

# Grow in Grace

God did not spend His grace, in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, to redeem and adopt children, who would merely enjoy this natural life, without spiritual growth or fruit for His pleasure.

“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.”  
II Peter 3:18

April 12, 2001

# Introduction

The grace of God is more than election, justification, regeneration, and glorification. It is more than the eternal, legal, and instantaneous work of salvation; it is also the blessed privilege and ability to know and live for God (John 17:2).

It is more than something for which to be thankful. It is more than the means of eternal life. It is something in which we should grow now.

Grace is . . . demerited favour and privilege – an incredible concept and fact. We are identified by doctrine as those believing and preaching grace, but are we living and growing in that grace?

Why were we saved? Just to go to heaven?

He could have simply taken us to heaven.

We sing “Amazing Grace,” but what are we doing with it?

Consider your ways (Haggai 1:5).

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

We were created again in regeneration to walk in good works (Ephesians 2:10). If we were not supposed to do something with out regeneration, then it would be a part of glorification.

There is a new man within us created in righteous and true holiness (Eph 4:20-24). We are to put him on after we have put off the old man.

“If so be . . .” is the motive (I Peter 2:1-3). He is very gracious; are we very ambitious? Do we crave growth in grace and the knowledge of Christ Jesus?

We are growing older, fatter, slower, duller, etc. Are we growing spiritually? In wisdom? In faith? In knowledge? In Christ? In fruit? We are not dealing with growing in graciousness, other than graciousness being one of those things in which we are to increase as God’s children.

We are dealing, in the uncertain optimism that a fruitless person is a child of God, with the difference between Abraham and Lot (James 2:21-23; Jude 1:7-9); though a fruitless life gives great evidence of never knowing Jesus Christ in any vital way.

God has graciously given us the power and all things necessary for partaking of the divine nature, but are we approaching the character of God (II Peter 1:1-4)?

Since we were dead, and He died for us; is it strange that we should live for Him? And if living for Him, then growth should occur (II Cor 5:14-15).

Why are we alive? What is your goal in living today? Tomorrow?

# Grow in Grace

## I. The OBJECTIVE

- A. Growth in any field or endeavor must first establish a purpose and its importance.
- B. True saints press toward the mark of God's great prize in Christ (Phil 3:12-14).
  - 1. They do not sit still from complacency or slothfulness (Eph 5:14-16).
  - 2. Paul was not content with his attainments of knowledge and holiness.
  - 3. He greatly desired to more perfectly fulfill his calling by Christ's grace.
  - 4. Only perfection in holiness is acceptable for God's children (II Cor 7:1).
- C. True saints give all diligence to add to their faith and bear fruit (II Peter 1:5-15).
  - 1. The lack of diligence and fruit shows a very careless attitude toward grace.
  - 2. Peter frequently reminded saints of this duty to stir them up to diligence.
  - 3. Those graces we have should be abounding more and more (I Thess 4:1).
- D. God's true grace should always result in teaching us several things (Tit 2:11-14).
  - 1. The gospel of God's grace cannot be content with thanksgiving and praise.
  - 2. It must teach a lifestyle of self-denial, godly zeal, and looking for Christ.
  - 3. We put off our old man and put on a glorious new man (Eph 4:20-24).
- E. True disciples of Jesus Christ glorify His father by bearing fruit (John 15:1-8).
  - 1. We interpret this figure as beginning with our vital union in Jesus Christ.
  - 2. The great Husbandman will not put up with fruitless lives (15:1-2).
  - 3. We can do much in Christ; we can do nothing away from Christ (15:4-5).
  - 4. He punishes those who are fruitless and rewards those bearing fruit (6-8).
- F. Consider this glorious description of our growth objective in grace (Col 1:9-11).
- G. Consider another description of great growth in faith by grace (II Thess 1:3-4).
- H. Even in obedient churches, Paul prayed for spiritual progress (Philippians 1:9-11).
- I. Previously darkness, we now are to prove the Spirit and light (Ephesians 5:7-10).
- J. Previously foolish, our gracious salvation now demands good works (Titus 3:3-8).
- K. We are stewards of the manifold grace of God for serving others (I Pet 4:10-11).
- L. Paul rebuked the Hebrews for not growing in knowledge of Christ (Heb 5:12-14).
- M. The saint's life is as a race, where only the diligent win the prize (I Cor 9:24-27).
- N. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," is only for some (Matt 25:14-30).
  - 1. Regardless of gifts, reasonable efforts to use them obtain the same reward.
  - 2. But even a small gift not exploited for the Master receives sore judgment.

## II. The FEAR

- A. Growth in any field or endeavor may be missed or lost entirely by negligence.
- B. It is possible to fail of the grace of God (II Corinthians 6:1; Tit 2:11; I Cor 15:10).
  - 1. This cannot mean to lose eternal life (Ps 89:28-37; Rom 8:28-39; Jn 6:39).
  - 2. This cannot mean confusion about grace (Gal 2:21; 5:4; Heb 12:15; 13:9).
  - 3. This does mean to squander or waste God's grace (I Cor 9:27; II Pet 1:9).
- C. Jesus prayed for Peter's faith not to fail under satanic temptations (Luke 22:32).
- D. A fruitless life is evidence of appointment to judgment by a holy God (Jude 1:12).
- E. Paul had a mess at Corinth - a church awash in carnality and errors (I Cor 3:1-3).
- F. To return to former ways is to be profane and vile like a dog or pig (II Peter 2:22).
- G. If we do not bear fruit, we may expect to be cut off in some way (Luke 13:6-9).

