

1 Alive and Growing

Juan and Maria were enthralled with their new baby son. Words could hardly describe the thrill of new life they shared. Yet they were very aware of the responsibilities that rested on them. The infant's survival depended on them: on the care they gave and on the provisions they made for his needs.

How quickly he grew! Maria could almost see him developing. Daily he gained weight and grew larger, thriving in the healthful, loving environment.

We might expect that as the weeks extended into months and years, normal growth and development would occur. It would not be too difficult to imagine how Juan might appear after several years. The baby was alive and growing!

In a similar way, the normal expectation of spiritual life is growth toward spiritual maturity. In this lesson you will discover that new spiritual life must be nurtured for growth to occur. You will also learn what is needed to nurture spiritual growth.

lesson outline

The Nature of Spiritual Growth

Nurture and Spiritual Growth

Elements of Spiritual Growth

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. State the nature of and need for spiritual growth.
2. Indicate the significance of nurturing spiritual life.
3. Identify elements of spiritual growth that lead to spiritual maturity.

learning activities

1. Carefully read the preliminary section in this independent-study textbook. You will find examples of the kinds of study questions used in this textbook and how to answer each one.
2. Read carefully the opening pages of this lesson and the outline which is given. Read also the objectives, both the lesson objectives which are listed at the beginning of the lesson and the enabling objectives which are given throughout the lesson. These objectives tell you what you should be able to do after you have studied the lesson. The study questions and the self-test are based on them.
3. Some key words are listed at the beginning of the lesson. You will find their definitions in the glossary at the end of this study guide. Be sure to find the meanings of any words that are not familiar to you.
4. Read the lesson and do the exercises in the lesson development. Be sure to read Bible portions as you are instructed. This is necessary to gain full understanding of the lesson material. Write answers to questions in this study guide where space is provided. Write longer answers in a

notebook. You will get more out of the course if you make it a practice to put something of your own into writing before you look ahead to the answers. Check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson.

5. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson. Check your answers carefully with those provided at the back of this study guide.

key words

Understanding the key words we have listed at the beginning of each lesson will help you as you study. You will find key words listed in alphabetical order and defined in the glossary at the back of this independent-study textbook. If you are in doubt about the meaning of any of the words on the list, you may look them up now or when you come across them in your reading. Please take time to learn the definitions of any new words, since they add to a complete understanding of this course.

admonished	disclosure	nutritious
adversity	discriminate	paradoxically
bereaved	durability	potential
boredom	emaciated	prolonged
characteristics	enthralled	propositions
compatible	explicitly	reservoir
contentious	facilitate	stature
corporate	inherent	survive
counterpart	latent	transition
degeneration	nurture	vitality

lesson development

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The Standard for Spiritual Growth

Objective 1. *State the nature of and need for spiritual growth.*

When you heard and believed the Christian good news, you began living an exciting new life. This experience is called new birth or spiritual birth. Everyone who has this new life in Christ begins by being born spiritually. Unlike biological life, which is limited by time to a normal life cycle, the germ of spiritual life is eternal. In people this germ of spiritual life resembles human infancy: it is subject to growth, development, and maturity.

Jesus spoke specifically of the possibilities inherent to this germ of life: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). You brought to Him a life filled with sin that had separated you from Him. He gave you a new life, His life, and He wants you to have this abundant life to the fullest.

When we speak of life to the fullest, we refer to the quality of life one can experience. Physical life, as we all know, can be sustained at a bare existence for some time. However, at this level one could not be very active, productive, or fulfilled. By contrast, when one eats well, lives in a healthy, secure environment, and exercises properly, one develops an abundant reservoir of energy. In this condition the individual fulfills the purpose for which he or she was designed—that is, living to the fullest.

When you were born spiritually, the spirit of Jesus Christ came to live in you. This birth generated the potential for spiritual development—development into the likeness of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:27). Now that the spirit of Jesus resides in you, He assumes control of your life. As the Lord of your life, He lives His life out through you as far as you surrender to His Lordship over your life (Romans 8:9–11).

