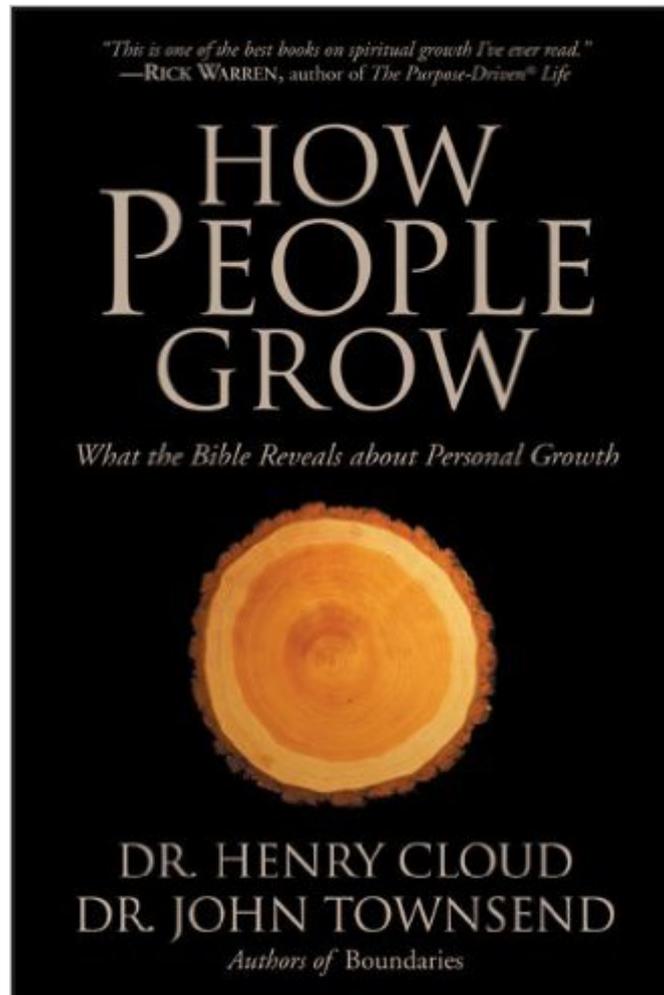


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# How People Grow: What The Bible Reveals About Personal Growth



## Synopsis

All growth is spiritual growth. Authors Drs. Cloud and Townsend unlock age-old keys to growth from Scripture to help people resolve issues of relationships, maturity, emotional problems, and overall spiritual growth. They shatter popular misconceptions about how God operates and show that growth is not about self-actualization, but about God's sanctification. In this theological foundation to their best-selling book *Boundaries*, they discuss:

- What the essential processes are that make people grow
- How those processes fit into a biblical understanding of spiritual growth and theology
- How spiritual growth and real-life issues are one and the same
- What the responsibilities are of pastors, counselors, and others who assist people in growing—and what your own responsibilities are in your personal growth

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

While "How People Grow" concentrates on a small group setting, the book is also valuable for the individual person struggling with spiritual growth. Among the many interesting points the authors describe include:

1. We have to give up our self-sufficiency and submit to God's rule in our lives.
2. Humility is an essential trait for bearing pain and we are created to be dependent on God and others.
3. We are responsible for submitting our will to God's will.
4. Guilt is inwardly focused while godly sorrow is focused on how we have hurt others.
5. Grief is an essential part of spiritual growth.
6. Psychology is to be used only to support, not supplant, the Bible.
7. We need to show people that change is not just for religious reasons, but as the way to a better life.
8. God has a special

tenderness towards those who are needy and brokenhearted.<sup>9</sup> Life works much better when we surrender lordship to Jesus.<sup>10</sup> Excellent points on dealing with rebellion and overcoming temptation. Additionally, the book stresses the importance of being accountable to safe people who are interested in our spiritual growth and are not out to just judge others. The book is highly recommended for either the individual or small group leader interested in facilitating the spiritual growth of others. I believe the book would have been even more valuable if more text had been dedicated to developing strategies for finding safe people to confide in and some specific steps to facilitating growth. In other words, many principles were stated but fewer strategies were mentioned. For example, the tips for growers and facilitators at the end of every chapter could have been more specific (what questions to ask, what specific steps can you step to help those hurt by distorted Bible teachings, how can you teach the value of godly sorrow, etc.). The complaint aside, I highly recommend the book!

In the short time I have seen this book pass through several hands, I have seen it change lives. My wife has used it to understand and overcome a stalled relationship with her mom. My Salvation Army friend says it is essentially the same approach used by them to treat addictions and alcohol abuse. In short, it is an excellent presentation of two basic truths: - A personal relationship with God, through Christ, is the necessary first step for spiritual growth...which is the only real growth. - All growth after that first step is in relationship with others. If anyone is looking for an in-depth understanding of why they can or cannot overcome personal limits, this is the best resource I've seen. And if you follow John Townsend or Henry Cloud's work, this is a decent summary of all they have been teaching over the years.

How People Grow is an easily accessible, Biblically-centered, psychologically-deep, and thorough overview of the growth process. I have read through this book twice and refer to it sporadically to refresh my memory on various parts of the growth process and, in my work with college students, urge them to read the book. I have found that living out and sharing its insights has helped me in every area of life, from becoming a more effective evangelist to developing stronger work habits. My main challenge in reading it is owning up to how misguided my understanding of the growth process has been, how I have subsequently misled others, repenting of these mistakes, and seeking to think and live differently in the future. It is a book that speaks to deep issues in a grace-filled but challenging way.

The authors may have influenced my thinking and life profoundly in the 5 years I have come to listen to and read them, but there was no way I would let anyone get away with clunky spiritual assertions if there were any. But I didn't have to as there weren't any in 'How People Grow'. Now this is difficult for me. Cloud and Townsend have themselves suggested and promoted that if we agree with someone about nearly everything, then there is probably something wrong. I would in an instant be flamed by them, but 'How People Grow' just keeps getting me to appreciate and honour God more and more as well as walk in truth and grace that all I can do is thank God it was written. (I will take the flak to the so-called heresy-hunters.) From the first day 2 years ago, this book has always managed to point me back to a God of loving and truthful holiness, grace, acceptance, unconditional love and majesty. They write about the same Christian God who has been misrepresented in the legalistic and 'holier-than-thou' evangelical and Charismatic circles, and the One skewed beyond recognition by the liberal camp. Much of what I read in their books and listen in their messages hark to the works of Henri Nouwen and Philip Yancey in the spirit and tenor of the themes. 'How People Grow' is ultimately about accepting that we desperately need God and His resources and His ways to accomplish life as He has planned it for us. People play an integral part in God's plan for us. Also, without humbly asking each other for help and support, we negate and cut-off a crucial resource of God to our detriment. 'How People Grow' is already the best devotional in my room among an impressive array of old trusted standards and it has spoiled me. I won't be able to read anymore "you-better-comply-or-God-will-be-mad-at-you" books. Neither the "look-at-me, aint-i-great-and-blessed, it-was-just-God-and-me-all-the-way" offerings. Thank God for tender mercies

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