

Growth Required

Do you know of any athlete who has ever reached the pinnacle of their sport without studying the sport and then applying? Have you ever heard of an actress that had her greatest performance without studying the screenplay and then applying? Now, do you know a Christian who has matured without studying the bible and then applying? The answer of course is, no.

Who we want to be is decided in what we study and what we apply. For as he thinks in his heart, so is he (Prov. 23:7). Most people are going to choose an occupation and put much of their effort into it. There will be challenges along the way but as a person struggles through, skills are refined, and they mature or grow in their occupation. The same illustration applies to Christians (Heb. 6:11-12). God doesn't ask us to spend months in an intense Christian boot camp or years in bible school. However, it's a commitment we make for life - to continue our maturing. There are many areas we can improve such as with our relationships with God, our community, friends, brethren, spouse, and children. There are characteristics and activities we must terminate and others we must emulate. It may be what we think, say, or do. But, as we grow in our knowledge and apply those things, we grow as a strong, mature, and faithful Christian.

Jesus grew in *wisdom, stature/maturity, and in favor with God and men* (Lk 2:52). Peter likewise tells his audience, to *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (2Pet. 3:18). If we want to be mathematicians, we increase our knowledge in mathematics. If we want to be a medical doctor, we need to study medicine. If we want to be a Christian, we study Christ and our bibles. We start with the fundamentals and proceed to what is more challenging. Hopefully, we move from being students to being teachers (Heb. 5:12). Just like the occupation we studied, we can lose our uniqueness as a Christian if we cease to learn. We should always seek to improve upon ourselves. As time goes on we should pinpoint an area in our life to develop and refine. Let us look to Jesus and to those who are exemplary examples of His so that we can grow into maturity (Philp. 3:17).