



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

Spiritual Growth

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Spring in Wisconsin is a time of growth as flowers emerge from their winter sleep and push their buds toward the heavens. The beauty of crocuses, daffodils and tulips makes the heart happy. Growth is good, and produces appreciable beauty. If there is no growth, we assume the bulbs died and are decaying in the earth. The absence of growth grieves our hearts.



Likewise, many will soon be planting gardens, even as the farmers till their fields and plant their crops. The farmer and the gardener both expect the seeds to sprout, the plants to emerge and grow, in hopes of a harvest in due time. A blighted field or a barren garden are sad to see, and speak of failure and death.

The physical world of plants teaches us about the spiritual world, as Jesus himself indicated. In John 12:24-25 the Savior says, ²⁴“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.” There are spiritual corollaries to material realities.

Spiritual growth is as necessary to vital Christianity as any doctrine you can name. For instance, if you were to deny the doctrine of justification by faith alone, that would be a deadly error. If you reject spiritual growth, that also is a fatal mistake. For as James reminds us that “faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.” Doctrinal correctness without

spiritual life is called “Dead Orthodoxy” and is dangerous to the soul.

This is not meant to diminish the central importance of doctrine, and especially the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It is simply to say that real Christians cannot ignore, reject, spurn or repudiate spiritual growth.

This duty of growth was urged by Peter upon his readers in the last verses of his second epistle, where he wrote “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” Spiritual growth is normal for Christians, and brings much glory to the Triune God.

Likewise, Peter urged the readers of his first epistle to crave the means of grace as a way to stimulate spiritual growth. In 1 Peter 2:2 we read, “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,”

Paul also wanted the Ephesians to grow spiritually. In Ephesians 4:15 “but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, *even* Christ...” Over time, believers should grow up in all respects, even as we are increasingly conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ. A failure to mature is a grievous thing which should cause concern.

So how does one grow spiritually?

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Volume 14, Issue 5

May 2019

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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, May 14th*

Prayer That Matters

By John Shaw

When we as believers face a difficult providence or a complex problem, we might turn to a brother or sister in Christ and ask, “What should I do?” With godly wisdom, our friend responds, “Pray!” We recognize the wisdom of this friend’s advice—of course we should pray—and yet we often still find ourselves asking ourselves the same question again: “What should I *do*?”

Peter and John faced such a situation in Acts 4. They were arrested, threatened, and charged “not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” (v. 18). There were many ways for these two Apostles to respond: they could flee, hide, speak, or remain silent. What should they have done? Their response as explained in verses 23–24 is remarkable when we consider the context. Immediately upon their release, they went to their friends—this new community of believers, now their friends in Christ—how wonderful! And together, they prayed.

The Apostles understood prayer to be kingdom warfare. When these followers of Jesus gathered to pray in Jerusalem, they were involved in battle, actively engaging in the work of the church. Their prayer was driven by the gospel, as it was filled with gospel content; and their prayer was driven by kingdom interests, as they sought strength to be instruments of the Holy Spirit in the advance of the church. In studying this passage, we can grow in our practice of gospel-driven, kingdom-centered prayer.

GOSPEL-DRIVEN PRAYER

When the disciples prayed together in Acts 4, they chose words saturated with the content of the gospel. We see a prayer framed by the character, words, and work of God.

They began with a reflection on the character of God (v. 24). They remembered the truth of who God is. They cried out to the Sovereign Lord, a title used also for despots and dictators. Maybe that choice of title surprises us, but it surely matched their present need. Peter and John had been threatened by earthly rulers who possessed great power, but they cried out to the Sovereign Lord of the universe who possesses all power and authority (Dan. 7:13–14, 26–27; Matt. 28:18–20). He created all things—“who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them”—and He sustains all things.

We can be sure they didn’t choose this title by mistake. Remembering that their God is the Sovereign Lord of the universe met their need head on. They faced a real threat, and they needed to know whether the Lord was powerful and able to care for them. Of course, He was—and remains—able. The rulers who threatened them were merely creatures, but the Apostles served the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and the nations and rulers serve as His footstool. He was able.

