



Mother's Day

S E R V I C E

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS A PROCESS IN WHICH
GOD AND I EACH HAVE A PART**

ICEBREAKER |

When you were growing up, what's the one thing you loved to do with your mom or dad? Or, maybe as a parent now, what's the one thing you love to do with your kids?

INTRODUCTION |

On Mother's Day, there's lots to celebrate! As we remember our own mothers fondly, or those who were mother figures in our lives, we also look forward to the relationships we are building. One thing that is great about building relationships is growing together. Our relationship with God is also about growing. And we get to do it together. Just like baking cookies, learning math, or finding out about life from our mom, we learn about a rich spiritual life from God. Let's learn three ways that we work with God to accomplish that.

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Jesus taught us that a rich spiritual life was a lot like a garden. He is the main vine and we are the branches. That means we each have a role to play in our growth. Just as He asks us to commit to getting into it, He promises to stick with us as well.

“Abide in Me, and I in you.”

John 15:4 (ESV)

If God has His role and we have ours, that means that it's not all on us but it's also not all up to God. We have the greatest resource in the universe! But we still need to do the work necessary to grow. Read the following verse:

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

God is at work within us. His Holy Spirit is moving in our lives, gifting us with power and enabling us to follow Him. Then, we respond by doing what is right. The Christian life cannot be lived on autopilot. But we don't run with an empty tank either.

Can you name some examples of God doing His part (like convicting us of wrong and forgiving our sins) and us doing ours (like loving our neighbors and serving the church)?

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Let's take a look at three ways that we and God work together to grow. The first one is: **He Invites and We Respond**

Jesus once told His disciples that they didn't choose Him, He chose them. Before any of us can respond to God's call, He first invites us to join Him. Take a look at this passage:

God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son... And having chosen them, He called them to come to Him. And having called them, He gave them right standing with Himself. And having given them right standing, He gave them His glory.

Romans 8:29-30 (NLT)

How incredible is that! God is all knowing. He knows every single thing about you. And He chose you for something glorious!

“God knows me and He chose me.” (say that together)

He knows even the worst parts about my life, the big mistakes I've made, and the times that I rejected Him. And still, He loved me enough to send His Son to die for me. Why wouldn't we want to respond to that?

Besides a call to receive Jesus into our life, what are some other things that God invites us to that we should respond to?

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Next: **He Teaches and We Learn**

God is the greatest teacher. Not just because He knows everything, but because of His patience and loving kindness in how He teaches us. In fact, teaching us is something that He made sure of before Jesus left. Here is one of the last things He told His disciples before going to the cross:

But the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take My place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you. The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth.

John 14:26; 16:13 (CEV)

There are so many ways that God can teach us. First, He can speak to our hearts. He can speak through His words, through music, through sermons, even through our friends. He can also teach us by example. Seeing how others interact with Him can help us learn more about Him and ourselves. He can even teach us through experience. Imagine how even a bad day can give us a good lesson.

What has God been teaching you lately?

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Finally: **He Brings Good from Evil and We Endure**

This might be a tough one to swallow. Whenever we come up against something bad, it's hard to take. But with God in us and we in Him, there will always be something good that can come from it. Consider this piece of wisdom:

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.
James 1:2-4 (NLT)

Notice there is always a method to spiritual growth. God is moving behind the scenes, allowing our faith to be tested and our endurance to grow. Then, we have perfection and completeness if we stick with it. This doesn't happen overnight, but it can produce something great.

We pray that you'll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul —not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy.
Colossians 1:11 (MSG)

Can you think of a time you went through a difficult time, but looking back on it you saw how God was working everything out for your good?

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When God does His part and we do ours, something incredible happens. We begin to grow. We want to spend more time in His word and in prayer. We can see our emotions and behaviors changing for the better. We find relationships are more fulfilling and our jobs are more enjoyable.

This takes a lifelong commitment, though. We'll never reach perfection on this side of eternity. But we can keep working towards it.

I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 (GNT)

What is something that God has begun in your life that you want to see Him complete? (Example, healing a relationship, getting a new job, starting a ministry)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

As we continue celebrating mothers, not just this day but every day, we are blessed by what every woman in our life means to us. We can also see what we mean to them, as well. In a way, it's like our relationship with God in our spiritual growth. This week, here are three questions to keep in mind and respond to:

1. When He invites, will you respond?
2. When He teaches, will you learn?
3. When He brings good from evil, will you endure?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God, we know You are at work every day. We see You moving and we thank You for it. Make our hearts tender to what You want from us. Motivate us to learn and respond to Your Spirit's calling. And help us identify more ways to grow. In Jesus' name we pray, amen!

SCRIPTURES FOR SOAP:

Day 1: *Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes.*

Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

Day 2: *We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything He wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding His Spirit gives. Then you will live a life that honors the Lord, and you will always please Him by doing good deeds. You will come to know God even better.*

Colossians 1:9-10 (CEV)

Day 3: *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

James 1:5 (NIV)

Day 4: *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.*

Romans 8:28 (NLT)

Day 5: *My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when His glory is revealed.*

1 Peter 4:12-13 (GNT)