

Kingdom Expansion through Multiplication

Part 6

INTERNAL GROWTH

KEY VERSE:

And... holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. (Colossians 1:19)

INTRODUCTION

In the last teaching you learned there are four types of growth in God's plan for multiplication of the church.

The Church is to multiply through internal, expansion, extension, and bridging growth.

This lesson focuses on the internal growth of the Church.

INTERNAL GROWTH

When we speak of "internal growth" of the Church, we are referring to the spiritual growth and development of its members.

The Church grows spiritually in proportion to the growth of its individual members.

The Church must not only grow in quantity through extension, expansion, and bridging growths, it must also grow in quality.

Growth in quality is internal or spiritual growth.

Paul referred to this process, comparing it to internal growth in the natural body:

And...holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. (Colossians 1:19)

The "increase of God" refers to spiritual growth.

As members grow spiritually, the Church experiences internal growth.

The entire Body is nourished and increases with the increase of God.

Spiritual growth is an increase in spiritual maturity which results in the development of the Christ-life in the believer.

It is growth in the knowledge of Jesus:

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...(2 Peter 3:18)

It is growth in Jesus:

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)

Spiritual growth means decrease of self and increase in the life of Christ in you:

He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30)

Decreasing yourself comes automatically when you INCREASE Jesus!

Spiritual growth does not come automatically as a result of the length of time one has been a believer.

It is the result of the development of the Christ-life in a believer.

Evidences of spiritual growth include:

1. An increase in spiritual knowledge.
2. Proper application of that knowledge to life and ministry.
3. A deeper delight in spiritual things.
4. A greater love for God and others.
5. Development of Christ-like spiritual qualities (spiritual fruit).
6. An increase in desire and ability to share the Gospel with others.
7. Development and effective use of spiritual gifts.

Growth is the natural result of life.

If there is spiritual life in a church, internal growth will result as well as expansion, extension, and bridging growths.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND INTERNAL GROWTH

In the last teaching you learned of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the church.

The Holy Spirit:

- Formed the Church.
- Inspires its worship.
- Directs its missionary activities.
- Selects its ministers.
- Anoints its preachers.
- Guides its decisions.
- Baptizes it with power.

In addition to these ministries in the Church, the Holy Spirit has important functions in relation to the internal growth of the Church.

These include:

CONVICTION OF SIN:

Spiritual growth is hindered by not understanding that we are one with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit convicts unbelievers of sin and believers of righteousness in Christ:

And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Of sin, because they believe not in me;

Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and ye see me no more;

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. (John 16:8-11)

When the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, we can then follow the command...

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

This is for the unrighteous people that do not know Jesus.

REGENERATION:

"Regeneration" means change.

The Holy Spirit changes the lives of believers.

Such change brings internal growth:

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. (Titus 3:5)

SANCTIFICATION:

Sanctification means to "separate unto God."

This separation results in spiritual growth:

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation **through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth... (2 Thessalonians 2:13)**

INDWELLING:

The Holy Spirit indwells or lives in the life of believers.

The purpose of this indwelling is to strengthen the new nature received through salvation:

What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of **the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (I Corinthians 6:19)**

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit**, (and the result will be that) ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;

and these are contrary one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

But if ye be **led by the Spirit**, ye are not under the law.
(Galatians 5:16-18)

STRENGTHENING:

Strength and growth are related.

You become strong as you grow. It takes strength to grow.

Internal growth comes through the strengthening of the Holy Spirit:

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. (Ephesians 3:16)

UNITY:

Unity brings internal growth in the Church:

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. (I Corinthians 6:17)

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body: so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:12-13)

INTERCESSION:

The intercession of the Spirit builds up the believer spiritually:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. (Jude 20)

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

GUIDANCE:

The Holy Spirit guides believers into the truth of God's Word which brings spiritual growth:

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. (John 16:13)

For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (gr. these sons are of God) (Romans 8:14)

REVELATION:

The Holy Spirit reveals the truths of God's Word to a believer which results in spiritual growth:

But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10)

LOVE:

People grow spiritually in an atmosphere of Agape love:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the (Agape) love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

(Romans 5:5)

CONFORMING:

The Holy Spirit is at work internally to conform believers to the image of Jesus:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (II Corinthians 3:18)

TEACHING:

We grow spiritually as we grow in the knowledge of God.