Who can tell what the future may hold for a newborn? She is a bundle of potential and capabilities which need development. If given proper care and nourishment, a healthful environment, adequate encouragement, and ample opportunities, this child will develop into a whole, mature person. This baby has within her everything she will ever become, but in latent form which must be developed.

We can transfer the idea of a newborn infant's growth and development toward maturity to spiritual life. Our Lord wants each of us to experience life to the fullest. How does one experience fullness of spiritual life? As we have noted above, you began to live the new life when you experienced new birth. You began like a spiritual baby, as a babe in Christ. In every way you were completely God's child. Yet you were not fully developed. To experience the fullness of the new life, spiritual growth and development must occur.

In general, as one responds to the Spirit's control, he or she grows spiritually. Growth leads to awareness, not only of the marvelous privileges but also of the responsibilities. Understanding of spiritual life and God's Word increases. God's purpose for one's life becomes increasingly clear as the new believer walks with the Spirit in control of his or her life (Galatians 5:25). The germ of spiritual life must be nourished, nurtured, and exercised for optimum development.

Application

- 1 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
 - a) From Scripture we learn that spiritual life comes to each person fully developed and complete, leaving no room for improvement.
 - b) Jesus indicated that there are no levels of spiritual life; therefore, when one is born again, he experiences life to the fullest automatically and immediately.
 - c) From Scripture we learn that our Lord has made provision for us to experience a rich and full spiritual life, but this potential is subject to growth, development, and maturity.
 - d) As one invites the Spirit of Jesus to assume and maintain control of his life, he is in a position to develop spiritually.
 - e) The newly born Christian develops spiritually as she is spiritually nourished and nurtured in an environment which encourages spiritual growth.
-

The Need for Spiritual Growth

Can you think of a person who is several years old but has not developed beyond the infancy stage? Immediately you would recognize that something was wrong because we expect growth and development to accompany life. That which is alive and normal will grow toward maturity.

Jesus taught the principle of spiritual growth to His disciples. He compared spiritual life to a vine and its branches, saying that no individual branch on the vine can be productive in and of itself. It must be in vital contact with the life of the vine. Then it can produce ever more abundantly as it develops and matures. In the same way, no Christian can mature and be spiritually productive without remaining in vital contact with the true Vine, Jesus Christ (John 15:1–16, but notice especially vv. 4–5, 8, and 16). The only alternative to spiritual growth and development is spiritual decay, degeneration, and death (John 15:2, 6).

A person is not an infant one day and an adult the next. Maturity is a time-consuming process. Spiritual life develops

according to this same growth principle. While we begin as babes, growth and development are to be expected. Just as a baby grows toward adulthood, so a babe in Christ must move toward spiritual maturity. We expect this growth because the person is spiritually alive. And what is alive and normal grows, develops, and matures as long as it is nourished properly. Only then can one accomplish the spiritual purpose for which God has called him or her—that is, to bear lasting fruit such as the Father desires (John 15:16).

Application

Circle the letter of the correct answer for each question.

- 2** We normally expect that which is alive to
- a) remain in a stage of infancy.
 - b) grow and develop toward maturity.
 - c) be brought immediately to maturity.
 - d) produce little if any observable change.
- 3** Spiritual growth is needed since it is commanded by the Lord and because it
- a) is an almost automatic process initiated by the new birth experience.
 - b) develops the individual physically also.
 - c) enables one to accomplish the Lord's purpose.



NURTURE AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Objective 2. *Indicate the significance of nurturing spiritual life.*

Every mother knows that if her baby is to survive and grow, he must be nurtured. Therefore, mothers lovingly care for their babies by supplying food and providing for their total needs. Without such tender care, babies would soon die.

In a similar way, spiritual life needs nurture. Helping someone experience spiritual birth is but the beginning of our Christian responsibility. Following new birth is the need to nurture spiritual life so the person will survive spiritually and

will mature. While spiritual infants are fully God's children, they have just begun to develop their spiritual potential and do not yet experience spiritual life to the full, as their Lord intends. During the early stages of development, they need the support and encouragement of caring spiritual brothers and sisters. Nurture of spiritual life is thus needed for new converts to survive spiritually and to grow toward Christian maturity.

