

Growing - continued

harmful to others.

Do good to others – Just as we are not to harm others, we are also to actively do good. *“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith”* (Galatians 6:10). We need to be looking for these opportunities in which we can show kindness and offer help to those who need it.

Respect others’ space and time – It is possible to exercise in excess and harm ourselves; therefore, we need periods of rest so we can recharge. In the same way, if we are constantly in the company of others and actively trying to be involved in their lives, this could eventually do more harm than good. We need to spend time with others and do good to those around us, but there is a limit to this. The wise man said, *“Let your foot rarely be in your neighbor’s house, or he will become weary of you and hate you”* (Proverbs 25:17). Let us seek to build relationships and do good to others without overstaying our welcome and causing them to resent us.

Conclusion

Growing - continued

If a child is not growing physically, it is an indication that something is wrong. In the same way, if we are not growing in wisdom and favor with God and man, something is wrong. Let us make sure we are eating right, exercising, and getting the rest we need – not just for our physical health, but also for our spiritual development and to improve our relationships with God and others.

- Andy Sochor -

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Guest Article: Growing in Wisdom, Stature, and Favor - Part 2

Favor with God

God loves each one of us, just as He does all mankind. Yet there are things we can do in order to grow in His favor.

Learn more about Him – In order to please God, we must first know Him. The Hebrew writer explained, “*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). As Paul explained to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill, God is “*not far from each one of us*” (Acts 17:27), so we are certainly capable of learning about and finding Him if we seek after Him.

Avoid idols – The apostle John concluded his first epistle with this admonition: “*Little children, guard yourselves from idols*” (1 John 5:21). An idol does not necessarily have to be a graven image of stone or wood; rather, an idol is *anything* that is equal to or greater than God in our hearts. Jesus said, “*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth*” (Matthew 6:24). He specifi-

cally mentioned one potential idol (wealth), but this principle applies to any object of our devotion. We must be wholly devoted to the Lord.

Worship God – Knowing about God and recognizing His greatness is good, but we must also demonstrate that reverence by worshiping Him. Jesus said that “*the Father seeks [people] to be His worshippers*” (John 4:23). As we offer worship to Him, we must not do it according to our will but His will. As Jesus said, we are to “*worship in spirit and truth*” (John 4:24).

Meditate on Him – There are two ways in which we can do this. We can meditate on His *word* and on His *works*. Regarding the former, the psalmist wrote, “*O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day*” (Psalm 119:97). Elsewhere he said that because the Lord is “*great...and highly to be praised,*” he would meditate “*on [His] wonderful works*” (Psalm 145:3-5).

Favor with Man

Some people will extend their goodwill toward us simply out of the kindness of their hearts. Yet there are certainly things we can do to increase the likelihood that others will look favorably upon us.

Spend time together – While this would apply to any relationship, I want to focus – at least for this point – on our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. The Lord expects the church to be a self-edifying body in which “*each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love*” (Ephesians 4:16). To do this well, we need to build relationships with one another. From the beginning, the early church did this. They were “*breaking bread from house to house [and] taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart*” (Acts 2:46). This closeness led to their willingness to sell houses and lands in order to provide for the needy among them (Acts 4:32-35). The goodwill that was shown toward one another began with a relationship rooted in their common faith and strengthened by the time they spent together.

Do no harm to others – We are to act in love which, as Paul explained, is the fulfillment of the law: “*Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. [...] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law*” (Romans 13:8, 10). We must avoid doing those things that are