

YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

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- I. What happens when you were born again? More specifically, what happened to me? -- A life-changing decision...
- A. When you received Jesus, your sins were freely and fully **Forgiven** (Acts 10:43; 13:38; Colossians 1:14; I John 2:12).
 - B. You were **Justified** which means “to count as righteous or not guilty” (Acts 2:37,38; 13:38,39; Romans 3:24).
 - C. To be “set free from the power of sin and the practice of sinning” is part of the meaning of the word **Sanctified** (Romans 6:1-23; 8:3,4; Titus 2:14).
 - D. Spiritual growth doesn't happen overnight but is a **Process**.
 - E. One of the first things you can expect Satan to do is to attempt to confuse you by trying to persuade you that nothing really happened when you received Christ. This is called the problem of **Doubt**.
And you can expect to have to deal with it.
 - F. In I Corinthians 1:18 Paul said that “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish **Foolishness**, but unto us which are saved it is the **Power of God.**”
 - G. In the parable of the Sower (Mark 4), the seed represents the **Word**.
 - H. In the above parable, the thorns represent three things.

List:

- (1) **Worries of this life.**
- (2) **Deceitfulness of wealth.**
- (3) **Desires for other things.**

II. Now that I am born again, what next?

- A. Expect to **Grow**, which means to increase in size, a differentiation in structure, an alteration in form.

- B. As a “newborn babe” in Christ, begin feeding on the “milk” of **God’s Word** (I Peter 2:2). You shouldn’t attempt to digest deep theology anymore than a 3-week old baby should attempt to digest a T-bone steak.
 1. Begin reading with the **Gospels** (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) initially and, after a general understanding, move to more difficult passages (just as one does in school when he or she is beginning to learn how to read). It is a good idea to seek guidance in your spiritual diet from a mature Christian leader.
 2. Cultivate a **Daily** Bible reading plan.

- C. Expect a battle with your **“Old Nature”** (Galatians 5:17).

1. What is the **“Old Nature”**?

It is that which is governed by the human nature instead of God’s Spirit: ruled by sense knowledge; that part of us which is most easily influenced by Satan (I Corinthians 3:3).

2. What is the **“New Nature”**?

It is the nature of God imparted to us the moment we are born again (II Corinthians 5:17); also called the “hidden man of the heart” (I Peter 3:4) or the “inward man” (II Corinthians 4:16).

[PARENTHETICAL – It is helpful at this point to have some understanding of the three dimensions of man (I Thessalonians 5:23):

- (1) **Body** – the physical tabernacle in which you dwell.
 - (2) **Soul** – the mind, intellect, emotions, and will.
 - (3) **Spirit** – the part of you that can receive input from the spirit realm. It is on this level that assurance of salvation can be received (Romans 8:16).
3. These two natures will naturally antagonize one another (Galatians 5:16-17) – they will battle for supremacy (Romans 7:14-25).
 4. If we allow the “old nature” to rule, our growth will be hindered and the “fruit of the Spirit” (the evidences of your new life) will be minimized.
 5. How can I assure the defeat of the “old nature” and the victory of the new one?
 - a. By the **“Transformation”** that will take place as you “renew your mind” daily with God’s Word (Romans 12:1-2).
 - b. By learning to **“Walk in the Spirit”** (Galatians 5:16) and cultivating spiritual fruit.
 - c. By continuing on in **Sanctification**.

In the childhood stage of growth, you will be getting **Established** (Ephesians 4:14) – this process is also called “progressive sanctification”, a process by which wrong ways of thinking, believing, and acting are being rectified.

(Note: Many people suffer from spiritual “dwarfism” because they never move beyond this stage. Your continued growth into the next stage is dependent upon your spiritual hunger and willingness to walk in what you understand.)

III. What characteristics mark one who is spiritually mature?

Someone who is spiritually mature is ...

- A. A Student of God’s Word (II Timothy 2:15).
- B. A Doer of God’s Word (James 1:22).
- C. One who has a disciplined Prayer life (Luke 18:1).
- D. One who is faithful to a Local Fellowship of believers (Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 12).
- E. One who looks beyond the failures of other Christians to Jesus as his source – looking at other Christians may result in confusion and discouragement. You must remember that they, too, are at their own level of growth and it may be a lower or higher level than your own. Also, you will be judged based on YOUR relationship with Jesus Christ, not theirs (Matthew 14:27-31; Ephesians 5:1).