You will recall, perhaps, Jesus' words to Peter concerning his ministry. The task of nurturing spiritual life involves people at various stages of Christian maturity from infant lambs to mature sheep (John 21:15–17). Obviously, Peter understood the need and accepted the challenge to care for the total flock, for he mentions both the spiritual infants (1 Peter 2:2) and the rest of the flock (1 Peter 5:1–4). Moreover, Peter appeals to other Christian workers to nurture spiritual life in the same way. He knew that it must be nurtured to survive and to reach its full potential.

Application

- 4** Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
- a)** Spiritual life has little or no durability to withstand testing until it is fully mature.
 - b)** In its infancy, spiritual life is frail and needs the support and encouragement of the Christian brotherhood.
 - c)** Spiritual life is maintained and developed by the ministry of Christian nurture.
 - d)** In the process of nurturing spiritual life, we provide the conditions for spiritual growth and development, but we cannot really predict whether any good response will follow our efforts.
-



ELEMENTS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Objective 3. *Identify elements of spiritual growth that lead to spiritual maturity.*

We have discussed the importance of those things which help sustain physical life: food, a favorable environment, support during infancy, exercise, and loving nurture. Spiritual life, similarly, matures normally when it has the necessary growth elements. It thrives on the Word of God, is nurtured by healthy Christian relationships, is stimulated by use (that is, as one prays, exercises spiritual gifts, and applies knowledge of the Word to his or her own life), and abounds as it shares its life with others. Thus, when one matures spiritually, one completes the intended life cycle: birth, growth, development, maturity, and reproduction. He fulfills the purpose for which he exists. Such a response brings glory to God and is the only appropriate response for the benefits of salvation and eternal life. Before we detail the elements of spiritual growth, let us examine the levels of spiritual growth.

Levels of Spiritual Growth

There are levels of development through which a person passes as he develops toward maturity. One of the marks of these levels of development is the ability to receive and digest different types of foods. Infants can handle milk, and milk is all they need to facilitate proper growth. But soon the baby requires something more substantial: cereal, porridge, or finely chopped vegetables and fruit. Later the child requires a fully balanced diet, which should include meat. Two basic facts emerge from these observations: 1) food is essential to proper growth and development, and 2) food must be appropriate for the stage of development.

Again, the illustration transfers to spiritual life. Spiritual life requires spiritual food to nurture spiritual growth. However, spiritual food must also be appropriate to the level of spiritual development.

The Bible, God’s Word, is compared to spiritual food. It is like milk for spiritual infants, and it is like solid food for those who are mature spiritually.

Application

5 Read 1 Corinthians 3:1–2, 1 Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5:12–14, and Ephesians 4:11–16 and answer the following questions which relate to these Scripture references.

- a) What two kinds of spiritual food are described in these verses?
- b) According to these Scripture references, is intended for those who are infants in Christ, while is for the mature.
- c) The stronger diet is for the mature, those who have learned to so that they will be prepared for so that the body of Christ will be built up, until we all reach and become mature, attaining unto



Now, let us examine three levels of human existence that are described in 1 Corinthians 2:10–3:3. These are the man without the Spirit, the worldly man, and the spiritual man. In these verses the apostle Paul describes the characteristics of each level. From this description we can determine what is needed to produce spiritual growth that leads to maturity.

The man we shall consider first is the man without the Spirit. He has not been born spiritually; therefore, he is spiritually dead (2:14). He is at the lowest level of human existence. The man at the second level is described as worldly (3:3). He has experienced the new birth and is therefore alive spiritually; however, he has not developed beyond the stage of

spiritual infancy. At the third level is the spiritual man (2:12–13, 15). He has gained spiritual stature and is able to function in more mature ways.

