Dig Deeper Devotional

A Better You: Growing Into the Person God Is Shaping You to Become

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for creating me with purpose and giving me the opportunity to grow throughout my life. Forgive me when I measure my progress against someone else's achievements. Help me recognize that You are calling me to become more like Jesus. Teach me to pursue growth with humility, celebrate the progress of others, and recognize that genuine transformation is measured by how faithfully my life reflects Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Foundation

> **NIV — Galatians 5:22–23**
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> “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”
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> **KJV — Galatians 5:22–23**
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> “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

Teaching & Insight

Self-improvement is used to strengthen our mind or bodies. We study to expand our knowledge, develop professional skills to advance our careers, or practice communication to improve our relationships. We may even establish spiritual disciplines through Bible study, prayer, worship, and service. These pursuits can be worthwhile because growth is a natural and necessary part of life. There is an important distinction between pursuing improvement and competing for superiority. When we measure our progress primarily against other people, comparison can produce resentment when someone surpasses us or pride when we believe we have surpassed them. Neither response necessarily makes us wiser, kinder, or more faithful. This is not to say competition is unhealthy in events that warrant it. Competition when you are comparing yourself to others is not giving you a proper measure, especially spiritually.

A healthier measure is to examine our own progress. Am I becoming more patient than I was a year ago? Do I respond to disappointment with greater maturity? Am I more willing to admit when I am wrong? Do I treat people with greater kindness, including those who cannot benefit me? These questions move the focus away from winning a comparison and toward becoming the person God is shaping me to be. Our goal is not only to become a better version of ourselves, but to become more like Jesus. Personal development can strengthen our abilities, but spiritual transformation reaches into our character, motives, desires, and relationships. It is not merely self-improvement with religious language attached. It is the continuing work of God's Spirit within a person who belongs to Christ.

Every person has a unique combination of abilities, experiences, opportunities, limitations, and responsibilities. Comparing our lives as though everyone began from the same starting point ignores those differences and often distorts our understanding of success. Someone else's accomplishments do not diminish our value, just as our accomplishments do not make another person less valuable.

A Better You

Scripture consistently warns against the pride that accompanies self-exaltation. In Galatians 6:4, Paul encourages believers to examine their own actions rather than making themselves feel superior by comparing themselves with others. This does not mean we should never learn from another person's example. Wise mentors, faithful Christians, and godly leaders can help us recognize what growth looks like. The danger arises when their progress becomes a reason to desregard our own journey or to feel superior because we believe we have advanced further.

Instead, consider the person you were yesterday. Perhaps you still struggle with impatience, but you recognize it sooner and adapt more quickly. Perhaps you continue to wrestle with anger and you are learning to bring your concerns to God rather than allowing fear to govern every decision. Such progress may not attract public recognition, yet it can represent meaningful growth. Your best measure is to ask yourself: “Am I becoming more faithful with what God has entrusted to me.”

The perfect role model for the Christian life is Jesus. We cannot become divine, reproduce His unique role as Savior, or earn God's acceptance through flawless behavior. Nevertheless, we are called to grow in Christlikeness. Our words, decisions, relationships, and priorities should increasingly reflect the character of the One we follow. Paul describes this process in Romans 8:29, explaining that God's purpose is for believers to be conformed to the image of His Son. This transformation is not accomplished through determination alone. We respond through obedience, Scripture, prayer, fellowship, repentance, and service, while depending upon the Holy Spirit to change us from within. Christian growth requires humility: we recognize the need for change, take responsible steps toward it, and give God the credit for the transformation He produces. We are not striving to earn salvation. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive God's grace; then, through the Spirit's continuing work, we learn to live in a manner that reflects the grace we have received.

DEED / ACTION

This week, complete a “Better You Checkup” using the fruit of the Spirit as your guide.

Step 1: Choose One Quality

Read Galatians 5:22–23 and identify one quality you most need to develop right now. Choose something specific, such as patience in stressful situations or self-control in your speech.

Step 2: Identify Your Growth Opportunity

Consider where this quality is most often tested. Identify a relationship, recurring situation, or personal habit that reveals where change is needed.

Step 3: Practice a Different Response

Ask the Holy Spirit for help, then choose one practical action that reflects Christ's character. You might listen without interrupting, respond calmly instead of reacting angrily, or keep a commitment when doing so becomes inconvenient.

Step 4: Review Your Progress

At the end of the week, reflect on what changed and where you still struggled. Thank God for the progress, acknowledge where you need further growth, and continue practicing rather than comparing yourself with someone else.

Pause & Reflect

- Where have I been measuring my worth against someone else's achievements?
- What change in my character would demonstrate genuine progress over the past year?
- Am I pursuing Christlikeness or simply becoming more successful at achieving my personal ambitions?

Consider one final question:

What might become different in my relationships, decisions, and witness to Christ one year from now?

Hebrew Insight

צֶלֶם (*Tselem*) — “Image, representation, likeness”

In Genesis 1:27, Scripture declares that God created humanity in His image. This establishes the dignity and worth of every person; our value does not depend upon our achievements, appearance, abilities, or standing in comparison with others.

Greek Insight

καρπός (*Karpos*) — “Fruit, produce, result”

In Galatians 5:22, *karpos* describes the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Paul's choice of imagery is significant: fruit develops from a living source and becomes visible over time. It is not manufactured merely to impress an observer.

The fruit of the Spirit provides evidence of God's transforming work within us. As we walk by the Spirit, our character should increasingly display love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Closing Prayer

Father,

Thank you for the ultimate sacrifice of your Son, Jesus Christ. I seek to grow and become Christlike knowing that you have instilled in me deep love and lasting joy. Teach me to move good intentions into faithful action and be better than I was before today. Where qualities are weak, help me recognize my need for Your transforming work rather than hiding behind excuses, showing pride or comparing myself with someone else. May the person I become reflect the Savior I follow, bringing encouragement to others and glory to You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Charge

You do not need to become better than someone else to become the person God is calling you to be. Your task is to follow Jesus faithfully, recognize where your character needs to grow, and depend upon the Holy Spirit to produce lasting change.

Measure progress by Christlikeness, not comparison. Let grace be your foundation, the Spirit your guide, and Jesus your example. Become a better you by becoming more like Him, one faithful decision at a time.

Sources

- The Holy Bible
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
- Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
- Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
- Mondays With Mark Video Series — LifeMark Ministries