They reflected on who God is, but they also remembered what God had said. “Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed” (Acts 4:25–26). They recited the first two verses of Psalm 2. Do you remember how the Lord responds to the raging and plotting of the nations according to this psalm? Seated on His throne in heaven, He laughs (Ps. 2:4). God reminds His people in Psalm 2 that He not only creates and sustains all things, but He rules over all things, including the nations. The gentiles rage, but the Lord reigns. The peoples plot, but the Lord prevails. No matter how powerful are the rulers and nations, when they plot and rebel against the Lord, they are fighting a losing battle.

In their prayer, the brothers and sisters who were with Peter and John prayed the words of God back to God. They took confidence in the words of God. The Lord has spoken, and He always does what He says He will do. “Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens” (Ps. 119:89).

The prayer didn’t finish there. They reflected on who God is. They remembered what God had said. Finally, they recorded what God has done. In particular, they recorded how God fulfilled the words of Psalm 2 through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Notice the clear parallels to Psalm 2 in the words of Acts 4:27. In the same city of Jerusalem in which these believers prayed, enemies had earlier gathered against the Lord’s Anointed, Jesus Christ. Those enemies included Herod and Pontius Pilate (a king and a ruler), gentiles (or nations), and the peoples of Israel.

Yet even in this apparent display of power, the rulers and people groups simply carried out the Lord’s plan, doing what He had predestined would take place (v. 28). Those events in Jerusalem were no accident.

Continued on next page...

Prayer That Matter Continued....

God spoke His plan, and God accomplished His plan. And what plan of the Lord was accomplished? The angry actions of this mob set in motion the events that led to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by which the Lord perfectly saves His people.

In other words, this was a prayer saturated with the truth of the gospel. The righteous, holy, all-powerful God redirected the sinful actions of an angry world to accomplish salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ. That is the God to whom they prayed, and only that God was able to meet the needs of the church in that moment of crisis. This was a gospel-driven prayer.

KINGDOM-CENTERED PRAYER

This was also a kingdom-centered prayer. Maybe you noticed that to this point, the believers in Jerusalem made no requests. They simply recounted the character, words, and work of God. Only in verse 29 do we read that they asked for anything. Before considering their requests, though, it might be helpful to consider what they *did not* ask for. They never asked for safety, protection, or deliverance. In fact, they assumed that persecution will continue.

For that reason, they first asked for perseverance and boldness: “Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness” (v. 29). They assumed the threats would continue, and that is indeed what happened. So, they asked the Lord to give them perseverance to continue to proclaim the gospel with boldness despite the threats of the opposition. Their greatest desire was not safety or deliverance, but strength to keep on doing the work of the kingdom in the midst of persecution.

Second, they asked for the Lord to act in clear and convincing ways: “grant to your servants to continue to speak . . . while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus” (v. 30). In fact, they didn’t actually ask the Lord to act. Rather, they assumed that He would act—they would speak, but the Lord would act. They knew He would act because of the truth of the gospel that filled their prayer: they knew His character, His words, and His work. They also knew the Lord would act because they prayed through the powerful name of His holy servant Jesus, who was crucified on the cross, raised from the dead, and presently sits at the right hand of God with the nations at His feet.

The Lord answered and acted immediately in response to their prayer. He responded with signs and wonders, as the place in which they were gathered was shaken. He also gave them perseverance, filling them with the Holy Spirit as they “continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (v. 31). The prayer in Acts 4 is clearly a kingdom-centered prayer. Rather than seeking deliverance from persecution, the disciples, with Peter and John, asked the Lord to act through their Spirit-filled, persistent witness. Praise the Lord, that is exactly what He did, and through their witness He built the church.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH TODAY

We live in a world broken by the fall, with constant reminders of the dreadful impact of sin and its results. News outlets regularly tell stories of disaster, violence, and death. Whether from political leaders or from those who shape the cultural ideas of the moment or from our neighbors, we are reminded that the message of God’s Word is rarely welcome in the public square. In fact, the private sphere where the Bible is welcome is continually shrinking and under attack.

