

It's not Automatic.

Slide 4. Introduction – There are no Automatic Christians

Remember the Five Frogs. Deciding and Doing are two different things.

You must Choose and Act to become a Christian.

You Must Make Every Effort to Grow Personally and Spiritually.

Eight Barriers to Growing in Christ.

Ask the Right Questions.

No Finish Line to Personal and Spiritual Growth.

Slide 5. Text: [Jos 24:15 KJV] 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: **but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**

Make every Effort.

God has given us all we Need to Grow. We must intentionally act on our Personal and Intentional growth.

Slide 6. [2Pe 1:4-5 KJV] 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might **be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, **giving all diligence**, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

Jesus Grew in Spirit and Personally

Slide 7. [Luk 2:40, 52 KJV] 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. ... 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

[Luk 2:40 NLT] 40 There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

Slide 8. Some Important Efforts to Try Now

Slide 9. Learn about God and Serve Him - [1Ch 28:9 KJV] 9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Slide 10. Cast Your Cares Upon Him - [Psa 55:22 KJV] 22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Slide 11. Keep Your tongue from Evil, Depart from Evil - [Psa 34:12-16 KJV] 12 What man [is he that] desireth life, [and] loveth [many] days, that he may see good? 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15

The eyes of the LORD [are] upon the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their cry. 16 The face of the LORD [is] against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Slide 12. Seek, Forsake, Turn - [Isa 55:6-7 KJV] 6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Slide 13. Be Consistent in Serving God - [1Ch 28:7 KJV] 7 Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day.

Eight Gaps That Slow Down our Growth in God

What Gaps are Holding you back from your service to Christ.

Slide 14-15. Assumption Gap – Christians Do Not Automatically Grow

Charlie Brown says, “I think I have discovered the secret of life – you just hang around until you get used to it.”

If you want to grow as a Christian, you must intentionally take steps towards spiritual growth. Set your target and go for it. God will Always help you grow.

[Phi 2:12-13 KJV] 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

[Psa 111:10 KJV] 10 The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do [his commandments]: his praise endureth for ever.

Knowledge Gap – What’s your plan to grow in Christ? Many of life’s lessons are random and difficult. Plan to grow intentionally and you will be better prepared.

Slide 16. [Gal 1:11-12 KJV] 11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Slide 17. [Gal 1:16-20 KJV] 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. 20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Slide 18. Timing Gap – It’s not the Right time or I’m waiting for the right time.

[Act 24:25 KJV] 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Five frogs are sitting on a log. Four decide to jump off. How many are left? There are five because there is a difference in deciding and doing.

Slide 19. If all of us do what we intend to do, great things will happen. When we wait, we may fall victim to the **Law of Diminishing Intent**. The longer you wait to do something you should do now, the greater the odds that you will never actually do it.

[Mat 21:28-30 KJV] 28 But what think ye? A [certain] man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I [go], sir: and went not.

Slide 20. Mistake Gap – I'm Afraid of Making Mistakes. What are the consequences?

[Jdg 6:15-16 KJV] 15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family [is] poor in Manasseh, and I [am] the least in my father's house. 16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

Slide 21. What would you attempt to do if you knew you wouldn't fail? Step out of your comfort zone with a plan.

Cemeteries are full of those who are no longer making mistakes.

Expect to make mistakes as you grow in Christ. They normally mean you are heading in the right direction.

Slide 22. King Saul made mistakes but he made excuses.

[1Sa 13:8-9 KJV] 8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel [had appointed]: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

[1Sa 13:11 KJV] 11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and [that] thou camest not within the days appointed, and [that] the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

[1Sa 15:1-3 KJV] 1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee [to be] king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. 2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember [that] which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid [wait] for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

[1Sa 15:9 KJV] 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all [that was] good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing [that was] vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

Slide 23. King David made mistakes.

Adultery and Murder

[2Sa 11:5-6, 15 KJV] 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I [am] with child. 6 And David sent to Joab, [saying], Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. ... 15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

[2Sa 12:7, 13 KJV] 7 And Nathan said to David, Thou [art] the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; ... 13 And David

said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

Slide 24. Perfection Gap – I'll start my personal growth in the Lord when I find the best way to get started. You can't find the best way unless you start. If you want to see more of the path, start walking the path.

Slide 25. [Exo 4:10-12 KJV] 10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I [am] not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I [am] slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Slide 26. Inspiration Gap – Motivation is a trap. Motivation will not strike you like lightning. Motivation is not something your pastor, a family member, or a close friend can bestow or force on you. Get out of the trap, As the famous Nike saying goes, "Just do it".

[Exo 4:14-15, 19 KJV] 14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, [Is] not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. 15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. ... 19 And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.

Slide 27. Comparison Gap – There may be many people you meet who are very talented, better educated, and very successful. Don't compare yourself with them, learn from them. Most of them are willing to share.

Sure that puts you out of your comfort zone but intentional growth in your personal and spiritual life leads to being uncomfortable. Get comfortable being uncomfortable.

[Isa 46:5 KJV] 5 To whom will ye liken me, and make [me] equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

Slide 28. **Don't measure yourself by others. Compare yourself today against who you were yesterday.**

[2Co 10:12 KJV] 12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Slide 29. Expectation Gap – I thought it would be easier than this. No successful person thinks growth comes quickly and climbing to the top is easy. Here is a formula for creating your own luck.

Preparation(growth) + Attitude + Opportunity + Action (doing something about it) = Luck

American entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker, Jim Rohan said, You cannot change your destination overnight but you can change your direction overnight.

Ask yourself the right questions.

Instead of how long will this take? Consider asking yourself, How far can I go? John Maxwell said he started intentional personal growth in his life 40 years ago and still don't have the answer.

Where do you want to go in life?

What direction do you want to go?

What's the farthest you can imagine going?

Grow in Christ without a finish line in this life.

[Luk 12:48 KJV] 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few [stripes]. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.