

GROW

Growing Pains

I. Hebrews 5:4-9

- A. He learned obedience (**Learn**-To acquire skill in anything; To gain by practice a faculty of performing; **Obedience**-Compliance, submission)
1. This obedience and submission was something he acquired, not something he was born with – His obedience wasn't automatic
 2. Submission/compliance–You submit your will to their will–What you want and what they want is different so you're going to submit and comply
 3. Learning obedience (submission) is part of the perfecting process – It's part of growing up spiritually – Submitting your will to God's will
- B. How did he learn this obedience/submission? By the things which he suffered (**Suffered**-To feel, have a sensible experience, undergo)
1. What things that he suffered is this referring to?
 - a. *In the days of his flesh* – This points us to the fact that Jesus was in his body when this happened and also to the fact that he had human nature
 - b. Hebrews 5:7-The topic here is, “to save him from death,” and Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to be saved from death in the Garden of Gethsemane – Matthew 26:36-44, Luke 26:39-44, Mark 14:33-42, John 12:27
 - 1) The big thing he's struggling with is the He wants to do it another way and the Father wants to do it this way – He's not getting his way
 - c. He didn't learn obedience by the suffering on the cross; Had he not learned obedience before the suffering of the cross, he wouldn't even had been on the cross; He would have called those legions of angels down; Besides that after he suffered on the cross he didn't learn he died
 2. Hebrews 2:18, 1 Peter 4:1-2-His suffering was being tempted and NOT EVER yielding to the temptation – If you give into the flesh you didn't suffer
 - a. He learned to obey and submit by suffering, by telling his flesh no, by not giving into the dictates of his flesh, by not getting his way
- C. Being made perfect (**Perfect**-Complete, perfect, bring to end, consummate human integrity and virtue, full grown, adult, full age, mature)
1. Saying no to his flesh, submitting to the Father's will when he didn't want to, lead to his development (Luke 1:82, 2:52-Jesus had to grow in spirit)

II. We grow by suffering

- A. 1 Peter 2:19-24-We are called to suffer and follow in Jesus' example who didn't yield to his flesh when he was being reviled
 - 1. You can't take all suffering and put it in the same sack (like you can't do with prayer) – There are different kinds of suffering
 - a. When Jesus suffered resisting sin you can follow his example, but when he suffered on the cross you can share in that b/c he was your substitute
 - b. 2Cor1:5-Anything Jesus suffered on the cross are things you are not to suffer with because he did that as your substitute, but the suffering of his in resisting sin is the suffering you and I share in
 - 2. Romans 8:17-19-You suffer with him, but submitting to the will of God and not pleasing your flesh
 - a. Glorified together-This has to do with us reaching our most exalted state, most glorious condition
 - b. The whole creation is waiting for the manifestation of the mature sons of God
 - c. *2 Timothy 2:12-If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him*
- B. Our attitude towards suffering-1 Peter 4:12-16
 - 1. 1 Peter 3:14-If you suffer for righteousness' sake happy are you
 - 2. Acts 5:41-They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name
- C. 1 Peter 5:10-Your development is connected to your suffering (**Suffered**-To feel, have a sensible experience, undergo)
 - 1. *Make you perfect* [**Perfect**-Complete, sound, equip, strengthen, make you what ought to be (1 John 2:6-You ought to be like Jesus)]
 - a. **Stablisth**-Make stable, make firm; **Strengthen**-Make strong, of one's soul; **Settle**-Establish, make stable
 - 2. Ephesians 4:14-Children are not firm and settle and established, but rather they are tossed to and fro
- D. 1 Peter 4:1-2-What does he mean when he says, "*after you have suffered a while*" – What suffering is he referring to? The suffering is not giving into your flesh, pleasing yourself, living by human appetites and instead pleasing God and living for what God wills/wants
 - 1. *2-But to the will of God* – Not my will, but your will be done – This is suffering
 - 2. You suffered when you said no to your flesh – When you said yes to your flesh you didn't suffer
- E. Saying no to your flesh and submitting to God when you don't want to will lead to your development
 - 1. If you always give into your flesh and yield to it you won't develop the way you should – Your development is in the NO and the more you say no to your flesh the more you develop – Every time you say no to your flesh you develop
 - 2. Every time I say "NO" I grow