The Holy Spirit is our resident teacher:

But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him. (1 John 2:27)

ASSURANCE:

Doubt hinders spiritual growth.

The Holy Spirit eliminates doubt by giving assurance of salvation:

The Spirit itself beareth witness, with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)

And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us. (I John 3:24)

LIBERTY:

Restrictions limit growth.

The Holy Spirit gives liberty from sin and traditions of man:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

COMFORTING:

Depression and discouragement hinder spiritual growth.

The Holy Spirit provides comfort:

...and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost...(Acts 9:31) [Fundamentally, 5401(Strong's Concordance) /*phóbos* ("fear")]

means *withdraw* (separate from), i.e. flee (remove oneself) and hence to *avoid* because of *dread* (fright).]

Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you...

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

(John 14:17, 26)

QUICKENING:

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus was to raise Him from the dead.

The same Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you. The Spirit is able to quicken (empower, give new life, resurrect) your mortal body:

But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11)

If you do not mature spiritually, you become spiritually "dormant." The growth process ceases.

It is the power of the Holy Spirit that quickens you again to spiritual life.

DEMONSTRATING POWER:

Paul said:

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power;

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (I Corinthians 2:4-5)

The demonstration of power by the Holy Spirit increases your faith in God.

EMPOWERING FOR WITNESSING:

The special power to witness is the true evidence that one has been baptized in the Holy Spirit:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Spiritually mature believers will be reproductive witnesses of the Gospel.

BAPTIZING:

The Church experiences internal growth through the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

Baptism in the Holy Spirit results in the development of spiritual gifts and fruit in the lives of believers.

GIVING SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

Spiritual gifts are important to the internal growth of the Church because they "edify" believers. To "edify" means to "build up and promote spiritual growth."

DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Spiritual fruit is the nature of the Spirit revealed in the life of the believer.

It refers to spiritual qualities which should be evident in the lives of all believers.

Spiritual fruit is the **evidence** of spiritual growth.

Like fruit in the natural world, it is a product which results from the process of life.

Just as fruit takes time to develop in the natural world, spiritual fruit takes time to develop.

It is the product of internal growth in the life of the believer.

Here is a list of the spiritual fruit of the Holy Spirit:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

God wants you to grow in:

- **Love:** Deep affection, care, and concern.
- **Joy:** Gladness, delight, and jubilation which is not dependent on the circumstances of life. **Peace:** Quiet, calm, harmony; absence of strife, anxiety, and concern.
- **Longsuffering:** Patience--the ability to cheerfully bear an unbearable situation; endurance.
- **Gentleness:** A mild manner; not severe, violent or loud; quiet, respectful kindness to others.
- **Goodness:** Acts of holiness and righteousness.

- **Faith:** An attitude of confidence towards God.
- **Meekness:** Controlled strength.
- **Temperance:** Moderation in emotions, thoughts, and actions; self-control.*

CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

In the natural world there are certain conditions required for growth and development of fruit.

These natural conditions are parallels of spiritual factors necessary for growth of the fruit of spiritual maturity. Here are some of the parallels:

LIFE:

- Growth is impossible without life.
- Fruit development starts from a seed.
- There must be life in the seed, or it will not grow.
- In the parable of the sower, the "seed" is the Word of God.

Growth comes through the seed of the Word:

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. (1 Peter 2:2)

Jesus was the visible manifestation of the Word of God, the Seed, and in Him was life: In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself. (John 5:26)

Jesus came to plant this seed of life in us to enable our spiritual growth: I come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

PROPER SOIL:

The seed of the Word of God must have good soil in order to develop properly.

Read the parable of the sower in Mark 4.

Only the seed which fell on good ground brought spiritual growth:

And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. (Mark 4:20)

You must prepare the "ground" of your heart and mind to receive the seed of the Word of God.

