

## Woodmen Valley Chapel - Anchoring (Spiritual Disciplines)

From Jim Tomberlin's sermon, Feb. 23, 1997

1. *Spiritual Growth is NOT automatic but intentional* - "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Ph. 2:12) "Give yourselves completely to God - every part of you" (Rom. 6:13 LB)
2. *Spiritual Growth may be mystical, but is mostly practical.* "Spend your time and energy in the exercise of keeping spiritually fit. Bodily exercise is all right, but spiritual exercise is much more important and is a tonic for all of you. So exercise yourself spiritually..." (1Tim.4:7 LB)
3. *Spiritual Growth is not instantaneous, but a process.* "I do not consider myself to have 'arrived' spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on..." (Ph. 3:12 PH) Mushrooms grow overnight and are crushed by our fingers, but oak trees take 60 years to grow and their strength is legendary.
4. *Spiritual Growth is demonstrated more by behavior than by beliefs.* "Show me your faith without deeds and I will show my faith by what I do" (Jm.2:18). "For by their fruit you will recognize them" (Matt.7:20). There are 2 dangers of spiritual knowledge without behavior:
  - a. It produces pride - "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up..." (1Cor.8:1)
  - b. It increases responsibility - "Anyone then who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." (Jm.4:17)It's not what we know, but what we show. It's not our talk, but our walk. It's not our creeds, but our deeds.
5. *Spiritual Growth doesn't come from keeping a list of rules, but flows from a relationship.* If my heart is right, my obedience is self-driven. Rules are external constraints. Better to be heart-bound. "You are my friends..." Jn.15:14. "And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1Jn.1:3). "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ... I want to know Christ..." (Ph.3:8,10). "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O Lord" (Ps.42:1).

Questions for personal assessment: Do I *have* a relationship with Christ beyond my salvation? Do I *really* know him or do I only know *about* him? Is everything else in my life secondary to pleasing him? Does my soul pant for God like my need for ice-water on a dry day? Do I want a relationship with my Creator more than I want new possessions like a house, money, car, stereo, camera, computer, speed boat, or clothes? More than fame, power, or pleasure? If not, why not? And what can I do, or allow God to do to change that? Do any of the following bear on my weakened state?

### ***Spiritual Exercises – measuring and improving my strength and staying power:***

daily Scripture reading, daily prayer, memorizing Scripture, daily 'quiet time,' reading devotional books, fasting, journal/spiritual diary, listening to Christian music & tapes, prayer retreats, solitude, personal Bible study, prayer walking, intercessory prayer, meditation on Scripture, family devotions, personal worshipping, singing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," days of prayer, accountability in a small group, service, worship in the congregation, fellowship with believers, sharing our faith with unbelievers, attending Bible studies, participating in a small group, regular giving.