

**THE ONE THING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BECOME THE PERSON GOD WANTS  
YOU TO BE**

**By Andy Manning  
Philippians 2:13**

The title of this sermon is **“The One Thing You Need to Know To Become The Person God Wants You to Be.”**

I want you to take a moment and **think about your eulogy.**

A eulogy is a speech or a piece of writing that praises someone who just died.

What do you want people to say about you after you die? How do you want your family and friends and children and church family to remember you?

If you are a Christian, then you want people to say that you were like Christ. You loved God; you loved people; you were a fearless witness for Christ; you were compassionate; you had strong faith; you were generous; holy; pure; self-disciplined; faithful and reliable; kind; loving; honest.

But if you are honest, then **you probably aren't that person yet.** In fact, you probably have a long way to go.

So the question is, **How do you become the person that God wants you to be?** How do you become the person that you want to be, the kind of person that you want people to remember?

Today I'm going to teach you the one thing you need to know to become that person.

Turn with me to **Philippians 2:13 (CSB).** “For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.”

What does this mean?

Sometimes the best way to understand a verse is to read it in other translations.  
So let's do that.

The **Amplified Bible** says, "For it is [not your strength, but it is] God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure."

The **Expanded Bible** says, "Because God is working in you to help you want to do and be able to do [both to will/desire and to work] what pleases him."

The **New Living Translation** says, "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."

So in a nutshell, this verse means that

**God is working in you to help you grow to spiritual maturity.**

That's the one thing that you need to know to become the person God wants you to be. God is working in you to help you grow to spiritual maturity.

The moment you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit indwells you (comes to live inside of you).

And what does He do? **He works in you to help you grow to spiritual maturity.** He works in you to help you grow spiritually. He works in you to help you become the person He wants you to be – that you want to be.

And **God is doing two things in you to help you grow.**

**He is working in you both to will and to work.**

That means He is giving you the will, or the desire to grow; and He is giving you the power to grow.

That may not sound very life-changing, but it is.

This truth leads to three powerful principles.

### **Three Principles About Spiritual Growth**

- 1. If God is working on your spiritual growth, then you should be working on your spiritual growth, too, because we are called to imitate Christ.**

The Bible commands us to imitate God (Eph 5:1).

What is God doing?

God is working on your spiritual growth.

So if you are going to imitate God, then you should be working on your spiritual growth, too.

That's why **2 Peter 3:18 (CSB)** commands us, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity."

If you are going to imitate God, then you should be working on your growth; you should be striving to grow; you should be putting some effort into your spiritual growth.

Most Christians are not working on their spiritual growth.

They are just existing; just drifting along.

But if God is working on our spiritual growth, then we should be working on it, too.

**2. If God is working on your spiritual growth, then you can grow, because God can do anything.**

When you start working on your spiritual growth the first thing you notice is how hard it is. It may even seem impossible. You might get discouraged and start to believe that it is impossible to grow, to overcome a certain sin, to develop new strengths, new qualities. And discouragement leads to giving up.

But if Philippians 2:13 is true, if God is working on your spiritual growth, then you can grow. Don't give up. God can do anything.

Remember **Philippians 4:13 (CSB)**, "I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me."

Mark 10 tells the story of a man who had a son who was possessed by a demon. The demon made the child unable to speak; it would throw him down, cause him to foam at the mouth, grind his teeth, and become stiff. It would throw the boy into convulsions and cause him to fall down and roll on the ground. It would throw the boy into fire or water to kill him. The man asked Jesus' disciples to help, but they couldn't.

And so he said to Jesus, "If you can, please help us."

Jesus answered in Mark 10:23, "If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes."

And that's what you have to understand. If Philippians 2:13 is true, then you can become the person you want to be.

You can repent of that sin; you can overcome that bad temper; you can get over that addiction; you can become more patient; you can become more generous; you can grow, because God can do anything, and God is working on your spiritual growth.

If you ever want to succeed at anything, find out what God is working on and join Him. Because if God is on your side, then you can't fail.