WATER:

Water is necessary for growth in the natural world. God promised:

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon dry ground. (Isaiah 44:3)

This pouring out is an anointing of the Holy Spirit of which water is a symbol:

I will pour out of my spirit upon your seed. (Isaiah 44:3 Amplified Version)

He that believeth on me, the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)

The water of the Holy Spirit causes the seed of the Word of God to take root in the hearts of men and women who are spiritually dead:

For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. (Job 14:7-9)

LIGHT:

It is a response to light that causes growth in the natural world.

Spiritual growth occurs in response to spiritual light.

That light is Jesus:

In Him was life, and life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)

AIR:

Air is drawn in by the natural plant from the atmosphere which surrounds it.

Air is necessary to growth.

In the Bible the Holy Spirit is compared to air or a wind:

The wind breathes where it will and thou canst hear the sound of it: But knowest nothing of the way it came or the way it goes. So it is when a man is born of the breath of the spirit. (John 3:8 Knox Translation)

The Holy Spirit breathes life into the Seed of the Word of God.

Spiritual growth and fruit development result.

SPACE:

In the parable of the sower, competition for space caused some plants to die:

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22)

The competition of the things of the world chokes the seed of the Word of God and prevents spiritual growth.

REST:

A period of rest (called dormancy) occupies a specific season of the development cycle of plants in the natural world.

It is a time of rest for the plant and is the season that precedes the springtime of rapid growth.

During dormancy, the plant looks like it is dead.

But it is not dead.

The seed of life is still alive within.

Sometimes an individual or a church may appear as though it is not growing spiritually.

But if the seed of the Word of God has been properly planted, internal growth will occur in time (Psalms 1).

Just as in the natural world, spiritual dormancy precedes the period of rapid growth and development.

Wait patiently for the process of internal growth to multiply spiritual fruit:

Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain. (James 5:7)

ROOT SYSTEM:

Roots are necessary to anchor and supply nutrients to the plant.

Psalms 1 tells how to develop the root system in your spiritual life:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doeth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalms 1:1-3)

DEATH:

Every time you plant a seed to produce fruit, it does not come to life unless it dies first:

Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (John 12:24)

Every time you plant a seed, you sow something that does not come to life

(germinating, springing up, and growing) unless it dies first.

(I Corinthians 15:36 The Amplified Version)

Spiritual life depends on death to the things of the world. It requires death to sin, worldly desires, and pleasures.

Death to the world results in the development of the fruit of Christ-likeness in your life.

ATTACHED TO THE VINE:

In order to bear fruit in the natural world a branch must be attached to the main plant.

If the branch is broken off from the main life-giving vine or trunk it will not bear fruit.

Jesus is the vine and we are the branches.

In order to bear spiritual fruit we must maintain our relationship to Him:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

(John 15:1-5)

PRUNING:

Pruning is necessary in the natural world if a plant is to remain reproductive and bear fruit.

When a farmer prunes a plant he cuts off the unproductive branches in order to make the plant produce more fruit.

He removes everything which would hinder the growth of the plant.

Pruning is also necessary in the spiritual world.

Spiritual pruning is correction by God.

The Bible also calls it chastisement.

When God "prunes" He removes from your life everything which would hinder your spiritual growth.

This process is necessary if you are to bear spiritual fruit:

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. (John 15:2)

Sometimes you do not reap the benefits of pruning because you blame Satan when God is actually the one bringing circumstances into your life to correct (prune) you.

The purpose of God's correction is given in Hosea 6:1:

Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten and He will bind us up. (Hosea 6:1)

The chastisement of pruning results in a return to God.

Only by returning to Him will you become spiritually reproductive and bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

CLIMATE:

Climate is important to the development of fruit.

In the natural world many types of fruit are developed in environments that are specially controlled.

They are grown in buildings called "hot houses" at specific temperatures.

They are protected from the real environment of the outside world.

If you take a "hot house" plant and move it outside, it will soon die because it has lived only in a controlled environment.

It cannot withstand the environment of the real world.

Spiritually speaking, you do not want "hot house" Christians who look good in controlled settings but wilt on contact with the real world.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. When a plant is near death in the natural world, it must be revived. When a Church is near spiritual death, revival is also necessary.

