

Grow in Grace and Knowledge

Sermon Delivered on January 1st, 2017

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Text: [2 Peter 3:9-18](#)

Introduction

This morning's subject is about growth and more specifically Christian growth or spiritual growth. As we begin this new year, 2017, I want us to stop and think about our lives and see if we made some progress. Many of you have been saved recently. After we get saved, God expects us to grow, to develop and to mature.

Babies are cute and adorable in many ways. Though babies brings pleasure, we don't want them to stay babies for ten years, twenty years, thirty years, etc. We want them and expect them to grow. We know that there are no twenty-year-old babies. But there are twenty-year-olds, forty-year-olds, sixty-year-olds who often act like babies. If we meet a grown up man but still wearing baby diaper and acting like a baby, we don't say, "O how cute and adorable." No, we say, that's weird, because something obviously is wrong with the person.

As we expect babies to grow up, God expects His children to grow up and mature spiritually. We are to grow. We all need to grow. It matters not how young or how old you are in the faith, you and I need to grow, for **we never outgrow the need to grow**. We cannot be stagnant. We cannot just stay where we are. **Christian life is like riding a bicycle** – either you keep moving forward or you fall. Have you ever tried riding a bike standing still? It is hard to do. When you are riding a bike you must move forward or you will fall.

That is what Peter is saying in our text ...

[2 Peter 3:17](#) Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. [18](#): But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Here, Peter warns his readers from being carried away with error and lose their stability and fall. In the spiritual realm, the secret from falling is growth. This is how we are kept from falling, from growing cold, from becoming lukewarm, from backsliding. We must constantly make progress or else we will fall.

The exhortation here in our text is to grow in grace and to grow in knowledge. Before we talk about these two areas of growth, let us first look at what are implied here.

It is implied that we are alive by grace

The implication is that we are alive and therefore, capable of growth. Dead things cannot grow. Growth is the evidence of life.

It is implied that we are not perfect in grace

The second implication is that there is plenty of room for growth. We will never outgrow the need to grow.

Now, let us look at the two areas we need to grow as Christians.

I - Grow in Grace

What does it mean to grow in grace?

To grow in grace is synonymous to sanctification. To grow in grace is to mature as a Christian. To grow in grace is to increasingly manifest the fruit of the Spirit in one's life such as enumerated in ...

[Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.](#)

To grow in grace is to grow in virtue, patience, a spirit of forgiveness, usefulness. To grow in grace is to increase in love for the things which the Lord Jesus Christ loves, such as the church and the lost.

Ultimately, to grow in grace means to become more and more like Jesus Christ and have His perfection. Isn't this the ultimate goal of salvation?

[Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.](#)

Isn't this the ultimate reason why God is causing all things to work together for our good? To be conformed to the image of His Son.

[Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.](#)

To be conformed to the image of God's Son is to be like Christ in holiness and character.

All growth is by God's grace. It is God's gift. We must constantly ask Him in prayer to make us grow. We need God's grace, not only in salvation but also in sanctification.

II - Grow in Knowledge

Now, how do we grow in grace?

How do we grow into maturity? How do we increasingly manifest the fruit of the Spirit? How do we become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ? How do we become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ in holiness and character?

It is to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

2 Peter 3:17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18: But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

The only way we can spiritually grow in grace is by seeking after the knowledge that will cause this growth to occur in the first place, which is to grow in our knowledge of who Christ is and what He has done.

Peter in his introduction to this letter, gives us what it means and how to grow in grace ...

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5: And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your **faith** virtue; and to **virtue knowledge**; 6: And to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance **patience**; and to patience **godliness**; 7: And to godliness **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness **charity**. 8: For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of God and the knowledge of Christ is very essential to Christian growth.

Colossians 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10: That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Paul expresses his desire for Christians to grow spiritually. If we want to grow as a Christian, we must grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This right here is why many Christians are not making much spiritual growth over the course of their lives after they initially get saved – all because they are not seeking after the knowledge of God that will cause this spiritual growth to occur in the first place.

Understand, the key to becoming more like Christ is ...

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when

he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3: And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Christians today, don't always see that as clearly as they should. Perhaps that explains why we are not all we ought to be, either in our worship of God, or in our fellowship with one another or in our witness to the world. My hope is that this sermon will contribute to a more God-centered way of living for the hearer.

How do we gain that knowledge?

Coming to know Him better through **the study of the Word, through intimate fellowship with Him**. All this means a deeper and deeper knowledge of Christ. Paul cried, "That I may know Him." Grace is the sphere of our growth. Knowledge is the component of that growth.

But Christ is not just a subject to be studied; **He also is a person to be known**. We should be growing to know Him personally on a deeper and deeper level as we spend frequent time with Him in His Word and in prayer.

Why do we strive to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Our aim in growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is not so that we can feel happier or more fulfilled or more significant. Rather, our lives should exalt Christ, so that through us others may see how great He truly is. "**He must increase, but I must decrease**" (John 3:30). He alone is worthy!

The more we grow in knowledge, the more we grow in grace, the more we grow in grace, the more glory we bring to God.

Closing Thoughts

God's will for us is not only that we get saved but also that we continue to grow. He gives us grace for that to take place. He gives us the tools we need — His Word and the teaching ministry of the church — to communicate what we need to know.

At the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, the last of the marathon runners were being carried off the field to first aid stations about an hour after the winner had crossed the finish line. Just a few spectators remained in the stands when they suddenly heard the sound of sirens and police whistles. All eyes turned to the gate to see John Stephen Akhwari, wearing the colors of Tanzania, limping into the stadium. His leg was bloodied and bandaged from a bad fall. He hobbled around the track past the finish line as the crowd rose and applauded as if he were the winner.

Someone later asked him why he had not quit, in spite of his injury and the fact that he had no chance of winning a medal. He replied, "*My country did not send me 7,000 miles to start the race. They sent me 7,000 miles to finish it.*" (From, Leadership, Spring, 1992, p. 49.)

Christ did not give His life for us just to start the Christian life. He gave His life so that you and I would finish it and finish it well. We will do so if we guard ourselves from spiritual error by growing in the grace and knowledge of Him, and by living our lives to glorify His name.

Are you growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ? What are you doing to know Him? What are you doing to increase in that knowledge and in that walk with God? It is our great calling, as children of God, to know Him and to press ever more unto that knowledge which is above all things most precious, the knowledge of the true and living God.

AMEN!