What is God working on? You. He is working on your spiritual growth. So go to work on that and you can't fail.

The only way you can fail is by giving up; by not working on it.

**3. If God is working on your spiritual growth, then something is terribly wrong if you are not growing.**

What does it mean if you are not growing?

If God is giving you both the desire and the power to grow, then there are only three possible reasons why you aren't growing.

**First, it could be that you are growing, but you can't see it because growth is slow.**

If you look at a piece of grass in the summer time, it doesn't look like it's growing. In fact, you could stare at it for hours and you won't notice any growth. But after a week, it will have doubled in size.

That's the way spiritual growth is. Often it happens slowly; so slowly that it's hard to see.

**Second, it could be that you are not working on your growth.**

For growth to occur, you must cooperate with God.

You have to put all of your effort into growing, or won't happen. If you aren't working at it, then it's not going to happen.

**Third, it could be that you are not saved.**

If you are not growing, and you aren't striving to grow spiritually, then that's a sign that you might not be saved.

Why? Because if you are a Christian, then God is working in you; He is giving you the desire and the power to please Him.

So what's the application?

**What do you do if you don't feel like you are growing?**

**1. Make sure that you are saved.**

If you are not growing, it could be that you are not saved – especially if you haven't been striving to grow. Because if you are saved God would be giving you the desire and power to grow. It's hard to imagine God giving you the desire and power to grow, but you aren't growing and aren't striving to grow. So it could be that you are not saved.

How can you make sure that you are saved? Do two things.

**a. Make sure you are trusting in Jesus and not your good works for salvation.**

There are many people in Acadiana who believe in Jesus but they aren't saved.

How's that possible?

They believe in Jesus, but they are trusting in their good works for salvation.

Ask them why God would allow them into heaven and they would answer, "Because I'm a good person."

That's not saving faith. That's faith in yourself. But faith in yourself won't get you to heaven.

True faith means believing that Jesus Christ is God's payment for your sin, and that you can't earn salvation, and if you got what you earned, it would be hell.

**b. Make sure that you are trusting in Jesus as Lord and not yourself.**

Another mistake that many people in Acadiana make is they see Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord; not as boss; not as CEO.

They invite Jesus to save them from hell, but they don't invite Jesus to take control of their life.

But that means you have not truly put your faith in Jesus.

Remember, the Devil and demons believe in Jesus. But they aren't saved. Why not? Because they don't trust in Jesus as Lord.

Jesus is not just a Savior. He is God.

To have faith in Jesus means to that trust Him not only to save you in the next life, but to lead you in this life.

Jesus doesn't just want to provide you with life insurance; He wants to own your life.

So to make sure you are saved, be sure that you have invited Jesus to be the Lord of your life.

Be sure that you have handed the steering wheel of your life to Jesus. If not, then you are not saved, and that's why you aren't growing.

So the first thing to do if you are not growing is to make sure you are saved.

**2. Get to work on your spiritual growth.**

The second thing to do if you are not growing is to get to work on your spiritual growth.

Why don't some Christians grow?

Because they choose not to.

Remember **the law of the harvest**: You reap what you sow.

If you are growing, it's because you have planted the seeds of growth.

If you are not growing, if you are not spiritually mature, then it's because you have not planted the seeds of spiritual growth.

If you want to change what you are reaping, then all you have to do is change what you are sowing.

Get to work today on your spiritual growth, and eventually you will reap a harvest of spiritual growth.

## **5 Ways to Work on Your Spiritual Growth**

### **a. Know the goal.**

You can't hit a target if you can't see it.

What is the goal of spiritual growth?

**Becoming like Christ, loving God and others more and more.**

That comes from two verses. **1 John 2:6 (CSB)** says, "The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked." God wants us to walk as Jesus walked; to become like Christ in our character, conduct, and convictions; in our behavior and our beliefs; in our attitudes, actions, and aspirations. In every way.



The second verse is also called the Great Commandment. It's found in **Mark 12:30-31** (CSB). Jesus said, "30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. 31 The second is, Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these."