To revive is to "regain life and flourish anew."

Study the following references:

- **A cry for revival:** Psalms 85:6
- **God's plan for revival:** II Chronicles 7:14

Study the following accounts of revivals in the Old Testament.

What were the factors that brought revival?

What were the results of each revival?

- The revival at Sinai: Exodus 32:1-35; 33:1:23
- The revival under Samuel: I Samuel 7:1-17
- The revival on Mt. Carmel: I Kings 18:1-46
- The revival in Nineveh: The book of Jonah
- Revival under Asa: II Chronicles 15
- Revival under Hezekiah: II Chronicles 29:1-36; 30:1-27; 31:1-21
- Revival under Josiah: II Chronicles 34:1-33; 35:1-19
- Post-captivity revival: Nehemiah 8:1-18

2. In the last chapter you learned that the Church is compared to a spiritual building built on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Internal spiritual growth is the process of building on that foundation.

Study the following outline:

GROWING BY BUILDING BASIC PRINCIPLES:

A. What are you building spiritually?

1. You are a building:

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house...(I Peter 2:5)

2. You are building an eternal structure:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (II Corinthians 5:1)

3. The Church is a building:

...Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:20-22)

B. There are two involved in the process:

1. God:

...He that built all things is God. (Hebrews 3:4)

**Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that built it...
(Psalms 127:1)**

**...I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.
(Matthew 16:18)**

2. Man: Man, in union with God, is to build:

**For we are laborers together with God..ye are God's building.
(I Corinthians 3:9)**

...Building up yourselves on your most holy faith...(Jude 20)

You...and they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places...thou shalt raise up the foundations...thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. (Isaiah 58:12)

BEFORE YOU START TO BUILD:

Before you start to build you must:

1. Count The Cost:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Lest haply, after He hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it began to mock him.

Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (Luke 14:28-30)

2. Be Determined:

And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the Lord... (II Chronicles 2:1)

3. Have A Proper Motive:

Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet smelling incense...continual shewbread, ...burnt offerings..solemn feasts...(II Chronicles 2:4)

4. Prepare:

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach it...(Ezra 7:10)

And that servant, which knew this lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will...(Luke 12:47)

HOW TO BUILD:

1. Build On The Right Foundation:

Wise man builds on foundation of the Word...it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. (Matthew 7:24-27)

The right foundation is Jesus and His Word:

..Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (Ephesians 2:20)

Built up in Him...established in the faith as ye have been taught.... (Colossians 2:7)

Be careful how you build on this foundation:

For other foundation can no man lay that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (I Corinthians 3:10-13)

2. Build According To The Plan:

In every Biblical building project, there was a plan given by God.

See Genesis 6: Exodus 25: I Chronicles 22.

People obeyed God's plan:

Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

(Genesis 6:22)

The plan was different, but the same was true of Moses, David, Solomon, Ezra, and Nehemiah...each did as the Lord commanded.

All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, every all the works of this pattern...then David gave to Solomon his son, the pattern...(I Chronicles 28:19)

If you do not follow God's plan for building your life on the Word of God, you will not succeed:

Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of His hands, he shall destroy them and not build them up. (Psalms 28:5)

3. Build According To Your Ability:

In building projects of Old Testament times, people gave according to their own ability:

They gave after their ability....(Ezra 2:69)

4. Build willingly:

Be willing to grow spiritually:

They offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place...
(Ezra 2:68)

5. Build In The Strength Of The Lord:

And I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord God was upon me...
(Ezra 7:28)

6. Build In Unity:

The people had a mind to work... (Nehemiah 4:6)

7. Build Wisely:

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established. (Proverbs 24:3)

Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. (Proverbs 14:1)

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.
(Proverbs 9:1)

God will endue you with wisdom:

God filled workers with...wisdom, understanding, knowledge...that they make all I have commanded...(Exodus 31:3,6)

Solomon was...endued with prudence and understanding, that he might build an house for the Lord...(II Chronicles 2:12)

The source of wisdom is God:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally..and it shall be given him. (James 1:5)