The church in a hostile world needs the kind of prayer found in Acts 4. Believers need to raise our voices together in regular gospel-driven, kingdom-centered prayer. We need prayers that are filled with the content of the gospel—prayers that recount who God is, what God has said, what God has done, and what He has promised to do. We need prayers that are centered on the kingdom—prayers that ask God to give us perseverance to speak the Word of God with boldness and that ask Him to act powerfully through our witness. We can pray with confidence because we speak to the God who redirects the sinful acts of men and women to accomplish His salvific purposes through Jesus Christ. He was present with His church as they prayed in Acts 4, and He continues to be present with us today as we lift our voices together. He continues to save a people for Himself, and we are instruments in His powerful saving arm. We must pray to that end.

Rev. John Shaw is general secretary for the OPC Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension.

<https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/prayer-that-matters/>



ANCHOR OF HOPE

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If you have any questions regarding your donation, feel free to contact our center at 920-335-8335.

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Baby Gates
Crib Sheets
Bibs
Baby shampoo, conditioner, & soap
Toys & puzzles
Diapers Size Newborn
High chairs
Diaper Bags
Sound machines
Monitors
Brand new car seats
Brand new full-size crib
Brand new full-size crib mattress
Baby/toddler toiletry items
Adult shampoo & conditioner
Kid's toothpaste
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Good News Jail and Prison Ministry Banquet

Mark Your Calendar - You are invited to attend the 16th Annual Good News Jail & Prison Ministry 2019 Banquet. It will be held on Tuesday, May 7th at 6:00 p.m. at the Blue Harbor Resort Conference Center. Gary Franz, VP, International Ministry will be the guest speaker. Tickets are FREE; however, a free will offering will be received to support this ministry. Contact Jack De Troye for tickets. 920-946-0103



“There may be some sins of which a man cannot speak, but there is no sin which the blood of Christ cannot wash away.”

Charles Spurgeon

John Ploughman

Chapter 17: A Good Word for Wives

We pulled up the horses in the last chapter at the sign of the "Good Woman"; and as there is good entertainment for man if not for beast under that sign, we will make a stay of it and dip our pen into some of that superfine ink which has no galls in it. When he writes on so fair a subject, John Ploughman must be on his best behavior.

It is astonishing how many old sayings there are against wives; you may find nineteen to the dozen of them. Years ago the men showed the rough side of their tongues whenever they spoke of their spouses. Some of these sayings are downright shocking; for instance, that very wicked one, "Every man has two good days with his wife the day he marries her, and the day he buries hers; and that other, "He that loseth his wife and a farthing has a great loss of the farthing."

I recollect an old ballad that Gaffer Brooks used to sing about a man's being better hanged than married, which shows how common it was to abuse the married life. It is almost too bad to print it, but here it is, as near as I remember it:

"There was a victim in a cart,
One day for to be hung,
And his reprieve was granted,
And the cart made for to stand.
'Come marry a wife, and save your life,'
The judge aloud did cry;
'Oh, why should I corrupt my life?'
The victim did reply.
'For here's a crowd of every sort,
And why should I prevent their sport?
The bargain's bad in every part,
The wife's the worst drive on the cart."

Now this rubbish does not prove that the women are bad, but that their husbands are good for nothing or else they would not make up such abominable slanders about their partners. The rottenest bough cracks first, and it looks as if the male side of the house was the worse of the two, for it certainly has made up the most grumbling proverbs. No doubt there have been some shockingly bad wives in the world who have been provoking enough to make a man say, "If a woman were as little as she is good, a pea shell would make her a gown and a hood." But how many thousands have there been of true helpmeets, worth far more than their weight in gold! There is only one Job's wife mentioned in the Bible and one Jezebel, but there are no end of Sarahs and Rebekahs. I am of Solomon's mind that, as a rule, "He that findeth a wife findeth a good things If there's one bad shilling taken at the grocer's, all the neighbors hear of it, but of the hundreds of good ones the report says nothing. A good woman makes no noise, and no noise is made about her, but a shrew is noted all over the parish. Taking them for all in all, they are most angelical creatures, and a great deal too good for half the husbands.

It is much to the women's credit that there are very few old sayings against husbands; although, in this case, sauce for the goose could make capital sauce for the gander, and the mare has as good reasons for kicking as the horse has. They must be very forbearing, or they would have given the men a Roland for every Oliver. Pretty dears, they may be rather quick in their talk, but is it not the nature of bells and belles to have tongues that swing easy? They cannot be so very bad after all, or they would have had their revenge for the many cruel things which are said against them. If they are a bit masterful, their husbands cannot be such very great victims, or they would surely have sense enough to hold their tongues about it. Men don't care to have it known when they are thoroughly henpecked, and I feel pretty certain that the old sayings are nothing but chaff, for if they were true, men would never dare to admit it.

