

## Four Reasons to Slow Down and Grow Well

There's no such thing as instant spiritual growth; it's a gradual process of development. The Bible says, *"So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding"* (Hebrews 6:1 NLT).

Spiritual growth is a journey, and that means it takes time. Sure, we want to speed up the process, but we can't. It's a lifetime journey where God teaches us one lesson at a time to develop our character so we become more like Jesus.

At the core of this journey are disciplines that help us grow spiritually. These disciplines—or habits—aren't new; they've been around for thousands of years.

We are the sum of our habits. Here's the truth: You can preach the greatest sermons in the world, but your congregation won't grow deeper spiritually until you help people learn how to practice spiritual habits on their own.

At Saddleback, we focus on spiritual habits in CLASS 201. We teach four specific habits that are essential to every growing Christian. These aren't the only habits that help you grow spiritually, but they are the most important.

You won't see any surprises on this list. They're tried-and-true disciplines that have helped Christians grow for generations:

**Read the Bible daily.** The people in our churches desperately need truth. Truth sets us free—free from worry, free from the expectations of others, free from guilt, etc. Jesus said this in John 8:31-32, *"You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (NLT).

Since the Bible is the best and most reliable source for truth, we must encourage people to get into God's Word on a daily basis, to help them find freedom and grow as Christians. You simply can't grow spiritually apart from the Bible.

**Pray daily.** Disciples spend time with Jesus. God's Word tells us in John 15:7-8, *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it . . . and in this way you become my disciples"* (GNT).

We become disciples by bearing fruit. We bear fruit by remaining in Jesus—and having his words remain in us. We listen to God through his Word, and we talk to God through prayer. To grow spiritually, we need both habits in our lives.

**Tithe weekly.** Tithing reminds us that everything we own belongs to God. He doesn't just own that first 10 percent. He owns it all.

If God isn't Lord of our possessions, he isn't Lord of us. Too many people sitting in our

churches are possessed by their possessions. Learning to tithe helps people hold what they have loosely and put God first in their lives.

**Fellowship weekly.** We all need other believers in our lives to help us grow. Weekly worship services aren't enough. Significant relationships don't develop when people just attend corporate worship. People need opportunities to talk and engage with others. At Saddleback, we believe small groups provide the best environment for people to build the healthy relationships that will help them grow.

Like I said earlier, there are no shortcuts to spiritual growth. While we worry about *how fast* people grow, God is concerned with *how well* they grow.

When God wants to make a mushroom, he takes six hours. When God wants to grow an oak tree he takes 60 years. Do you want your people to be mushrooms or oak trees?

Teach your people the four habits above, and they'll grow into oaks.

> [Read more from Rick.](#)

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