

Melva's Corner

TIME TO GROW

Tapping the Source of Power



Central Truth: Others can learn from you, too!

Are you growing in your relationship with the Lord and the knowledge of His Word?

Many people are not growing. They stopped many years ago and are virtually in the same place they were decades ago. Some Christians have been one-year-old Christians for 30 years. How are you different in your walk with the Lord than you were a year ago? . . . 5 years ago? Are you a life long learner? Are you grounded and rooted in God's Word? Are you doing anything new to stretch yourself and your faith? Do you plan to step out and do something new for Jesus in the near future? We all know that anything that isn't growing is dying. So are you growing?

Are you helping others to grow in their relationship with the Lord and obedience to His will?

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20) Attendance at Sunday School and Wednesday night Bible Studies is not enough, others learn "from" you too! So are you helping others grow?

What are you doing to grow in doing the work of God?

What is your personal growth plan? Does it include Church attendance, Sunday School, books, tapes, seminars, and Bible studies? These things are good. However, watch out for a common misconception that growth equals more head knowledge. Growth includes information. Growth includes

inspiration. Growth also includes doing what we have learned! James cautioned us to "be doers of the word, and not hearers only." James 1:22) "Doing" launches us in to a whole new dimension of growth. Preparation as a teacher causes us to learn more than just attending. Dealing with difficult situations causes us to grow in faith and in prayer. Stepping out into the situations that challenge us — those ministry opportunities out of our comfort zones — help force us to grow. So how are you growing in both "knowing" and "doing"?

Are you growing?

Are you helping others to grow?

What Is Your Ministry

People often ask: Melva am I doing what God wants me to do? I use ten questions to regularly guide me in my spiritual life. Recently, I shared them in church and several people asked me for a copy. So maybe you will find the questions helpful too. Warning: Don't think you have to check off everything or feel guilty about what you are not doing. These questions are simply meant to be a practical guide for you and your church.

1. **Do I pray regularly?** It sounds so simple yet nothing happens without prayer. When I am struggling it is often because my prayer life is not what it should be. Does your church emphasize prayer as a regular and critical part of their ministry? Prayer is always step one.
2. **Do you have a vision?** It is difficult to shoot an arrow if there is no target. So how can you function without a vision from God and goals to help you fulfill the vision? What talents and resources are available to you . . . to your church? What is needed in your community?

Are we growing in faith? Spiritual formation is a continuous journey of learning, experiencing and sharing the Word of God. Young and old are discovering a passion for God's Word but don't always know where to begin. Bible studies and small groups play a key role in spiritual development. Take a class, participate in Sunday school or join a prayer group.

4. **Are you caring for others?** What are you doing to maintain loving contact with friends and family? Do you regularly

- offer encouragement? What is your church doing to care for each other? Most offer shepherd groups and support ministries. Perhaps you can help. The simple gesture of sending a card is a ministry that often works miracles.
5. **Do you cultivate friendships above and below your own age?** If you don't . . . why not? Maybe you need to get a life! Just kidding but it's important that you reach beyond your comfort level and seek to understand other age groups. You will learn a lot and probably have a great time. Young and old alike have so much to offer but they need our love and respect.
 6. **Am I involved in a community ministry?** Is there a Habitat for Humanity near by? Am I doing anything for children at Christmas? Are groups fixing broken down houses for people too poor to make their own repairs? Is there a "Meals on Wheels?" Every community has needs? To meet those needs God has given us all unique talents. What am I doing with mine? It's usually not that hard to find out what's needed and ask: "How can I help?"
 7. **Are you a witness?** Do people really know what you believe? How can you talk about God without others feeling intimidated or offended? Do coworkers look upon you as someone they can trust? Will you listen to their concerns with respect and love? Are you praying for opportunities to share your faith? The best definition for being a witness is the willingness to make a sincere and honest attempt to be a friend in the name of God.
 8. **What about men?** 61% of those not attending church are men. Maybe you can help with starting a ministry for them. Mission trips, building projects and sports have all proven to be successful ways to include guys. Many come back to participate in other church activities.
 9. **Are we reaching singles?** More than 56% of the population is single. Surveys indicate that many single adults believe in God but feel isolated from the Body of Christ. We can start recognizing their needs by changing our language. Many churches have family night supper; however, this implies that you must be married to attend. Instead call it a "Fellowship and Fun" supper. Ministry

ideas could include divorce and grief recovery workshops or single parent programs.

10. **What about children?** Parents are struggling to provide a wholesome environment for their children.

I can't possibly do all that! True but you can do something. My prayer is that these questions will stimulate your thinking. Then, let God guide you. We all face a challenge to reach out in ministry in creative ways. The main thing is to be open-minded, be in prayer and celebrate the victories.

In the last few years, I have witnessed many people inspired by God to become involved in ministry. It has been the biggest joy of my life. The excitement of doing something worthwhile for God is contagious. So, what are you waiting for? Find your ministry today and may God be with you!

Scriptural References:

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52 NKJV)