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A true wife is her husband's better half, his lump of delight, his flower of beauty, his guardian angel, and his heart's treasure. He says to her, gI shall in thee most happy be. In thee, my choice, I do rejoice. In thee I find content of mind. God's appointment is my contentment." In her company he finds his earthly heaven; she is the light of his home, the comfort of his soul, and (for this world) the soul of his comfort. Whatever fortune may send him, he is rich so long as she lives. His rib is the best bone in his body.

A good husband makes a good wife. Some men can neither do without wives nor with them; they are wretched alone in what is called single blessedness, and they make their homes miserable when they get married. They are like Tompkin's dog which could not bear to be loose but howled when it was tied up. Happy bachelors are likely to be happy husbands, and a happy husband is the happiest of men. A well matched couple carry a joyful life between them, as the two spies carried the cluster of grapes. They are a brace of birds of paradise. They multiply their joys by sharing them and lessen their troubles by dividing them; this is fine arithmetic. The wagon of care rolls lightly along as they pull together; and when it drags a little heavily or there's a hitch anywhere, they love each other all the more and so lighten the labor.

When a couple fall out, there are always faults on both sides, and generally there is a pound on one and sixteen ounces on the other. When a home is miserable, it is as often the husband's fault as the wifely Darby is as much to blame as Joan, and sometimes more. If the husband won't keep sugar in the cupboard, no wonder his wife gets sour. Lack of bread makes lack of love; lean dogs fight. Poverty generally rides home on the husband's back, for it is not often the woman's place to go out working for wages. A man down our way gave his wife a ring with this on it, "If thee don't work, thee shan't eat." He was a brute. It is no business of hers to bring in the flour: she is to see it is well-used and not wasted. Therefore, I say, short commons are not her fault. She is not the breadwinner, but the breadmaker. She earns more at home than any wages she can get abroad.

It is not the wife who smokes and drinks away the wages at the "Brown Bear" or the "Jolly Toppers." One sees a drunken woman now and then, and it's an awful sight; but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it is the man who comes home tipsy and abuses the children—the woman seldom does that. The poor drudge of a wife is a teetotaller, whether she likes it or not, and gets plenty of hot water as well as cold. Women are found fault with for often looking into the glass, but that is not so bad a glass as men drown their senses in. The wives do not sit boozing over the taproom fire; they, poor souls, are shivering at home with the baby, watching the clock (if there is one), wondering when their lords and masters will come home, and crying while they wait. I wonder they don't strike. Some of them are about as wretched as a beetle on a pin or a mouse in a cat's mouth. They have to nurse the sick girl, and wash the dirty boy, and bear with the crying and noise of the children, while his lordship puts on his hat, lights his pipe, and goes off about his own pleasure, or comes in at his own time to find fault with his poor dame for not getting him a fine supper. How could he expect to be fed like a fighting-cock when he brought home so little money on Saturday night and spent so much in worshipping Sir John Barleycorn? I say it, and I know it, there's many a house where there would be no scolding wife if there was not a skulking, guzzling husband. Fellows not fit to be cut up for mops drink and drink till all is blue, and then turn on their poor hacks for not having more to give them. Don't tell me I say it and will maintain it—a woman can't help being vexed when, with all her mending and striving, she can't keep house because her husband won't let her. It would provoke any of us if we had to make bricks without straw, keep the pot boiling without fire, and pay the piper out of an empty purse. What can she get out of the oven when she has neither meal nor dough? You bad husbands, you are thoroughbred sneaks and ought to be hung up by your heels till you know better.

