

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven," and, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a person who built his house upon the rock."

Matthew 7:21 & 24

We have to live what we believe. When we build our lives on a strong foundation of the Lord's teachings, and try to put those teachings into practice, we begin to walk the path to genuine happiness and heaven. We all have experienced a time when we did something good and felt a sense of joy and satisfaction from it. This is what heavenly happiness feels like. It builds us up. It strengthens us. It is peaceful. It is heavenly.



### **Spiritual Growth**

The path is really very simple.

**Look to the Lord** - Learn what God teaches. Ask Him to show you what changes need to be made in your life. Pray for guidance every day.

**Look at yourself** - What habits or behaviors are harming your relationship with God, your family members, your friends, and others?

**Take responsibility** - Acknowledge the things that you do which you see are unhealthy and wrong. Confess them to God and ask for His help to overcome them.

**Work on it** - Choose one habit, thought pattern, or behavior that you wish to change, and ask God to remove it from your life. Take action yourself, but remember that it is the Lord who gives you the strength to overcome temptations and change.

**Begin a new life** - Through this process we become more compassionate, wiser, and less fearful. We are spiritually reborn.

### **The New Church**

[www.newchurch.org](http://www.newchurch.org)



# **Rebirth and Spiritual Growth**



**"Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a firm spirit within me."**

**Psalms 51:10**

**New Church Perspective Series**



# Rebirth and Spiritual Growth

## ***Spiritual Rebirth***

We don't need to walk around in continuous meditation and prayer to become spiritual people. We can be engaged in our work, home, and social lives. We are meant to behave civilly and morally. We are meant to act honestly and fairly. We are meant to be useful while on earth.

The New Church teaches, though, that anyone can behave in these ways. So what takes these same actions to a spiritual level? The motivation is the key element.

Actions become spiritual actions when we do them because they are the right thing to do, because God asks us to. We are no longer motivated by the desire to behave morally or civilly in order to look good for other people. It is no longer about getting ahead. It's not about being afraid of getting caught doing something we should not be doing. Our actions become based in love, instead of fear.

This is spiritual rebirth.

## ***Heaven Is For Everyone***

Everyone would like to go to heaven after they die. The New Church teaches that it is God's will that all of us live happily there with Him to eternity.

Is there a sure path to heaven? In the Bible, God gave us some very simple yet profound rules for living:

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."* Matthew 22:37-39

*"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you."* Matthew 7:12

And the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:1-17



## ***Spiritual Growth***

The foundation for spiritual life is loving God and other people, being useful, and turning away from the evil, harmful tendencies we observe in ourselves. This is the key to genuine, lasting, and mature happiness.

Jesus said, *"A new command I give unto you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."*

John 13:34-35

Some people believe that being "saved," comes from simply believing in certain teachings, being chosen by God, or belonging to a certain religion. The New Church teaches that believing alone is not enough - we have to act on what we believe. We have to live our lives in such a way that God's truth directs our actions and God's love shows through us. Believing in God", and yet not trying to live the way he has taught, is not truly believing. We have to do our part, wanting and trying to live as the Lord has shown us, because it is the right thing to do. Trying to change the way we live is a process of spiritual growth, which happens one step at a time as we resist a negative, harmful thought or behavior and choose a better one. As we do this, we grow closer to the Lord, and this is the process leading us to salvation.