

STEPS TO GROWING SPIRITUALLY

The Christian life is a journey of growth.

After being a Christ follower for a few years, there should be evidences of growth in our relationship with Jesus.

Howard Hendricks: *“If you have stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow.”*

Jesus once told a story in the Bible, where He gave some antidotes to four common barriers that keep us from growing spiritually.

Luke 8:4-15 (niv)

**PART 1: To grow spiritually, we must be
RECEPTIVE to Jesus.**

Growth is a choice. We must **want** to grow.

Luke 8:5 (niv) “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up.

Jesus gives the meaning of vs 5.

*Luke 8:12 (tlb) The **hard path** where some seed fell represents the hard hearts of those who hear the Words of God, but then the devil comes and steals the*

words away and prevents people from believing and being saved.

Jesus says people can be unresponsive to Him because their hearts are hard and closed towards Him.

They have a hardening of the attitude and are closed minded to Jesus.

As a Christ follower, don't allow your minds to be closed and your hearts to become hard towards Jesus. We will not be responsive to Jesus out of this condition.

The hardened path represents a closed mind and there are at least two causes of this:

1. People close their minds to Jesus because of PRIDE.

Pride keeps us from being receptive to God. Sometimes we just don't think we need Jesus. We think, *"I can solve my problems by myself."*

People have fallen away from living for Jesus because of willful sin.

***James 1:21* (gw) So get rid of all immoral behavior and all the wicked things you do. Humbly accept the Word that God has placed in you. This Word can save you.**

If we don't think we need Jesus, then we are not going to be receptive to Him.

2. People close their minds to Jesus because of **HURT**.

“If Jesus allowed that to happen to me, no thanks, Jesus!”

“If this is Christianity, and if this is Jesus, then no thanks, you can have it!”

Hurt, rejection and grief that is not properly worked through and result in resentment and bitterness.

We cannot grow and have bitterness at the same time.

Bitterness is the spiritual cancer. It will spread and suffocate any sign of growth.

Let your pain turn you toward Jesus where He can comfort you. Be responsive to Him.

Never let another person or another experience get between you and Jesus.

This will become an obstacle to growing spiritually.

When we hold onto hurt, and resentment sets in, our hearts and minds can become unresponsive to Jesus.

Psalm 46:1 (niv) God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Psalms 147:3 (nlt) He heals the broken-hearted and bandages their wounds.

If we want to grow spiritually, we first have to say, “Jesus I want to be receptive to You.”

Psalm 51:10 (nlt) Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.