3. You need to say no to the stuff your flesh likes to say yes to the most those are the things that are going to help you grow the most

III. To grow spiritually arm yourself with this mind – I'm not giving my flesh what it wants even when it hurts

- A. Psalm 15:4-I'll swear to my own hurt and change not
- B. James 1:2-4-If you won't change you will develop – If won't allow the temptation to move you, you will develop
 1. **Temptations**-The trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy – The temptation comes to get you to change
 2. When you're flesh is being pulled on your faith is being tried; When your faith is bring tried put patience to work
 - a. **Patience**-Steadfastness, constancy, perseverance, endurance
 3. *That you may be perfect* – (Complete, perfect, bring to end, consummate human integrity and virtue, full grown, adult, full age, mature)
- C. Isaiah 50:7-Your development is in your refusal to change when it hurts
 1. Isaiah 41:10-You can't get to the place where you become hardened to difficulties and what used to move you doesn't move you anymore – What you used to give into you just don't give into anymore

IV. You will have God-ordained opportunities to have your flesh graded and you say no to it – Remember your development is in your NO

- A. Matthew 4:1-God will put you in situations that grate your flesh to give you the opportunity to respond right and develop
 1. The spirit of God led Jesus into the wilderness (solitary, lonely, desolate) to be tempted of the devil; **Tempted**-Test, try, make trial of: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself; test one's faith, virtue, character by enticement of sin; to prove character and steadfastness of faith
 2. 1 Peter 1:7-There is a trying of your faith and time of testing that where you prove your faith and your character and your steadfastness
 3. James 1:13-God's not tempting you and he doesn't have to – You're going to have opportunities to prove yourself and God watches
 4. You can't develop without pressure, without practice, without opportunity to perform under pressure
 - a. **KENNETH HAGIN (MUST CHRISTIANS SUFFER)**-Smith Wigglesworth said, "Great faith comes out of great tests." We read, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Of course, you can believe what God's Word has promised you. But great faith doesn't come just by feeding on God's Word. Great faith doesn't come just by hearing cassette tapes. The potential of great faith comes by hearing. But the great faith itself comes when you put what

you have heard into practice. You see, faith is a force. To build up faith muscles, you have to use your faith against something. You don't build up muscles in your body just by reading books on building muscles, do you? No! It's when you put into practice what you read and start lifting weights that the muscles begin bulging out.

- B. Suffering will make you grow spiritually in a hurry – Being put in that situation where your flesh is being grated and not yielding causes you to grow up
1. Matthew 4:1-As a result of not yielding to the flesh when he was tempted Jesus grew up and developed and had he not had the opportunity to be in this situation he would not have developed the way that he did
 2. **Kenneth Hagin**-*"I didn't know that you could hurt in so many places and still be in the will of God."*
 3. **KENNETH HAGIN (MUST CHRISTIANS SUFFER)**-*We need to learn the way of the Spirit, dear friends. And He doesn't always lead in a bed of roses or where the going is good. He doesn't always lead where there's smooth sailing and no opposition or persecution. Christ was made perfect or reached maturity through the things He suffered. Whether you like it or not, these are the things that mature us. We need to learn the way of the Spirit. He'll lead you into things like that. Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted or tested of the devil. We need to learn the way of the Spirit, because sometimes He'll lead you in ways your natural mind doesn't like. It is well to remember that some of our hardest tests are God's way of leading us into a deeper place in Him.*
 4. **KENNETH HAGIN (MUST CHRISTIANS SUFFER)**-*As I look back now, I can see I wasn't conscious of the fact that the Holy Spirit led me into many hard places. Just knowing the Word and walking by faith won't mature you. That's the reason many people never get settled or matured—they won't stay in a hard place. I thank God now for all those hard places He led me through. We don't like to hear that side of it too much. But when the Lord has told you something, stay hooked. Go right on through the tests and trials and be perfected. Do you know why I'm settled? It's because I suffered awhile. The foundation for my ministry today came in my staying put. I stayed in places where I didn't want to stay. That's where I learned so much. That's when the foundation was established in me. Stay put in hard places, and you will eventually rest upon the mountaintop.*

