of eternal life?*

Read Matthew 22:37,38. There are more than 600 commands in the Old Testament. *Why do you think Jesus singled out this one?*

Jesus' command to love God with all your being means to put God first in every area of your life. Amazingly, your deepening love for God will enable you to give greater love to your family and friends. Also you'll be better able to prioritize the demands on your life and experience a deeper purpose for living.



KEY QUESTION *What could keep you from putting God first in your life?*

Read John 14:21. *What will be a result of your growing love for Him?*



SUMMARY Growing in Christ means building a loving relationship with Him. As in any relationship, we must take time to get to know Him.