By the way, how do you know how you need to grow?

**One preacher** said, "How do you know which areas of your life you have not given up to God yet? It's the areas that tick you off when the preacher talks about it – money, sex, parenting, baptism, etc."

**b. Focus on staying close, not just trying.**

To grow in Christ you need to put all your effort into it.

You are in a spiritual battle, and winning is going to take all of your effort.

But effort is not enough.

In **John 15:5 (CSB)** Jesus tells us the key to spiritual growth. "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."

Jesus says that if we remain, or abide, or stay closely connected to Him, then we will produce the fruit of spiritual growth.

**Stay connected, and fruit happens.** Stay close to Him, and fruit happens. So the key to spiritual growth is staying close to Christ.

How do we stay close to Christ?

You have to establish the right habits.

**Rick Warren** said, “You are the sum total of your habits. You’ve got good ones and you’ve got bad ones, but the things you habitually do are the things that make you. The key to spiritual growth is developing good habits.”

**First we make our habits, and then our habits make us.**

There are several habits that will enable you to stay close to Christ.

Most Christians know what they are, but few actually do them. Let me give you six habits that will help you stay close to Jesus.

- 1) Sunday worship.
- 2) Daily quiet time.
- 3) Home Group.
- 4) Find a significant way to serve God at church.
- 5) Tithing.
- 6) Witnessing.

As you focus on staying close consistently over an extended period of time, God will grow you.

**c. Work the steps to full devotion.**

A third way to work on your spiritual growth is to think of spiritual growth as a series of steps you must take, and focus on taking the next step, one at a time.

There are nine steps to spiritual growth. Some of these are the habits that I just mentioned. 1) Sunday worship. 2) Trust in Christ for salvation. 3) Baptism. 4) Home Group. 5) Daily quiet time. 6) Join the church. 7) Find a significant way to serve. 8) Tithe. 9) Witnessing. I guarantee that if you focus on those 9 steps, by the time you take all nine of those steps you will be a completely different person.

**d. Read great Christian books.**

**Og Mandino** said, “You will be the same person in five years as you are today except for the people you meet and the books you read.”

**Andy Andrews** said, “We are where we are because of our best thinking, and if we want to keep improving, we must transcend that level of thinking.” How do you transcend your level of thinking? By reading great books.

**Andy Andrews** said, “One idea has the power to transform your life forever, but you must first recognize it.” Where do you get good ideas? By reading.

**Andy Andrews** also said about reading, “What do you call a child who reads two books a year? Slow. What do you call an adult who reads two books a year? Normal. Amazingly, the national average for books read by American adults is less than two books a year.”

**Ben Shapiro** said, “How do you become an expert on anything? Read a book. Just one book. Because that will be one more than anybody else is reading. Nobody reads anymore.”

If you want to grow, you need to be reading great Christian books. I have a bunch of reading lists on our church website, and I’ll even pay you for getting through a reading list.

**e. Ask God to help you grow.**

The last way to work on your spiritual growth is to actually pray and ask God to help you grow.

**James 4:2 (CSB)** says, “You do not have because you do not ask.”

One reason people don’t grow is because they don’t ask for it. They ask for everything else except for spiritual growth.

Jesus said in **Matthew 7:7 (CSB)**, “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.” If God is working on your

spiritual growth, and you are working on your spiritual growth, and you are praying for spiritual growth, then you will grow.

## CONCLUSION

Let's go back and read our text for today.

**Philippians 2:13 (CSB)** says, "For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose."

God is working on your spiritual growth.

That means you should be working on it, too.

That means that you can grow.

And that means that if you are not growing and striving to grow, then something is wrong.

And so get to work on your spiritual growth.

You might be thinking, "Andy, I've heard all this before; but it hasn't changed my life."

**H. Richard Niebuhr** said, "The great Christian revolutions come not by the discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when somebody takes radically something that was always there."

You may know these principles. But the real growth occurs when we start practicing these principles. If just a few people got serious about spiritual growth, they could change the world.