They say a man of straw is worth a woman of gold, but I cannot swallow it; a man of straw is worth no more than a woman of straw. Let old sayings lie as they like, Jack is no better than Jill, as a rule. When there is wisdom in the husband, there's generally gentleness in the wife; and between them, the old wedding wish is worked out: "One year of joy, another of comfort, and all the rest of contents Where hearts agree, there joy will be. United hearts only death parts. They say marriage is not often *merry-age*, but very commonly *mar-age*; well, if so, the coat and waistcoat have as much to do with it as the gown and petticoat. The honeymoon need not come to an end; and when it does, it is often the man's fault for eating all the honey and leaving nothing but moonshine. When they both agree that whatever becomes of the moon, they will each keep up their share of honey, there's meaty living.

When a man dwells under the sign of the cat's foot where faces get scratched, either his wife did not

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marry a man, or he did not marry a woman. If a man cannot take care of himself, his wit must be as scant as the wool of a blue dog. I don't pity most of the men martyrs; I save my pity for the women. When the Dunmow porker is lost, neither of the pair will eat the bacon; but the wife is the most likely to fast for the lack of it. Every herring must hang by its own gill, and every person must account for his own share in home quarrels; but John Ploughman can't bear to see all the blame laid on the women. Whenever a dish is broken, the cat did it; and whenever there is mischief, there's a woman at the bottom of it: here are two as pretty lies as you will meet within a month's march. There's a "why" for every "wherefore," but the why for family stores does not always lie with the housekeeper. I know some women have long tongues, then the more's the pity that the husbands should set them going. As for the matter of talk just look into a bar when the men's jaws are well oiled with liquor, and if any woman living can talk faster or be more stupid than the men, my name is not John Ploughman.

When I had got about as far as this, in stepped our minister, and he said, "John, you've got a tough subject, a cut above you; I'll lend you a rare old book to help you over the stile." "Well, sir," said I, 'A little help is worth a great deal of fault-finding, and I shall be uncommonly obliged to you.

He sent me down old William Seeker's *Wedding Ring*, and a real wise fellow that Seeker was. I could not do any other than pick out some of his pithy bits; they are very flavorful and such as are likely to glue themselves to the memory. He says, "Hast thou a soft heart? It is of God's breaking. Hast thou a sweet wife? She is of God's making. The Hebrews have a saying, 'He is not a man that hath not a woman.' Though man alone may be good, yet it is not good that man should be alone. 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.' A wife, though she be not a perfect gift, is a good gift, a beam darted from the Sun of mercy. How happy are those marriages If where Christ is at the wedding! Let none but those who have found favor in God's eyes find favor in yours. Husbands should spread a mantle of charity over their wives' infirmities. Do not put out the candle because of the snuff. Husbands and wives should provoke one another to love, and they should love one another notwithstanding provocations. The tree of love should grow up in the midst of the family as the tree of life grew in the garden of Eden. Good servants are a great blessing; good children a greater blessing; but a good wife is the greatest blessing; and such a help let him seek for her that wants one; let him sigh for her that hath lost one; let him delight in her that enjoys one."

To come down from the old Puritan's roast beef to my own pot herbs, or, as they say, to put Jack after gentleman, I will tell my own experience, and have done. My experience of my first wife, who will I hope live to be my last, is much as follows: matrimony came from paradise and leads to it. I never was half so happy before I was a married man as I am now. When you are married, your bliss begins. I have no doubt that where there is much love, there will be much to love; and where love is scant, faults will be plentiful. If there is only one good wife in England, I am the man who put the ring on her finger, and long may she wear it. God bless the dear soul if she can put up with me; she shall never be put down by me.

If I were not married today and saw a suitable partner, I would be married tomorrow morning before breakfast. What think you of that? why," says one, "I think John would get a new wife if he were left a widower." Well, and what if he did, how could he better show that he was happy with his first? I declare I would not say, as some do, that they married to have someone to look after the children; I should marry to have some one to look after myself John Ploughman is a sociable soul, and could not do in a house by himself. One man, when he married his fourth wife, engraved in the ring—

"If I survive,
I'll make it five."

What an old Bluebeard! Marriages are made in heaven: matrimony in itself is good, but there are fools who turn meat into poison and make a blessing into a curse. "This is a good roped said Pedley, "I'll hang myself with it." A man who has sought his wife from God and married her for her character, not merely for her figurehead, may look for a blessing on his choice. They who join their love in God above, who pray to love, and love to pray, will find that love and joy will never cloy.

