

A Balanced Personality

Introduction

The purpose of spiritual growth

*“God's divine power has given us everything we need to live a truly religious life through our knowledge of the one who called us... In this way he has given us ... precious gifts he promised, so that by means of these gifts **you may...come to share the divine nature**. For this very reason do your best to add goodness to your faith; to your goodness add knowledge; to your knowledge add self-control; to your self-control add endurance; to your endurance add godliness; to your godliness add Christian affection; and to your Christian affection add love” (2 Pet. 1:3, my emphasis, GNB).*

The purpose of spiritual growth is to change so that we progressively display the qualities of a Godly life (2 Pet. 1:4-8).

In Jesus we have an example of a perfectly balanced personality – each one of His virtues is balanced by its opposite godly counterpart. So we see that whilst Jesus usually acted in a gentle, loving way, He, when it was necessary, could use a whip to disperse people from the temple building (**Matt. 11:29, Joh. 2:15**). Sanctimonious hypocrites also had to bear the brunt of His tongue! (**Matt.23**). Although the Word declares that one must hate sin, Jesus was known as being a friend of sinners (**Jude 23, Luk.7:34**).

In our case, if our strong virtues are not balanced by their opposite godly attributes, our strong point becomes our weakness! So for instance, the virtue of **determination**, if not balanced by a teachable spirit and by an attitude of being prepared to be influenced by wise counsel, can manifest itself as **stubbornness**. A strong, unbalanced point of view can blind you to the truth.

So also, if **zeal**, or **enthusiasm**, especially in the area of religion, is not guided by **sound spiritual principles** which are based on the Word, it can very easily deteriorate into subjective emotionalism, which at its worst, can become fanaticism, something which the cults thrive on! Unchecked emotionalism can sometimes lead to subjective, ecstatic experiences that some wrongly interpret as the working of the Holy Spirit.

Thrift, if not balanced by **charity**, tends to become **stinginess**.

Humility and gentleness, if not balanced by discipline, determination and a strong sense of a love for the truth, can easily become a **permissive**, spineless attitude.

In one's approach to spiritual things, it is possible that one can focus so much on understanding everything intellectually, that the emotions are neglected, but, on the other hand, an over emphasis of the importance of emotions, can dull one's discernment in terms of spiritual truths.

Conclusion

Spiritual growth entails the development of every aspect of our personalities – our thought life must be purified by the Word (**Rom.12:2**), we must be able to keep our emotions in control and we must also have a clean conscience; in other words, our wills must be subjected to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus we can see a perfectly balanced personality – He was gentle and passive, yet could be militant, He was self-renouncing, but could assert Himself, He was a man of prayer and also man of action. Looking at Jesus, we become conscious of our own weaknesses and how much we need the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to display the right attitude in the many situations that we are faced with every day.

“...let the Spirit direct your lives, and you will not satisfy the desires of the human nature” (Gal. 5:16).

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