Stories

- I went to preach a meeting for one fellow, and I don't know why in the world he asked me to preach. He knew what I preached. I had heard him get up right in the middle of conventions and criticize what I was preaching. Here he was asking me to come hold a meeting. I said, "Lord, I don't want to go." There's some suffering that goes along with that kind of thing. Don't think it's all joy unspeakable and full of glory. I remember I started off preaching something we could all believe in. I didn't try to be controversial. The pastor said, "You preach on texts I never heard anybody preach on." That's just me. I don't try to be

somebody else—I'm me. I never in my life preached on the prodigal son, for instance. It's in the Bible, and that's fine, but I always preach on something else. Nearly everything I preached was controversial. I wasn't trying to be controversial, but it's just in me. It's the Word of God, and people didn't see that. So I started out by going along with the people in order to get their attention. You have to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. I got their attention, and then I began to drop a little faith on them. I just gave them a spoonful occasionally—people can choke to death on too much. When I would see they were slipping from me, I'd get back on some old Baptist sermons like "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb" and "The Second Coming of Jesus." I'd get them with me again, and then I'd drop a little more faith on them. Finally I announced two or three nights ahead of time that I would be speaking on a certain subject. I had put it off as long as I could, but God had said, "Do it! Do it!" I said, "Lord, why did You send me to this place to begin with?" I didn't know that you could hurt in so many places and still be in the will of God. But these are the things that will perfect you. They'll put some stamina in you. This is what it means to be led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; led by the Holy Spirit into a trial.

- I remember something that happened when I was pastoring my last church. I was making plans to go to a fall Bible conference. I had preached on a Sunday night, and my wife and I were planning to leave for the conference the next Tuesday morning. I stopped by my church office on Monday, and just as I started to go in, the Spirit of God said to me, "Fast the next few days. They're going to ask you to pray for the sick at the convention." I stepped inside the church, and said, "Well, Lord, if they do, that's going to be more than they ever did before. They haven't even asked me to pray in the past. There are hundreds of preachers there." My wife and I got to the conference on Tuesday and sat down in back because the building was full. In a little while it was time for the main speaker to begin, and the fellow who was introducing him said, "I saw Brother Hagin come in awhile ago. The Lord has been dealing with me the last day or two to have him minister to the sick tonight; to have a healing meeting." He added that another man would be the main speaker for the evening, and asked me if I would prefer to have the healing service before or after the sermon. The Scriptures say to prefer your brother before yourself, so I said I would go afterwards—and I made a mistake. You talk about suffering! The speaker was upset because he thought I might ruin his sermon. He didn't like the idea of my having a healing service. He did choose a healing text—the woman with the issue of blood. And he did all right for awhile. He talked about miracles he'd seen in the early days of the Pentecostal movement. But then he said, "I guess we shouldn't expect things like that in these times. Every movement is at its best in its beginning; then it starts to wane." He began by getting people in faith, but wound up by getting them in the dark and in doubt, and then he turned the meeting over to me! There I was, having to wade through unbelief neck deep. It was like swimming in something—and I didn't even swim in those days! I could hardly keep my head above water. The atmosphere was charged with unbelief. God wasn't expected to do what He ought to do. All the ministers on the platform were breathing that hot breath of unbelief down my neck. You talk about tough! Thank God, I don't have to put up with that anymore. I

wouldn't go through that again for \$10 million. But on the other hand, I wouldn't take \$20 million for it.

That's the thing that gave me stamina; the thing that perfected me. That was a kind of suffering. That's being led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

