

# Personal Life and Growth

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*Detailed Outline  
Part 3 of 3*

## **IV. Practical Ideas for a Leader's Growth in Christ**

### **1. Pray for a desire to grow and mature.**

Since the time of the fall, man has been hiding from God. Spiritual things are difficult for us. Thus, we have to pray that we do not lose our thirst for the Word of God, or lose our desire for worship, prayer, service, and the fellowship of the Lord's people.

Oswald Chambers:

*"A great fear has been at work in my mind and God has used it to arouse me to prayer. I came across a man whom I knew years ago, a mighty man of God, and now ten years have gone and I meet him again—garrulous and unenlivened. How many men seem to become like that after forty years of age! The fear of sloth and indulgence has come home with a huge fear and fairly driven me to God to keep me from ever forgetting what I owe him."*

How natural it is to lose our thirst for knowledge, for study, for truth, and for expanding our minds and our hearts. Let us pray daily about this. Whenever we see the waning of interest or love for God, let us immediately confess it and pray for a fresh energy and interest in love for him and his precious Word.

### **2. Protect your prayer life.**

We are all very busy people. Hyper-busyness is a part of the new modern age. We are travelling at warp-like speed, and the first thing to go in the Christian life is our prayer life. We get so busy for God we have no time to pray. We don't have time for God.

In Acts 6:4 the twelve apostles declared that **we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**

Here at the dawn of Christianity, the twelve apostles lay down the principles for pastoral elders: devotion to prayer and the Word of God. These priorities the apostles learned from the Lord Jesus. He was a Man of prayer.

Let me also encourage you not only in prayer but in worship and in singing to God.

### **3. Protect your Bible-reading time.**

The greatest treasure God has given us outside of his Son is the treasure of his Word, the Bible, the very words of God, the Truth and the Light.

As leaders, we all need to be Berean Christians. Acts 17:11: **Now these Jews . . . received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.** Let us be Berean-like elders, searching the Scripture daily.

It is said, "You cannot be too busy driving to stop for gas." You too need to fuel your tank (your heart and mind) with the Word of God like the Bereans did.

Colossians 3:16: **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another.**

#### **4. Listen to audio messages.**

This is a wonderful way to grow spiritually and to fuel your tank as you spend yourself in ministering to other people.

Most of us spend a lot more time driving in a car than we realize. Or we go for a walk or go to the gym and exercise. During these periods of time, we can listen to great Bible expository preaching by some of the world's greatest teachers. You can literally get a Bible school education in several years by just listening to audio messages.

#### **5. Go to good conferences.**

Going to good conferences can be excellent training for future and present elders. Conferences are not only occasions for education, but key opportunities to acquire new resources (books and audio messages) for the church body at home. Use conferences to educate your eldership and to become aware of what is going on in the worldwide church of Jesus Christ.

#### **6. Raise your consciousness about the world around you.**

Our Lord gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). He gave a global commission to disciple *all nations*, baptizing and teaching new converts to obey everything Jesus had taught them. We are thus internationalists. We are globalists.

A Christian leader should be a Great Commission leader. We have a big gospel, not a tiny gospel. A healthy church is a missions-minded church. A good Christian leader is a missions-minded leader. We should be interested in world news and events that affect the advancement of the gospel and the work of our missionaries.

As a leader among God's people you also need to be aware of important cultural shifts in society, new theological and philosophical trends, and changing moral values. These trends are affecting the minds of your young people. You may not care about these things, but your young people are involved in them daily at school, and eventually these trends come into the church.

Acts 20:31: **Therefore, be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.** An elder who is preoccupied with the world or his own personal interests, distracted from the work of God, is not alert and will not be able to protect the church or prepare young people for living the Christian life.

## **7. Watch for distractions.**

Sociologists say we live in the age of distractions, unlike any other age. This is particularly true with the technological distractions and traps—Facebook, email, text messages, video games, and movies. People are becoming addicted to these things. Sadly, they are not addicted to the Bible or world missions. They are addicted to machines, movies, TV, and sports.

Many people today are amusing themselves to death, wasting the short life they have been given by God upon this earth.

## **8. Be concerned about your ongoing education as a Christian leader and an eldership group.**

You want your children to continue to learn, don't you? You send them to school; you spend a lot of money on their education; you want them to learn, grow, and prepare for life. Why then should *you* stop growing? Why are you not interested in your own education?

An eldership should be learning, growing, and concerned about ongoing development in the things of God. Talk about this as a group of elders, how will you educate yourselves.

Be a learning, growing pastoral eldership!