

Growing as a Christian

Topic: Basic Growth Principles

Purpose of this study:

To give students as basic understanding of spiritual growth principles as they relate to time, adversity, and the sovereignty of God.

Motivation for teaching this study:

After having given some specific activities to help your students grow in the last session, you can be sure that they will want to practice these new disciplines. However it does not take long before one begins to figure out that it isn't as easy to grow spiritually as one thinks. There are many factors that must be added into the equation to help us understand how God works in our lives. Rather than getting frustrated at these supposed "obstacles," we should welcome them and know the value of them. This study is designed to give some perspective on spiritual growth from a Biblical point of view.

Introducing the Lesson:

Explain: *In our microwave-instant society today, we expect everything to happen immediately. However in the spiritual realm, God is in control and He works in ways that are very different than we might expect. Today, we want to look at three ways in which God helps us to grow spiritually.*

Teaching the Lesson:

The time factor

In all three examples under point one, God is shown as having taken his time to develop His leaders for His purposes. Stress that God is in no hurry to develop us and He wants us to learn things that are deep and permanent in our lives. Students should not expect to become a "Super Christian" within a couple of weeks or even a couple of years for that matter. You might also want to think of some examples in your life of how long it took for God to teach you important Biblical truths.

The hard times factor

God allows us to go through adversity because He knows it will make us stronger and prepare us for greater things down the road. He always allows discipline and adversity into our lives, not because He is unable to control things, but so that we can share in His holiness and righteousness in our lifestyles. Encourage your students to share how going through hard times has made them stronger in some area.

The sovereignty of God factor

Nothing happens by accident in our lives that God cannot control. Everything always has a purpose even though we may not always know exactly what it is. Emphasize that God desires all believers to be like His Son Jesus in their character, perspective, and actions.

Dentist Illustration: Even though we don't fully understand all that the dentist does in our mouths when he is filling a cavity, we know it is good for us despite the temporary discomforts. In our Christian walk with God we must trust God that He knows what He is doing even though it may not make any sense to us at all.

Closing the Lesson:

These three factors all produce a more mature understanding of how growth takes place in our lives. But, all three factors require us to trust God by faith that He is in control. Have your students identify one area where it is really hard for them right now. Encourage them to decide to trust God by faith in that one area. God is pleased when we put our faith in Him and His word even though we do not understand fully what is going on (Hebrews 11:6).

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask to see if your students understand this objective:

1. What should our attitude be when we encounter hard times in our life?
2. What if we are having a tough time in several areas? Could that mean that God temporarily lost control of our lives?
3. How long do you think it will take for you to become spiritually mature?
4. Should we be concerned if we do not know exactly what God is doing in our lives at the present moment?

* Many concepts in this study are from *Personal Disciplemaking* by Chris Adsit. Visit www.ccci.org/disciplemakers or call 888-342-2235.