As these Scriptures indicate, the ability to receive and understand spiritual truth is a major difference among these levels. In fact, the ability to understand God's Word demonstrates to which level of spiritual maturity a person has attained, if any. As you would expect, the man without the Spirit cannot understand or appreciate spiritual food, for his interests lie in other directions. Paradoxically, the worldly man is a spiritual baby. He must be fed with only spiritual milk as he is able to understand only elementary spiritual truth. He is interested in feeling good and enjoying the blessings of the Lord. But his attention span is short when he is faced with the sobering responsibilities of spiritual adulthood. Thus, he feels no obligation to grow spiritually and develop spiritual muscles. The spiritual man, being more fully committed to the Lord, is maturing in his relationship with God. He is fully satisfied with the deeper doctrinal truths, the meat or solid food of God's Word. Moreover, he shares this truth with others, encourages those less mature than he, and is able to teach and serve effectively within the body of Christ.

Paul's teaching on the levels of spirituality shows us that God's Word is the spiritual food which nurtures spiritual growth. One's response to the Word, then, determines whether one will progress spiritually toward a healthy and productive period of Christian maturity or remain a spiritual infant with the dangerous signs that accompany prolonged infancy.

Application

6 Match the descriptions and characteristics (left) with the appropriate level of spirituality (right).

- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| ... a | Operates at the “feeling” level of spirituality, has not truly assumed his spiritual responsibilities | 1) Man without the Spirit
2) The worldly man
3) The spiritual man |
| ... b | Does not understand or respond to spiritual things | |
| ... c | Enjoys the deeper truths of God’s Word, exercises good judgment, and shares truth with others | |
| ... d | Has not experienced the new birth | |
| ... e | Has experienced the new birth, but has remained a spiritual infant | |
| ... f | Experience is marked by progress from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity | |

7 Evaluate each example, identify the level of spiritual growth involved, and explain why you chose as you did.

- a)** A noted non-Christian politician of England attended a service in which the Word of God “was preached with clarity, power, and logic, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit,” according to reputable witnesses. When the service ended, his host asked, “What did you think of the service?” He responded, “To tell you the truth, I gave the speaker my whole attention, but I could not get what he was trying to say.” Though intellectually brilliant he was unable to respond. He is typical of a man without the spirit. Why?

.....

.....

b) Pastor James recently moved to a new church. Many people in his congregation respond well to general evangelistic preaching. Preaching on the deeper life in the Spirit and spiritual responsibilities, such as the commitment to work and witness in the community, however, is met with little enthusiasm. He notices that when he ministers the truth about complete commitment to Christ, being faithful to church, giving service to the community, taking responsibility for leadership (teaching a Bible class, organizing a Bible study cell group, etc.), and supporting the Lord’s work on a regular basis, people get restless. People who respond in this way have the characteristics of the worldly man. Why?

.....

.....

.....

c) Dan belongs to a Bible-centered church. He is involved in a workers’ training course to improve his skills to communicate more effectively to his junior boys’ class. He has adopted a personal spiritual development plan that includes consistent Bible reading, prayer, and regular church attendance. His Christian life has been difficult at times because of family opposition, professional obstacles, and illness. In spite of the difficulties, Dan’s testimony and life are a consistent witness to the reality of God’s grace that mellows one in spite of hardship. Dan is an example of the man. Why?

.....

.....

.....



Nurture Through the Word

In our discussion on the levels of spiritual development, we noted that God's Word is the spiritual food which nurtures spiritual growth. One's spiritual development is directly related to one's response to the Word of God. Let us examine more closely how the Bible nurtures spiritual growth.

While the physical universe speaks forcefully of our Creator, this revelation is general and incomplete. In the Scriptures, however, God reveals himself more fully. Whereas the physical universe speaks of qualities such as power and wisdom, the Bible reveals His holiness, justice, truth, mercy, and love. The Scriptures also reveal God's nature, plan, and will for man. In this disclosure God reveals himself.

God's Word provides us with His plan for our lives and the goals of Christian living. We learn how to serve Him, to correct mistakes, to discern the nature of spiritual life, and to produce spiritual victory. The Bible is God's blueprint for spiritual life.