- About that time the two preachers came in and asked me, "Have you prayed about East Texas?" I said, "You fellows are looking at the next pastor of that church." They said, "You don't know that church like we do. It's split right down the middle. Half want the pastor to stay and half want him to leave. He can't stay unless he gets a two-thirds vote, and he only has half of that. The half that wants him to stay is mad at the other half that wants him to go. Half of them sit on one side of the church and half on the other. They can't get together on anything. You don't know that church like we do." I said, "No, I don't know that church, but I do know Jesus and the Holy Spirit. And the Lord told me, 'You're the next pastor there.' " The next week I took the whole family with me to that town and we went to one of the deacon's houses. He said, "Brother and Sister Hagin, we'd be glad to have you stay with us the whole time you're here, but if you did, some would think I was for you. They'd vote against you. You'd better go somewhere else tomorrow night." So, we stayed with another one of the board members the next night. And he said, "Brother Hagin, I'm glad you can stay with us, but some may think we're for you if you stay more than one night. They might vote against you. You had better go somewhere else." We stayed different places and one night I whispered to my wife, "You know what I'd do if I didn't know God was in this? I'd get up in the middle of the night and we'd leave—and wouldn't tell anybody we're going." But knowing that God had led me there held me steady. I was perfected through what I suffered. We need to learn the way of the Spirit, dear friends. And He doesn't always lead in a bed of roses or where the going is good. He doesn't always lead where there's smooth sailing and no opposition or persecution. But if you'll hold steady, you'll come out on top. Do you know why I'm settled? It's because I suffered awhile. You'll begin to praise God for trials and tests when you learn about them. Each one is just another opportunity to prove God. When I was preaching at that church in East Texas, we stayed with a different member each night. A time or two we even slept on the floor. I started preaching there on a Wednesday night. You talk about suffering through a service! Thank God for my Baptist training. As a Baptist I had learned to preach from an outline and I kept that outline right in front of me. It was a good thing too, or I'd have forgotten everything I knew. I went through that outline—one, two, three—and every word I said came back and slapped me in the face. By the time I got to the last point I felt like someone had been beating me in the face. After some of these meetings my wife said, "I feel like somebody has been beating me all over with his fists." You just have to suffer through some of these things. Remember that Christ was made perfect through the things He suffered. The Greek word translated "perfect" also means "mature." Christ was made perfect or reached maturity. Whether you like it or not, these are the things that mature us. We need to learn the way of the Spirit. He'll lead you into things like that. Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted or tested of the devil. I had thought I would only have to preach at that church in East Texas that one Wednesday night. But

the church board told me they wanted me to preach every night through Sunday. They said, "After Sunday night we'll have an election." I knew the Lord had said, "You're going to pastor that church." But I thought, I wish He hadn't said that! I'd leave! I was so glad I had learned to preach from notes. I could feel anointed and the minute I would step inside the church door it was like somebody had poured a bucket of cold water on me. Finally I said to my wife, "I'll go out there and throw out a little dry hay, and we'll go home." That was about all I could do. We went on through Sunday night, and the deacon board said, "What do you think about it?" I said, "Well, go ahead and vote." I never did tell them God sent me. I didn't want them to know that the Lord led me into such a mess. I said, "The church has got to have its way about it." They had their election and I got every vote but two. People said, "That's a miracle the board could ever get together on anybody." So I started pastoring that church. You talk about a fellow suffering! I suffered for the first six months. I never did say anything in front of our two children. They thought everything was wonderful. But practically every Sunday night when I got in bed I'd whisper to my wife, "If I didn't know God was in this, you know what I'd do? I'd rent a U-Haul, back it up to the parsonage at four in the morning, load in our things, and leave. I wouldn't tell a soul. People would come by the parsonage the next day and find it empty. They'd say, 'I wonder where Hagin went?' They'd know the Rapture hadn't taken place because the furniture would be gone too." In the natural that's what I would have done. But I stayed and suffered. The Lord led me. I preached the faith message when it wasn't popular. It's not too popular in some areas today. Yet I stayed with it. I preached that God wants us to prosper. At that time I had only one pair of shoes and they had holes in them. I had a dime in one pocket and a hole in the other. The automobile I was driving had four bald tires and no spare. Finally the car wore out and I sold it for junk and lit out on foot. But I stayed with it. One would not choose such a way to grow in grace. But God sees differently than we do.

- One time we were having a watch night service in one church I pastored. People would stay until midnight and watch the New Year in. We didn't have any special speaker, and people were testifying about what different ones in the church meant to them. I said, "I want to thank God for Sister So-and-so." Everybody looked at me, because Sister So-and-so was a gossip. She was a trouble-maker and was always sticking her nose in everybody else's business. She caused everybody, including me, more problems and trouble than anyone else in the church. So I said, "I want to thank God for Sister So-and-so. She's been the greatest blessing to me of anybody in this church. She's kept me on my knees almost continually. I wouldn't have prayed nearly as much if it hadn't been for her."
- I'll be honest with you—pastoring that first church in Pentecostal circles had more to do with my ministry today than anything else. I was perfected through the things I suffered.