

# Forty Days of Purpose Devotional

## Day 23 "It is never too late to start growing."

In order to grow into the fullness of what God has designed for our lives, we must do two things. One is to provide nourishment and exercise, just as must be done for our physical bodies to grow. What might these be? Let us turn to what Jesus said about spiritual nourishment:

*"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."* (John 6:63-64) *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Tim 3:16-17 [NIV])

We grow toward spiritual maturity through "exercise", i.e., diligent application of Scripture in our lives:

*". . . the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."* (Heb 5:14 [NIV])

The other thing we must do is to remove toxins and impediments, i.e. things that damage and imprison us. What sorts of things are "toxic"?

*"Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly."* (2 Tim 2:16 [NIV])

What sorts of things "bind" us?

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."* (Heb 12:1 [NIV])

When we add all this up we get a program for spiritual growth:

- Feast on the Word of God (see also 1Pet 2:2);
- Study and practice the art of godly living;
- Practice self-discipline with the tongue, remaining silent if necessary (see James 1:19 & 3:2);
- Cleanse yourself by confession and repentance whenever you are convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit.

Rate yourself in each of the areas discussed above: taking nourishment from the Bible, living a godly life, controlling your tongue and actively seeking to cleanse yourself from sin. If you don't rate yourself very highly ask godly friends for help. If you have rated yourself highly, ask godly friends to confirm your rating. With only rare exception, everyone in God's family should be busy both helping and getting help in the business of growing into mature Christians.

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