- H. God will judge His people for not exploiting His grace (Heb 10:30-31; Is 65:12; 66:4; Pro 1:24-31; II Chron 36:15-16; Luke 12:48; Ezek 16:1-43; Matt 25:24-30).
- I. But consider the great DISGRACE to not walk and grow in His glorious GRACE, for it is the height of ungratefulness and disrespect to waste such a gracious gift.

### III. The FRUIT

- A. Growth in any field or endeavor requires criteria by which to measure progress.
- B. The world screams to measure life by all sort of vain ideas as income, wealth, prestige, things, yard, children, education, bodily appearance, toys, pleasure, etc.
- C. Godliness with contentment is great gain. Are you gaining? (I Timothy 4:8; 6:6).
  - 1. Godliness is (a) those moral aspects of God's nature we can reproduce and (b) that conduct that is acceptable and pleasing to God.
  - 2. Contentment is satisfaction with Jesus Christ over any thing or person.
- D. The fruit of the Spirit is a nine-fold standard by which to measure (Gal 5:22-23).
- E. The fruit we can add is an eight-fold standard by which to measure (II Pet 1:5-8).
- F. We can prove the acceptable spiritual fruit of the Lord in our lives (Eph 5:8-10).
- G. Fulfilling our role in the kingdom of God is by spiritual fruit (Romans 14:16-19).
- H. We are to pursue spiritual things with the world's zeal for money (I Tim 6:9-11).
- I. We want to appear more and more as the sons of God (Matt 5:43-48; II Cor 7:1).
- J. Growing in grace is increasing in these things more and more by Christ's strength.

### IV. The DISCIPLINE

- A. Growth in any field or endeavor requires denial of those things hindering growth.
- B. There are three things that cannot be done to achieve godly prosperity (Ps 1:1-3).
- C. There are things to be laid aside before taking of spiritual nutrition (I Peter 2:1-3).
- D. What we were sometimes, we are not to be any longer (Eph 5:7-21; I Peter 4:1-5).
- E. Saints require discipline (temperance) as do athletes (I Cor 9:24-27; Heb 12:1-4).
- F. With a vision of heavenly things, we must put to death our old sins (Col 3:1-11).
- G. Emulation and competition is good spiritually (Ro 11:14; I Cor 15:10; He 10:25).
- H. Ministers are given to help the saints grow up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15).
- I. We seek growth of building up ourselves on our most holy faith (Jude 1:20-21).

### V. The DIET

- A. Growth in any field or endeavor requires nurture and/or nutrition for anabolism.
- B. Some things increase unto more ungodliness (II Tim 2:16; I Corinthians 15:33).
- C. The sincere milk of the Word is spiritual food to crave like infants (I Peter 2:2-3).
- D. Delight and meditation in the Word of God leads to prosperity (Psalm 1:2-3).
- E. The Word of God's grace is able to build up God's saints as desired (Acts 20:32).
- F. We crave preaching looking for correction (Acts 10:33; Ps 139:23-24; 19:7-10).
- G. Spiritual help is from God through Christ by the Spirit (II Pet 1:1-4; Jn 15:1-8).
- H. We must pray for a supply as Paul prayed (Col 1:9-11; Eph 3:14-19; Phil 1:9-11).
  - 1. Observe in these prayers apostolic wisdom, the goal, and the Source.
  - 2. These prayers give some of the most profound descriptions of Christianity.
  - 3. The conflict we are in requires frequent prayers like these (Eph 6:18).
- I. Call to God for spiritual strength in your soul for growth (Ps 138:3; Luke 11:13).
- J. It is not eliminating opposition, but rising above it by His grace (II Cor 12:9).
- K. Christ's strength is available by drawing nigh to Him for all things (Phil 4:13).

VI. The EXERCISE

- A. Growth in any field or endeavor requires exercise in those skills necessary.
- B. There is exercise for godliness, which we are to utilize (I Tim 4:7-8; II Pet 1:5-8).
  - 1. **Exercise.** To put in practice, employ, use and then to practice by training.
  - 2. Though this book is ministerial, its spiritual lessons apply to all saints.
  - 3. We must avoid counterproductive distractions wasting time and energy.
  - 4. Repetitive application and use of our spiritual strength by a daily choice.
  - 5. Godliness, and its exercise, is profitable unto all things in two worlds.
  - 6. Exercise in godliness has a geometric superiority to bodily exercise.
  - 7. It has promise – proof, evidence, and assurance – of life in both worlds.
  - 8. Many analogies comparing bodily exercise with spiritual exercise are valid and help us grasp the nature and necessity of diligent training.
- C. Spiritual senses are exercised by reason of use in righteousness (Heb 5:12-14).
- D. Bearing fruit from our True Vine is by His commandments (John 15:1-8; 14:23).
- E. We should exercise ourselves to emulate the life of our Lord Christ (I John 2:6).
- J. Paul labored more abundantly than all apostles with God's grace (I Cor 15:10).
- K. Daily we must choose to apply God's grace to improve in speech, love, use of time, gentleness, marriage, temperance, prayer, employment, meditation, etc.

VII. The CHOICE

- A. Growth in any field or endeavor requires a decision, if the prize merits the effort.
- B. Paul and Peter saw it clearly, given life in Christ (II Cor 5:14-15; I Peter 2:24).
- C. If the Bible is true . . . then we owe God our lives for His precious grace in Christ.
- D. "Lord, Your grace is an unspeakable gift through Christ Jesus, but I have squandered it in many ways. I repent of my disgraceful slothfulness and carnally mindedness, and I beg for your Spirit in Christ to supply me with the strength to grow and increase in your grace to your glory and the proper adorning of the gospel. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen."