

"Growing Up"

Part 4

2 Peter 1:1-11

Introduction: In our study of second Peter have been looking the need for spiritual growth in the believer. Peter pointed out four provisions which God has given to us for our growth.

Notice 2 Peter 1:3-4

Peter tells his readers they have ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness. They are:

- a. Divine power.
- b. Knowledge.
- c. Great and precious promises.
- d. Divine nature.

Peter then went on to describe what spiritual growth looks like in the life of the believer. As he gave the description Peter presented it as though we are climbing a ladder of growth.

Notice 2 Peter 1:5-7

There are 8 steps on this ladder of growth.

- a. Faith - Living faith.
- b. Virtue - This is courage to live out our faith.
- c. Knowledge - This comes from God's Word, and it increases as we grow.
- d. Temperance - This is self-control.
- e. Patience - This is perseverance, and it refers to dealing with difficult circumstances.
- f. Godliness - This is Christlikeness.
- g. Brotherly kindness - This is kindness shown to other believers.
- h. Charity - This is agape love which is unconditional love.

This now brings us to where we are tonight. In our study this evening we shall look at the benefits of spiritual growth. With all growth there are growing pains and many people would rather remain in the stage of infancy than to deal with pains of growth. Therefore, they go through their entire Christian life as a spiritual infant.

1 Corinthians 3:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

² *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

³ *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

⁴ *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

I underlined part of verse 3 because we can see that if these people were going to grow, they would have to set aside self will and pride. They needed to be humble and that is painful for people who are prideful. Let us look at another situation.

Hebrews 5:12-14

¹² *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

¹³ *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

¹⁴ *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

We have looked at this text many times and I want to use it again to help you to see that growth brings pain. These believers had not grown because they were trying to live with one foot in Judaism and one foot in Christianity. Now in order to grow they would need to make a clean break but there would be much pain involved. They would be banned from the temple, they could lose their position in society, they could be cast out of their family, and they could face persecution. So, we can see that in order to grow they would experience pain. Now let us get to our text.

I. You Need to Grow

2 Peter 1:3-11

Part 4

A. The Benefits of Spiritual Growth

1. A fruitful life.

Notice 2 Peter 1:8

There is much to unpack in this verse. First of all "THESE THINGS" refer to growth which we just looked at on the ladder. Peter is saying that if we are growing then here will be the results. The first result is that we will not be barren nor unfruitful. As we grow up in the Lord, we will bear more and more fruit for Him. We will not produce fruit, but we will bear fruit. God is the Producer.

John 15:1-8

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

³ *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

⁴ *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

⁶ *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

⁷ *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

⁸ *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

We can only bear fruit if we are attached to the vine. We can only grow when we are attached to the Vine. Jesus is the Vine, and He is the Source of the life within us that produces the fruit and brings about spiritual growth. We **MUST** abide in Him, meaning we must stay in fellowship with Him.

John 15:16

¹⁶ *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that **your fruit should remain**: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

We need to notice that Jesus said that our fruit will REMAIN. This is because it is eternal fruit. It is from Jesus Christ who is eternal. The spiritual fruit that we bear will have eternal benefits. That which we live for in the world will all go away. It will have no eternal value at all.

2 Peter 3:10-12

¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

¹¹ *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

¹² *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

Getting back to the point, if we are growing in our spiritual walk then one of the benefits will be bearing fruit which means we can have an eternal impact upon the lives of others.

2. The experience of the new life.

Before we get to this point let us consider a verse in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

This verse speaks of our POSITION in Jesus Christ. We are new creations in Christ. This also means that our lives should manifest this new life. But the truth of the matter is that many believers do not see much of this new life lived out. The reason is because they are not growing in their spiritual walk.

Notice 2 Peter 1:9

The believer who is not growing is blind and cannot see afar off. What does this mean? I believe it means that the person who is not growing is not focused upon the hope of their salvation.

Hebrews 11:8-16

⁸ *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

⁹ *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*

¹⁰ *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

¹¹ *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

¹² *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

¹³ *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

¹⁴ *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*

¹⁵ *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

¹⁶ *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly:*

Here we see that those who lived by faith in the Old Testament lived for what was yet future. This is the opposite of what the stagnant believer does.

1 John 3:1-3

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.*

The believer who is growing is focused upon what awaits him in eternity and it changes the way he or she live their lives.

Notice 2 Peter 1:9 again.

The believer who is not growing loses sight of what the Lord has done for him or her and forgets their true identity in Jesus Christ. Instead of living the new life in Jesus Christ and using the provisions from God to escape the corruption that is in the world through

lust, they go back to their old ways of life. They therefore live under their old identity. They therefore miss so many blessings which they could be enjoying. A Biblical example of this would be seen in Lot as he lived in Sodom.

3. The assurance of salvation.

Before we look at our point let me first of all just say that there are people who do not believe we can know we are saved. They say we just have to wait until we die and find out. But the Bible is clear that we can know.

1 John 5:13

*¹³ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

There are believers who really struggle with knowing if they are saved or not. The reason is because there is very little or no growth in their lives.

Notice 2 Peter 1:10a

When you are growing then you become very aware of your calling and salvation. The more you grow the more you see the work of God in your life and your growth then gives you that blessed assurance that you are saved. What is the greatest proof of a believer's salvation? The answer is, "THE PROMISES OF GOD". God cannot lie and therefore we can rest in His promises.

John 3:16-18

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Conclusion:

Spiritual growth is God's work but at the same time we have a major part in the growth. Just from these points we can see the benefits of spiritual growth. There are several more which we will see next week. Let us step back and take a close look at our lives to see how we are doing in our growth.