



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

Bonsai Faith

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Bonsai faith refers to a type of Christian faith that grows but does not become large from roots up to its leaves. The Bonsai plant is cultivated uniquely involving methods of cutting and pruning that lets it survive in a small pot. Christian faith however, requires it to expand in its interior life to enrich personal relationships with God and others. Moreover, our faith is not cultivated like a Bonsai plant, but rather, like a giant tree that stands firm, cut and pruned by God Himself.

1. Seven stages of progressive faith: (continued)

1.1 **No Faith.** There is knowledge of God but we do not put our total trust in Him.

1.2 **Little Faith.** We limit God's abilities due to our limited knowledge of His power.

1.3 **Growing faith.** We must assess if our faith grows or not and check its abnormalities.

How can we grow our faith properly?

1.3.1 We should have the desire to grow.

We as Christians must have a longing for pure spiritual milk (1Pt. 2:2) until we are ready for something more. There is a path that we ought to follow, a path walked by Christ (1Pt. 2:21). We must remain conscious of our spiritual needs by worshipping and praying to God. We should develop the habit of knowing His Word, or our worldly life would kill our faith. We must assess ourselves continually (1 Cor. 10:12).

1.3.2 **We should maintain the proper Spiritual diet.** We should avoid vices of the spirit. Avoid the diet of bad & false news.

1.3.3 **We should grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pt. 3:18).** What we learn from God's word, we should put into practice either in word or in deed (Phil. 4:9).

Planting seed (Word of God) is a good exercise: it requires cleansing ourselves like a clean pot (Eph. 4:22), being a good soil (Mt. 13), and growing continually from Light (God), Food (Word of God), and Water (Jesus, the living water).

1.3.4 How do we know we are growing?

- We bear the fruits of the Spirit (Jn. 15:16; Gal.5:22). We should be doers of the Word (James 1:22).
- We must have a daring faith, full confidence that God will fulfill His plan for us (Jer. 1:12).
- We must not be afraid of God's call and the power to endure hardship (Jas. 1:3-4).
- We must grow a connection with others, and be intertwined in the life of the community to have a flourishing life.

1.3.5 Growing like the mustard tree (Mt. 13:31-32).

Our Lord emphasizes this parable of the mustard tree for how the smallest seed became the biggest tree and a shelter for the birds. God made the church for the wandering & sick people for shelter and healing (Mk. 2:17). God, as a farmer, had sown seeds on the earth (Mt. 13) so they can bear hundreds of fruit. God asks us to be like a mustard tree so that God can stretch his mercy and grace to others through us.

Conclusion:

God wills our faith to grow. If our faith is surrendered to God, our life shall be filled with blessings and grace, which in turn will ignite our passion in sharing the Gospel of Christ with others.

Reflection:

1. What are your plans in growing your faith?
2. How will you keep your faith from being like a Bonsai plant?

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