

*These Perilous Times*  
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What Do God's People Believe?

Part XI

Have you ever experienced the rewards associated with the planting of a vegetable garden? A lot of thought and hard work are involved in the initial stages.

The ground has to be well cultivated and free from weeds to accommodate what the gardener wishes to plant.

First time gardeners may raise some questions, i.e. what type of soil Ph; {acid level} is required for the best results? Should the garden be planted in full sun or a shaded area? What sort of vegetables *grow* best in my region of the county or country? What is the best time to plant? How long is the *growing season*?

How much *daily water* is needed? Do I need to use some lyme or a special type of fertilizer to change the Ph balance of the soil? Should I use pesticides?

Many of us have had the opportunity to *grow* our own vegetables. The reward of all the hard work comes at harvest time.

For me, the most exciting part of planting my garden, {as a novice many years ago} was to see the tiny seeds planted transform into mature plants and vegetables.

**What does this mean for us?**

## *Obvious Signs Do Tell The Season*

Unfortunately, regardless of our efforts not every seed planted in our gardens reaches maturity, and makes it to the harvest. There is a powerful object lesson in gardening that teaches us about our spiritual lives as we *grow in Christ*.

**Seventh-day Adventist Believe...**

### **11. Growing in Christ**

“Birth Is A Moment Of Joy. A seed germinates, and the appearance of those first two leaves makes the gardener happy. A baby is born, and its first screams announces to the world that here is a new life to reckon with.

The mother forgets all about her pain and joins the rest of the family in joy and celebration... The joy of the gardener, the ecstasy of the mother, and the promise of a freedom-filled future at times turn into disappointment, grief, and mourning.

*Growth—continual, constant, maturing, and fruit-bearing growth—is essential to life. Without it birth has no meaning or purpose or destiny. To grow is an inseparable equation of life—both physical and spiritual.*

*Physical growth* demands proper nourishment, environment, nurture, exercise, education, training, and a purpose-filled life. But the issue under consideration here is **spiritual growth**. How do we growth in Christ and mature as Christians? What are the *hallmarks of spiritual growth*?<sup>1</sup>

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom.

Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His

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<sup>1</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Believe, "A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Beliefs," 2005, pp. 149-162.

love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. *Continually committed to Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we are set free from the burden of past deeds.* No longer do we live in darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life.

*In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily, in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the church.*

As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us *through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience,*" <sup>2</sup> {Emphasis supplied}, Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11,12; Col. 1:13, 14, 15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; I Thess. 5:23; II Pet. 2:9; 3:18; II Cor. 3:17, 18; Phil. 3:7-14; I Thess. 5:16-18; Matt. 20:25-28; John 20:21; Gal. 5:22-25; Rom. 8:38, 39; I John 4:4; Heb. 10:25.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 149-150.

