

Crafting a Spiritual Growth Plan



Definition: A Spiritual Growth Plan (SGP) is an intentional, thought through, and written out plan that describes and defines what you believe God would have you do to walk with Him and grow spiritually. It has long been the understanding of men and women of God through the ages that God causes us to grow, but it is our responsibility to put ourselves in the position to grow. There are certain resources and disciplines that have long been recognized as “means of grace” that God has ordained to nurture our spiritual life. A Spiritual Growth Plan is simply thinking through and personalizing how we will incorporate these things into our lives.

Elements of a SGP

1) Connecting to God: By far the two things that God will use most powerfully and frequently in our lives to grow us and help us stay connected to Him are His Word and prayer. At the most basic level He speaks to us through His Word and we respond through prayer. This is how our relationship with Him is nurtured and sustained. So the most significant thing that we can and should include in a spiritual growth plan is how we will read the Word devotionally (thoughtfully and responsively). We recommend, as a starting point, 30 minutes for such devotional reading of the Bible. Twenty minutes to read and reflect on what we read and ten minutes to respond in prayer to what He has shown us in His Word and speak with Him about other concerns we may have. In a plan include when you will do this, where, for how long, and what portion(s) of the Bible you will read.

2) Conforming to Scripture: As you think through a spiritual growth plan ask God to guide you regarding any changes He may want to make in your life. Jesus said that if we love Him we will keep His commandments. He has spoken to us in His Word about virtually every area of life. To be a follower of Christ is to continually seek to grow in obedience to His will. We all have “growing edges”. Ask God to show you those. It may be harmful patterns to stop, or helpful ones to begin. He will show you and He will enable you if you ask Him. Write them down as part of your plan to grow.

3) Inputs: God uses such things as books, involvement in groups, conferences, the regular practice of spending extended time alone with Him, Scripture memory, rest and retreats, to grow us. These are some of the time tested “means of grace” that have been recognized for centuries. Ask God to show you what elements might help you most at this stage of your life and in light of the areas where you would like to grow.

4) Outputs: Often when we give to and serve others we receive far more blessing than we pass on. These help break the human tendency toward selfishness and God uses it, by His Spirit, to free us. Serving is also one of those “means of grace” that God has ordained to nurture our relationship with Him. All of us have been blessed with talents and resources that are not just given to us for us. God wants us to be channels. So the final step in any good SGP is to think through and write down how you will serve and give to God and others.