

"Growing Up"

Part 5

2 Peter 1:1-11

Introduction: The last time we were together in 2 Peter we were looking at the benefits of spiritual growth. Peter described what spiritual growth looks like in 1:5-7 and as he did, he presented it as climbing a ladder.

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.

We then moved on in our study in the next verses and it is in 1:8-11 that Peter gives his readers a list of the benefits of spiritual growth. Now the last time we were together I had mentioned that spiritual growth takes effort from the believer and with the growth there will be growing pains. The believer must decide if he or she is willing to endure the growing pains in order to reap the benefits. Many believers do not want to deal with the growing pains and so they live their lives as spiritual infants. This was happening with the Hebrew believers.

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.*

Years had passed since some of these people were saved but there was no growth. They did not want to deal with the pain and therefore they were content to remain as spiritual babes in Christ. This now brings us to where we stopped the last time, we were together.

I. You Need to Grow

2 Peter 1:3-11

Part 5

A. The Benefits of Spiritual Growth

Before we get to a review of what we looked at last time let me first of all remind you of why growth is so important.

2 Peter 2:14

¹⁴ *Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:*

Ephesians 4:11-15

¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

¹³ *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

¹⁴ *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

¹⁵ *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

Now let us again see the benefits of spiritual growth.

Notice 2 Peter 1:8

- 1. A fruitful life.**

The more we grow the more spiritual fruit we will bear for the Lord. We do not produce the fruit, that is the Lord's work, but we do bear the fruit as we grow and abide in Christ.

John 15:1, 4-5

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

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.*

Notice 2 Peter 1:9

2. The experience of the new life.

I want to examine this verse and point in a little more detail. There are 2 points that need to be seen here. First of all the believer who is not growing does not have their focus upon their eternal destiny. They would be the opposite of those who are mentioned in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:13

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.*

Here is where I want to take this a little deeper. The believer who is not growing and therefore does not have their focus in on the things of eternity struggles with the challenges of life. The opposite is true of the believer who is mature. Notice how the growing believer faces the challenges of this life:

2 Corinthians 4:8-11, 16-18

⁸ *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;*

⁹ *Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;*

¹⁰ *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

¹¹ *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

¹⁶ *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

¹⁷ *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

¹⁸ *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Notice 2 Peter 1:9 again.

The second point to see here is the believer who does not grow forgets who he or she is in Christ. In other words they forget their identity in Christ. They fall back to their old ways of life but not as a continual practice for God will not allow that to happen.

Hebrews 12:5-8

⁵ *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

⁶ *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

⁷ *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

⁸ *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

Notice 2 Peter 1:10a

3. The assurance of salvation.

The believer who is not growing struggles with the assurance of salvation. The continually question whether or not they are saved. The more we grow the more secure we become in our minds concerning our salvation. This now brings us to where we stopped last time.

Notice 2 Peter 1:10b

4. Stability

The believer who is growing is far more stable in their spiritual walk.

Ephesians 4:14

¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

The believer who remains an infant is pulled about by every "new" teaching that comes around. Do you remember several years back of the different fads that swept through the churches and do you remember how many people bought into the fads? There were 3 that I can think of:

- a. The Promise Keepers
- b. The Prayer of Jabez
- c. The Purpose Driven Church

These were all fads and much of what was behind them was the desire of making money through the selling of their books. If the Lord tarries, there will be more fads that will come down the road and the only way to keep from getting caught up in them is to be diligent in spiritual growth. Let me just say that when the next fad comes, keep in mind that there were no fads in Acts when the church began. Jesus never told His disciples to use fads, but He simply told them to preach the Gospel. The early church grew in number by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Notice 2 Peter 1:11

5. Heavenly Rewards.

This verse tells us that all believers will be given entrance into heaven but not all believers will be rewarded equally. Some believers will be rewarded abundantly, and others will receive very little. From the text before us we can clearly understand that it will be spiritually mature believers who will be rewarded abundantly. There will be many who stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and they will be very embarrassed because their earthly lives were spent living for the things of the world.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

The doctrine of rewards was something that Paul was very concerned about.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

²⁵ *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

²⁶ *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

²⁷ *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

Paul was very careful because he did not want to be disqualified and therefore miss any rewards. Jesus warned the church at Philadelphia to be careful about allowing someone to lead them away from rewards.

Revelation 3:11

¹¹ *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

Let me share one more verse to show the Apostle John's concern.

2 John 1:7-8

⁷ *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

⁸ *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*

Conclusion:

Revelation 4:10-11

¹⁰ *The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

¹¹ *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*