The Scriptures nurture spiritual growth because they are quickened by God and are life-giving. The same spiritual life that resides in the Scriptures resides in the Christian. The life of God in the Word is the source of the new life God gives. The spiritual life within responds to the spiritual nourishment in the Word. It is a compatible diet; however, Christians must allow the Word to change what God intends. As they desire what God desires, they grow and develop in their likeness to Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Application

- 8** Circle the letter in front of each statement which explains how the Bible nurtures spiritual growth.
- a)** The Bible provides the nourishment required to sustain spiritual life and produce spiritual growth.
 - b)** Biblical truth enables one to know God's will and respond to His purpose in an acceptable manner.
 - c)** The life of God, inherent in His Word, corresponds to the life of God in each believer; therefore, as the believer allows the Word to change his life, he is able to be what God wants him to be.
 - d)** The Bible affects spiritual growth by causing a change in mental attitude only and not in behaviors.
-

Nurture Through Relationships

Babies are born into families. Each member makes room to accept and accommodate this new family member. The family unit is the setting in which the needs of the newborn are met. Each member gives of himself or herself to meet the needs of the new child and helps nurture this new life. Throughout the development of the child, the family provides the caring, supportive setting in which he can mature. The family experience is one of sharing life, of nurturing one another, and of meeting each other's needs. The strength of the family relationship is an important factor in nurturing new life.

With spiritual life, association with other Christians contributes to spiritual growth. The caring relationship shared by fellow believers nurtures spiritual growth.

It is often helpful for a new Christian to identify closely with one who is more spiritually mature. In a sense, the more mature Christian can become like a spiritual parent, providing the loving, caring relationship which nurtures spiritual life. Such a person can aid the new Christian in studying and applying God's Word to his own situation. He

can also influence him by his godly example and offer needed encouragement, counsel, and prayer.

God has planned, also, that the local church be a place where spiritual life is nurtured. Many Christians think of the church congregation as the family of God. Helping a new Christian identify with the local church can be compared to helping a new baby relate properly to his family. Local churches, as we have seen, are organized with God-appointed leaders, such as pastors, deacons, and teachers, to help Christians grow toward spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:11–16). The activities of the church—study of the Word, corporate worship, active evangelism, effective service and education, fellowship, and discipline—are designed to nurture spiritual life and to promote spiritual growth.

Application

- 9** Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.
- a)** One's spiritual growth is promoted by relationships because he is able to avoid difficult spiritual decisions, by permitting others to decide which is the right or wrong course of action.
 - b)** Spiritual life is nurtured by the associations one has with more mature Christians, who might be compared to good spiritual parents who give advice, encouragement, love, and understanding.
 - c)** The church functions as a place where spiritual life is nurtured through study of the Word, corporate worship, effective service, and discipline.
 - d)** The church promotes growth by association. As one becomes a part of the church organization, he automatically grows in spiritual understanding and Christian maturity.
-



Nurture Through Use

Perhaps you have been wondering, “What is the function of a healthy body? Should it be used or should it just be a potential source of productivity? Should its purpose be to please itself only or does it have a responsibility to others? Will its ability to function effectively be impaired if the body is not exercised?” These and other questions come to mind as we consider spiritual life.

As we have seen, Jesus admonished His disciples to become productive. Not only is spiritual health involved in His admonition, but also spiritual life (John 15:1–8). The point is that one must either be fruitful or suffer spiritual loss. Thus the goals of Christian growth and maturity are service and productivity. Just as Christians are admonished to grow and develop (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:18), so are they challenged to share the truth so that the world may know of God’s redeeming grace (Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). While the writer to the Hebrews implies that mature Christians should be capable of and involved in teaching truth and exercising spiritual discernment (Hebrews 5:12), Paul says explicitly that the various church ministries exist

to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12–13)

As Christians perceive their responsibilities to become Christ’s ambassadors, they share the good news with others. Living, spiritual organisms that are healthy will reproduce. They realize that the process of growth and maturity is not an end in itself. They live to exalt the Author of life and share His life constantly with those who have not experienced its life-changing power. The mature Christian thus fulfills the purpose for which she was born. Alive and growing, she moves

purposefully to do her Lord's will: building up the body of Christ spiritually and numerically.

Application

10 Circle the letter in front of each example of Christian activities that exercise spiritual life and promote spiritual growth.

