

How to Align What You Desire with What You Believe

Living things grow. It's true for every organic life form, but it's also true of us spiritually. When we are born again in Christ, we are set on a trajectory of spiritual growth. The Holy Spirit is in us in order to empower this transformational process by which God grows us up into the likeness of His Son, and that growth fleshes itself in all different kinds of ways.

It means that we continually grow in the fruit of the Spirit as our character is developed. It means we continually pursue purity and godliness in our lifestyle. It means we share the gospel more and more freely with others. It means our priorities shift from safety and comfort to the priorities of the kingdom of God. It means we hold more and more loosely to the material things of the world as we pursue the imperishable things of heaven.

But here is one other way we grow up in Christ over the course of time. Perhaps this is one way we don't often think about, and yet one that might in the end bring us tremendous joy:

Growing up in Christ means an ever-increasing alignment between what we desire, and what we know.

Let's use a simple example to flesh this out – that of reading our Bibles every day.

We know this is a good thing for us. We know that this is the inspired Word of God. We know that if we want to grow spiritually then the best thing in the world for us is to every day crack open God's Word and prayerfully read it, believe it, and obey it. We know these things. And yet at some point this very week – maybe tomorrow – you won't *feel* like opening God's Word. And neither will I.

We will feel like sleeping. Or we will feel like scrolling through Twitter. Or we will feel like watching TV. We *know* we should read our Bibles, but we don't want to. In fact, we might even know it so deeply that we want to want to do it. And that's the state in which we live much of the time:

We want to want.

And it's not just about Bible reading. We want to want to pray. We want to want to be holy. We want to want to be generous. We want to want, but there is still this war inside of us by which our flesh battles with the Spirit. We are torn on a daily basis between what we know and what we desire.

But, friend, consider the hope of gospel if you feel this acutely today. Consider the wonderful promise that God, who began His good work in you will indeed carry it onto completion (Phil. 1:6). Consider that it will not always be this way. For there will come a day when we will no longer want to want, and instead, there will be a glorious unity between what we know and what we feel. This is the work the Holy Spirit is doing, slowly, patiently, over the course of time in us – He is bringing unity to our whole selves.

As we embrace His work now, often times through the practice of self-discipline, it is entirely appropriate for us to long for the day when that work will be done. For that will be the day when faith is sight, and at long last we will not only know the truth of the gospel, but we will feel it as well.

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