



## Growing Spiritually: An Orthodox Christian Perspective

The question of “spiritual growth” is a serious one; we speak about it all the time, but we do not all have the same understanding of what that really means.

Unlike physical growth, there is no quantitative way to measure one’s spiritual growth. And yet, we can still do it, not by using a measuring tape or a weight balance, but by measuring ourselves against the saints, the heroes of the Christian faith, most of whom gave their lives as martyrs for the faith in Christ!

Do you think that you are really patient and humble? Compare yourself to the trials and tribulations of saint George, or saint Demetrios, saint Catherine or saint Irene and even more contemporary saints like saint Nektarios, and you will know immediately how far you still have to go. In order to make this comparison you will certainly need to read the stories of the lives of these men and women. And, do you know what? As you read about their lives you will be growing spiritually at the same time!!! Spiritual growth is a process that begins when you want it and never ends once you start it, unless you stop it.

Hence, my question to you who reads this article is: Do you really want to grow spiritually? Do you really want to know how? The responsibility is all on you! You need to make the decision and begin the effort. It is not difficult to do so. You just have to embark on this journey and God will be there to help you along the way.

Many people confuse spiritual growth with the increase in knowledge of facts and the ability to recite information. But that is not spiritual growth! Some of the most knowledgeable “Christian theologians” in the world are “spiritual infants” in the best cases and total pagans in the worst. On the other hand, some of the simplest and least educated Christians I met in my life were “spiritual giants” by comparison.

Do you really want to grow spiritually? Here is the recipe: Humble yourself, fall down at the feet of a spiritual father and confess your sins, including your pride and arrogance. It is guaranteed, you will walk away a “new man,” renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. That will be a leap in spiritual growth. You will know it in your heart.

Do you want to retain that elevated spiritual state? Here is the recipe: Go back to the confessional again and again with a contrite heart and a humbled spirit. You will certainly begin to see yourself and the world around you in a new light. You will begin to have a different appreciation of both people and nature. You will feel God present everywhere you go. You will begin to experience joy in untold ways and see the goodness and kindness in people as you never have before.

It is not difficult to get on the spiritual-growth-path. It’s up to you to do it and you will be the first and foremost beneficiary from it.