- a)** Bob regularly attends church and studies God's Word. He conducts a Bible study at his job during the lunch hour. He shares his salvation experience whenever he has the opportunity. He initiated a devotional time daily for his family soon after he accepted Christ. His family is sensitive to the needs of others and continually seeks to help them.
- b)** Richard has been a Christian for many years. He makes an effort to attend church when he feels he can. He has never witnessed to others, nor has he become involved in Bible study, regular devotions, or church activities (both fellowship and service). He does not feel that he should be obligated to support the ministries of the church, for he sees the relationship as one of "association" only. His friends view him as they would any other non-Christian, for there is little to distinguish him from them.

11 Circle the letters of the best completions. Spiritual growth is promoted by

- a)** simply increasing one's knowledge of spiritual life, purpose, and destiny.
- b)** the knowledge that one is saved to serve and share with others and to apply the knowledge gained.
- c)** helping others, especially those who are spiritual infants, to grow and develop spiritually.
- d)** one's studies to increase his knowledge of the truth so that he will be an effective spiritual worker.

12 Identify the elements of spiritual growth we have studied in this section by placing 1 in front of those activities that promote maturity and 2 in front of those that do not.

- ... **a** Campaigning as a candidate for a church office which promises to keep one in the public eye
 - ... **b** Studying the Word consistently and allowing it to become the standard for one's life and service
 - ... **c** Sharing the gospel with others who neither know its claims nor its power to change their lives
 - ... **d** Making efforts to bridge the gap between the church and the world by nonspiritual means, such things as promoting church money-raising functions, organizing parties for members, and initiating discussion groups which consider popular books and social action issues.
 - ... **e** Nurturing spiritual life by teaching newborn spiritual babes the truths they need to know to survive spiritually and to grow toward life to the fullest
 - ... **f** Serving the body: helping the poor, the sick, the elderly, the bereaved, and the discouraged
-

self-test

- 1** New spiritual life, which begins when one experiences the new birth, resembles human infancy in which way?
- a)** It is and will always be irresponsible for the way it develops and for what it becomes.
 - b)** Spiritual life develops naturally without any conscious effort.
 - c)** Spiritual life develops by chance; therefore, some make it, and some do not.
 - d)** It is subject to growth, development, and maturity.
- 2** Spiritual growth and vitality, which our Lord wills for His children, are related directly to the Christian's
- a)** desire to develop his spiritual life to the full.
 - b)** spiritual nourishment, nurture, and exercise.
 - c)** willingness to let the Spirit assume and maintain control of his life.
 - d)** response to the things noted in answers a), b), and c).
- 3** The nature of spiritual life is such that if it is to be experienced to the full, it must undergo
- a)** instant maturity.
 - b)** growth and development which lead toward maturity.
 - c)** many setbacks, lapses, and failures if it is to be worthwhile.
 - d)** rapid change at the beginning and immediate and constant progress in maturity.
- 4** All of the following statements but one give reasons why spiritual growth is needed. Which is NOT one of the reasons we discussed?
- a)** Spiritual growth and development are expected from that which is spiritually alive.
 - b)** The growth and development of spiritual life to full fruit-bearing potential is commanded by our Lord.
 - c)** Spiritual development is needed to prevent spiritual boredom.
 - d)** Spiritual development is part of a process of growth toward maturity which continues as long as it is nourished properly under the Spirit's control.

- 5** The nurturing of spiritual life is vital because it
- a)** tends to be frail in its infancy.
 - b)** can never be sustained without the help of many sympathetic people.
 - c)** is impossible to understand without the assistance of spiritual specialists.
 - d)** needs to be mediated by spiritually mature people who act as spokesmen between newborn Christians and God.
- 6** Caring for one's spiritual life is needed so that new converts
- a)** can remain young in Christ and never mature.
 - b)** may not have to go through testing and hardship as many older Christians have.
 - c)** can become dependent on older believers for spiritual growth.
 - d)** can survive spiritually and develop Christian maturity.
- 7** Various levels of spiritual life are reflected in the
- a)** physical life of lower animals.
 - b)** degrees of rewards placed before the aspiring Christian in the Word to motivate him to excel in good works.
 - c)** Scripture which gives us the diet compatible for each stage of spiritual development.
- 8** A mature Christian, according to biblical definition, is the person who
- a)** excels in every spiritual enterprise.
 - b)** through constant use of his spiritual faculties has learned to distinguish good from evil.
 - c)** is perfect.
 - d)** is supported by popular consent to lead people and to make decisions for them.
- 9** The man who has never begun to live spiritually is characterized in Scripture as one who
- a)** is potentially dead in sins and trespasses.
 - b)** is able to respond minimally to spiritual things.
 - c)** cannot comprehend the issues of life in general.
 - d)** cannot receive or understand spiritual truth.

