

GROWING PAINS?

Growth, whether physical, emotional or spiritual seldom happens in constant linear progression. Growth happens at times, aggressively while at other times, it seems almost non-existent. Malevolent influences can affect and infect leaving body, soul and spirit weak, frail and sedentary creating a kind of atrophy or digression in growth. In Galatians 5:7 Paul says "you were running well who (or what) hindered you..." "What happened?" is the resounding question expressed in Galatians 4:15, when Paul asked, "where is that sense of blessing you had?" Hebrews 5:12 says, "though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God." 1 Corinthians 3:1, as perhaps a greater reprimand says, "I could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as men of flesh, as to babes in Christ."

What causes this "shrinking back" as Hebrews 10:38-39 defines it? Hebrews 10:39 goes on to clarify that this digression begins to occur when men begin operating in the realm of the superficial & disingenuous seeing faith as mere religious regiment and ritual. "What happened?" Well, in the case of the Galatians other influences had come in declaring themselves superior having reputable clout and impressive degrees. In our day and age, we would refer to them as "experts." They represent people and ideas we tend to go to when life becomes overwhelming and trials seem insurmountable. Whether we are overwhelmed by our own faults and failings as in 2 Corinthians 2:7, or oppressed by the nefarious external forces of the world spoken of in 1 Peter and James, we begin seeking not only some kind of immediate relief and gratification but usually go back to the familiar & predictable patterns of our past. Galatians 3:3 asks, "are you so foolish?" having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? In other words, it was faith in God that saved you. What makes you think your old ways or the ways of man (ie. Flesh) can keep you? Galatians 6:8,9 reminds us that we are prone to atrophy, that is corruption, weariness and loss of backbone and strength. Faith must be maintained! Faith grows us! Paul says you were saved or born by faith you must live or grow by faith. Colossians 2:6 says, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him!"

The world will tell you your problems are too great and the answer is too complicated. Don't believe them! 2 Corinthians 11:3 says, "as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, our minds can be so easily led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ! Peter says in 2 Peter 3:18, that we are to "grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Hebrews 11:6, says that without faith it is impossible to please Him! In other words, without faith it is impossible to incur the favor (ie. Grace) and blessings of God. As Matthew 6:27 says, growth comes from God, not you! "Apart from Him you can do nothing." (John 15:5,6)

Start walking by faith again & you will be amazed at your spiritual growth but don't be surprised if, like your physical growth, others begin to recognize it before you!