

## Make Your Choice

It may be good to ask oneself, "Why do I not grow spiritually?" Despite all the pious practices and listening to the Word of God we are not growing in our spiritual lives. We read in Genesis 2:7: "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being." God created man without asking him. But if he is to be saved He needs his consent. Without one's consent and cooperation God cannot save us.

- God can come anywhere at anytime. "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking, if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me" (Rev. 3:20). The Lord will only knock, he won't push the door open. It is for my part to open the door.
- The Lord has given us the capacity to choose. "If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice. He has placed before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you choose. Before each person are life and death, and whichever one chooses will be given"(Sir. 15:15-17). It is our responsibility to choose the right thing, according to the will of God. "It was he who created human kind in the beginning, and he left them in the power of their own free choice" (Sir. 15:16). He has given us freedom to live with Him. The first parents misused the freedom of choice and fell as prey to Satan, and hid themselves behind the bushes and leaves. Without our consent and good choice God cannot save us. St. Augustine says that, God who created you without you, cannot save you without you.
- If one wants to get rid of one's bad habits he has to pray with an earnest desire. Jesus asks apparently a strange question to a paralytic patient: "Do you want to be made well?" If one does not want He cannot do anything. There are ever so many instances of people who really changed because of their ardent desire, prayer and cooperation with the grace.
- The Lord is ready to help all those who express or show a desire. Zacchaeus expressed his desire to see Jesus by climbing on a tree; and Jesus blessed his desire, and he became a changed person. The prodigal son wished to get out of the filthy situation and walked out of the situation; he was welcomed by his father with embraces and kisses.
- In whatever situation you are in, if you really wish and cooperate with the Lord He will change you. In the case of the prodigal son, in the first place he chose to get out of his house--from the presence of his father. Later he used his freedom to choose the right thing--to go back to his father's presence where he was welcomed beyond his expectation.

In conclusion, spiritual progress consists of desire, choosing the right thing and cooperation with the grace. As St. Augustine says: "Without God you cannot, without you God will not."

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