

# Growing as a Christian

There are three very important factors which influence your spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is just like physical growth in many ways. Spiritual growth takes time, is enhanced by going through difficult times, and is sovereignly directed by God.

## The TIME Factor

### 1. God takes His time

Whenever God wants to do something important, time is always a big factor.

Three examples of God taking His time

- a. **Jesus** - Luke 3:23 How long did God wait until he let Jesus begin his public ministry?  
Why do you think he waited so long? (See Hebrews 5:8)
- b. **Moses** - Acts 7:23-34 How long did Moses grow up in Pharaoh's household? (See verse 23)  
How long did Moses stay in the desert land of Midian? (See verse 30)  
Why do you think God took so long to bring Moses back to free His people?
- c. **Paul** - Galatians 1:15-2:1 How long did Paul wait until he finally launched his public ministry?  
(Add up the number of years mentioned in verses 1:18 and 2:1)  
Why do you think God waited so long to send Paul off as a missionary?

### 2. Quality requires Time

"It takes a hundred years to make a decent oak tree, but only three months to make a squash."

### 3. Complexity requires Time

- Mouse - full grown after three months
  - Dog - full grown after a couple of years
  - Human - takes 16-20 years (longer than any animal on earth)
- Why does it take longer for humans to mature?

### 4. There are no shortcuts - both physical and spiritual growth take time



## The HARD TIMES Factor

Have you ever had a coach that really pushed you hard in practice?

Why do you think he made you do all of those things?

1 Cor. 9:24-27 describes a race of life that we are all in.

What do those who compete in the race have to do to win?

Why does God, our heavenly coach, put us through hard times? (See Hebrews 12:5-11)

## The SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD Factor

### 1. God is always in control

Does God allow us to experience temptations that are too great for us? (See 1 Cor. 10:13)

What end does God have in mind in a Christian's life? (See Romans 8:28)

Even though some tough times are in God's training program for us, they have all been screened by God and are beneficial to us.

### 2. God knows what He is doing even if we do not understand

*Dentist illustration*

Because God is loving and has our best in mind, we can have confidence in His abilities to work on us.

How does the Bible compare our ways to God's ways in Isaiah 55:8-9?

Even though we don't always understand what God is doing, yet because of His character we can trust Him even in difficult times.

The Basics #9

by Steve Huerd

<http://www.svtwincities.org/basics>