

WEEKLY REFLECTION

As we read about the baby Jesus growing to become the boy Jesus, can we ask ourselves this? How did we grow this year? *Did* we grow this year? Do we want to keep growing? If the Lord of heaven and earth showed opportunities for growth, why can't and why shouldn't we?

It's puzzling and surprising that Jesus came down to earth to save all of humanity, but He only started doing so in the last three years of His life. For the first thirty years, the Scriptures give no indication that He was doing any of this saving work or using His divinity to accomplish anything. In fact, when Mary involves Jesus in asking Him to provide wine at a wedding that has run dry, He tells her that it is not yet time. His hour has not yet come. (Jn. 2:4)

Perhaps if the Scriptures had put anything down, they might have revealed a Jesus who was committed to learning what it means to be human. Who was submissive to His mother and father, as He increased in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man (Lk. 2:52). Jesus displays a steady and patient commitment to growth that is reflected in the early church, which is absent from most of us today. We remember the 3000 who were saved at Pentecost, and the incredible number of churches that Paul planted, but are we willing to do the work, for the amount of time needed to get there?

It may not be as easy as it sounds: energy levels can vary from individual to individual, while some of us have work or family obligations that eat up most of our time. But can we discard our expectations and notions of explosive or even fast-paced growth? Can we stick to the basics in committing to a general direction of growth? Can we surprise ourselves with our steadiness and perseverance, day-in and day-out? Use what you have, and use it wisely.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

If 2024 were a genre of book / movie, what genre would it be? What would the progression of the book / movie be like? Would it have an exciting plot, or would it detail more day-to-day happenings? Who would be the main characters apart from yourself? What did it reveal about yourself, and about God?

QUESTION TWO:

As you look forward to the new year, what are some areas of growth that you would like to see in 2025? They can be physical, social, mental, emotional, or spiritual.

What is one practical thing that you can be doing every day or week to work towards that?

What are some obstacles that you anticipate? What would be your strategy for coping with these moments, and how would you proceed in the face of difficulty, or ride those times out, and pick yourself up again afterwards?

QUESTION THREE:

When you think about the direction of growth that you would like to commit yourself to, it can be helpful firstly to have a tool for evaluation, and secondly to think in terms of the short-term, medium-term, and long-term. There are many tools on the Internet that help with evaluating your spiritual condition (the Christian Life Profile by Randy Frazee is one of them).

As you think about and evaluate your spiritual condition in the past year, identify (with or without the help mentioned above!) one area that you would like to grow in, and think of one practical thing that you can be doing, either by yourself or with your group, to move towards that growth.