10 The person described in Scripture as the worldly man exhibits what qualities?

- a) He exists on a weak, spiritual diet.
- b) He cannot apprehend spiritual truth.
- c) He loves the things of the world: amusements, enterprises, associations, and acclaim.
- d) He has determined to reject spiritual truth.

11 The spiritual man is characterized by his

- a) other-worldly attitude, avoidance of nonspiritual people, and the world in general.
- b) rigid adherence to rules, regulations, and appearances: he seldom if ever leaves his church to mix with common people.
- c) commitment to the Lord and ability to discriminate between spiritual truth and error.
- d) emaciated features, poor clothing, spare diet, and unkempt appearance.

12 Scripture indicates that the major difference among levels of spirituality is

- a) that of time and exposure to the Word of God.
- b) the ability to receive and understand spiritual truth.
- c) the type of person involved: some respond to truth; others cannot.
- d) one of degree only: the difference between the unspiritual man and the mature man is simply the amount of light each has received.

13 One's spiritual development is directly related to one's

- a) opportunities to attend church and learn its precepts.
- b) environment: if it is favorable, he will develop rapidly.
- c) background training in spiritual things.
- d) response to the Word of God.

14 Spiritual growth is nurtured through relationships because relationships

- a)** fill the role of active support one needs.
- b)** provide the basis for one's faith.
- c)** replace the active role of the Word of God in developing character.
- d)** are the most important ingredient in building one's spiritual life.

15 One element of spiritual growth which affects both the maturing believer and those less mature is the

- a)** application of knowledge.
- b)** ability to judge the productive efforts of others in order to show them how much they need to improve.
- c)** ability to find the will of the Lord for other people, especially the immature.

answers to study questions

7 a) (Your answer may differ a little from the one provided.)
Having never been born again this man did not comprehend or respond to the Spirit. He was trying to apprehend God's truth on a nonspiritual basis, and it did not change him.

b) They are spiritual infants who still savor the simple (milk) diet and their relative freedom from responsibility. They evidence worldliness in their lack of commitment to hear and apply the truth and thus grow spiritually.

c) spiritual. Dan understands his Christian responsibilities and has assumed them. He gives evidence of a growing relationship with the Lord. He is no longer a learner of basic truths, but a teacher of others. As a result, his own spiritual life is maturing in spite of adversity.

1 c), d), and e) are true.

8 You should have circled answers **a), b), and c)**. Answer **d)** is incorrect, for spiritual life is not encouraged by simple mental assent. Biblical truth works to change not only the mind but also the behavior of an individual.

2 b) grow and develop toward maturity.

9 a) False

b) True

c) True

d) False (As one abides in Christ and is responsive to the Spirit's control, he grows; however, this is not a purely automatic process. God initiates, but we must respond for growth to occur.)

3 c) enables one to accomplish the Lord's purpose.

10 a)

4 b) and **c)** are true.

- 11** You should have circled answers **b)**, **c)**, and **d)**. Answer a) is not right because spiritual growth takes more than knowledge; it requires one to apply that knowledge.
- 5** **a)** Milk and solid food.
b) milk, solid food
c) distinguish good from evil, works of service, unity in the faith, the whole measure of Christ.
- 12** **a** 2 Does not promote maturity
b 1 Promotes maturity
c 1 Promotes maturity
d 2 Does not promote maturity
e 1 Promotes maturity
f 1 Promotes maturity
- 6** **a** 2) The worldly man
b 1) Man without the Spirit
c 3) The spiritual man
d 1) Man without the Spirit
e 2) The worldly man
f 3) The spiritual man

