5 Steps to Practical Spiritual Growth

So much is written about spiritual growth, and anyone in a relationship with God wants to grow spiritually, yet often it can seem so complicated!  We can feel pulled between intellectual approaches on the one hand and the pursuit of mystical experiences on the other.  One expert tells us to look back into the mists of time, while another tells us to look within, or to look at their list of how-to steps.  In the midst of all the noise, somehow Jesus often gets lost.  In this workshop we will consider some simple biblical insights that will help us grow spiritually is a straightforward, practical, and Jesus-focused way.

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1. Beware of the Deadly Be’s
	1. Be like
	2. Be good
	3. Be disciplined
	4. What is the problem with these approaches?
2. Recognize the basic issue: where are you looking, O my soul?
	1. **1** O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. **2**Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? **3**Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3)
	2. **18**And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18)
3. **Gaze: Looking To?**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2looking to Jesus,** the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

1. **Gaze: Looking Away From?**

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 (Consider also Colossians 3:1-17; Philippians 3:1-16)

1. **With: Looking With?**
	1. We are not created for lone ranger spirituality
		1. Church
		2. Friends (Give/Receive/Mutual?)
		3. Fellowship of the Heart
	2. Communion with Christ

We need “to return to ‘the forgotten Trinity’ – to an understanding of the Holy Spirit, who delivers us from a narcissistic preoccupation with the self to find our true being in loving communion with God and one another – to hear God’s call to us, in our day, to participate through the Spirit in Christ’s communion with the Father and his mission from the Father to the world – to create in our day a new humanity of persons who find true fulfilment in other-centered communion and service in the kingdom of God.”

(Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace, James B. Torrance, IVP 1996)

***Suggested Readings:***

*The Little Him Book: Looking at the Jesus Who Makes Our Hearts Sing*, by Peter Mead (10Publishing 2021)

*Lost in Wonder: A Biblical Introduction to God’s Great Marriage*, by Peter Mead (Christian Focus 2016)

*Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*, by Dane Ortlund (Crossway 2020)

*The Good God: Enjoying Father, Son and Spirit*, by Mike Reeves (Paternoster 2012)