

# THE PROCESS OF BEING

By Bill Irby

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Human existence is a process, not a state. We do not stand still, ever. From the time of our conception we move through time. Things may seem to be the same, but they are not. Every day is different and we are a bit different every day.

Our kids illustrate the reality of life as process. I've been around here long enough to see it in your kids and you've seen it in mine. A fine young woman showed me the birthday card she bought for her friend's seventeenth birthday. I remember when they were both little children; I remember when the boy was born. They have changed and so have I. So have you. It's a process.

I am not here so concerned with the physical aspect of the process of being. The spiritual process of being is more important. We begin without much in the way of spiritual consciousness. But even as little children we start to learn about things that transcend material reality. We learn about emotion, feelings and love. These are God's tools to make us look beyond the here and now to necessity of spiritual growth in the process of life.

Life here is literally and essentially a waste of time, space and energy unless we see the need to grow spiritually. It is good to work and play, to sleep and eat, to dream and study in and about this life. But it is not enough. God has made us capable of doing more.

I think that the apostle Peter was a good fellow. He was a fisherman, but he did not remain one. He was bull-headed, but he did not stay that way. He denied the Lord, but he did not deny Him forever. He was religiously a Jew who became a Christian. He was a man in the process of growing as a child of God. Theses

are the last words of his second New Testament letter: “But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen” (2 Peter 3:18).

This record teaches us that Peter was in the process of growth. In the first chapter of 2 Peter he wrote about adding to our lives what we have come to call the Christian graces. He wrote, And beside all this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love (2 Peter 1:5-7). None of these graces can be added to life once and for all or all at once. The Christian life requires spiritual growth everyday. The process does not end.

Paul also saw it. He wrote this: Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but thing one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14). He knew he didn't have it made. But he did know that he was in the process of making it. He pressed toward the mark. That was his process. It must be ours, too.

I am glad that the Christian life is not done all at once. It begins all at once when a person obeys the gospel (Romans 1:16, Mark 16:16). But that is not the end of it. We know it is just the beginning. God has blessed us with life that is lived as a series of physical and spiritual processes. Let us honor Him by working hard to grow spiritually.