He who respects his wife will find that she respects him. With what measure he metes, it shall be measured to him again, good measure, pressed down, and running over. He who consults his spouse will have

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a good counselor. I have heard our minister say, "Women's instincts are often truer than man's reason"; they jump at a thing at once and are wise offhand. Say what you will of your wife's advice, it's as likely as not you will be sorry you did not take it. He who speaks ill of women should remember the breast he was nursed at and be ashamed of himself. He who ill treats his wife ought to be whipped at the cart tail, and would not I like a cut at him! I would just brush a fly or two off, trust me for that. So no more at present, as the thatcher said when he had cleared every dish on the table.

May Birthdays

Gracie Froh	6th
Jean Wilke	6th
Steve Boss	9th
Ivan De Master	16th
Linda Damkot	17th
Stuart Ver Velde	17th
Scott Onnink	20th
Deborah Arndt	27 th



May Anniversaries

Warren & Mary Gillmer
~May 31st~





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

May 2019



Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website:
graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@ids.net

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Session Meeting	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Slow Cooker Chicken & Biscuits

Ingredients:

- 3 chicken breasts, diced
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 cups broccoli floret
- 2 cups baby carrot, diced
- 21 oz condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 can refrigerated biscuit

Instructions:

Place the chicken in a 7-quart (6 1/2 liters) slow cooker. Sprinkle on salt & pepper.

Add the veggies and condensed soup, and mix thoroughly.

Cook on high for 3 hours.

Rip biscuit dough into small pieces, and drop evenly over chicken. Cook an additional hour. Enjoy!



*“For He
has satisfied
the thirsty soul,
and the
hungry soul
He has filled
with what
is good.”*



Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

Grace OPC

Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
revbriandjong@gmail.com

CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

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Spurgeon

“I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

2 Corinthians 6:16

Corner

What a sweet title: “My people!” What a cheering revelation: “Their God!” How much of meaning is couched in those two words, “My people!” Here is *speciality*. The whole world is God's; the heaven, even the heaven of heavens is the Lord's, and he reigneth among the children of men; but of those whom he hath chosen, whom he hath purchased to himself, he saith what he saith not of others—“My people.” In this word there is the idea of *proprietorship*. In a special manner the “Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” All the nations upon earth are his; the whole world is in his power; yet are his people, his chosen, more

especially his possession; for he has done more for them than others; he has bought them with his blood; he has brought them nigh to himself; he has set his great heart upon them; he has loved them with an everlasting love, a love which many waters cannot quench, and which the revolutions of time shall never suffice in the least degree to diminish. Dear friends, can you, by faith, see yourselves in that number? Can you look up to heaven and say, “My Lord and my God: mine by that sweet *relationship* which entitles me to call thee Father; mine by that hallowed *fellowship* which I delight to hold with thee when thou art pleased to manifest thyself unto me as thou dost not unto the world?” Canst thou read the Book of Inspiration, and find there the indentures of thy salvation? Canst thou read thy title writ in precious blood? Canst thou, by humble faith, lay hold of Jesus’ garments, and say, “My Christ”? If thou canst, then God saith of thee, and of others like thee, “My people;” for, if God be your God, and Christ your Christ, the Lord has a special, peculiar favour to you; you are the object of his choice, accepted in his beloved Son.

Morning, May 5th, C.H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded...

Paul gives us a clear hint in 1 Corinthians 3:6, where he states that “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.” God is the one who ultimately brings about our growth. No mere man can stimulate or control the growth of anything – physically speaking or spiritually speaking. God causes the growth – that’s a fact of the universe that nothing can change.

How does God normally work? Through the means of grace – the reading/hearing/preaching of the Bible, through times of prayer, through the sacraments, through fellowship and even through church discipline. God makes those means effective for bringing about our growth.

All of this comes back around to the importance of church involvement in the life of

the believer. If a Christian does not become involved in a congregation of like-minded believers, he will find it hard to mature in the faith. If he dives into a good church and is involved, he normally and naturally begins to grow.

When spiritual growth is taking place, God is pleased, the church enjoys peaceful seasons of ministry, the good news goes to the lost, and broken people are cared for and loved. And as growth takes place in some, it often stimulates growth in others. In this way, we all move toward maturity in Christ.