**Grow!**

*2 Peter 3:18*

**Introduction**

1. Peter concludes his second epistle with an exhortation to grow spiritually (**cf. 2 Peter 3:18).**
   1. This is a theme of his epistle – bookends of his epistle **(cf. 1:5 – *“giving all diligence, add to your faith”*).**
   2. The main part of the epistle considers false teachers, and a specific heresy they espoused – ***“Where is the promise of His coming?” (3:3)***
      1. This growth is necessary because of threats against our faith and salvation.
      2. **Grow to prevent apostasy** – **3:14-18** – False teachers twist Paul’s teaching (about coming of Lord and all it entails) and you need to beware lest you fall.
2. **GROWTH IS NECESSARY! God requires us to grow:**
   1. **1 Thessalonians 4:1-2** – abound more and more.
   2. **Colossians 1:9-10** – filled with knowledge, increase in knowledge and bearing fruit.
   3. **1 Peter 2:2** – desire milk of the word to grow.
   4. And countless other scriptures which demand, and encourage growth.
3. **Growth is necessary, but how do we grow?**
4. Growth Inhibitors
5. Indifference
   1. **Lamentations 1:8-12** – Judah doomed to captivity, and the people act as if it is nothing.
      1. **(v. 9)** – did not consider her destiny (future) – **cf. Jeremiah 5:30-31** (*They know there is corruption, but who cares? They get to do what they want – but they don’t consider the inevitable judgment of God.*)
      2. **(v. 12)** – is it nothing to you?
      3. Sadly, there are Christians who possess this mindset.
   2. **If there is not the slightest concern for spiritual matters, and your soul, you will not be able to grow.**
   3. Desire to grow shows that at least you are not wholly indifferent.
6. Worldliness
   1. **James 1:21** – The word is able to save us, as we hear it, do it, and grow. However, sin must be left behind!
   2. **Matthew 13:22** – Thorny soil (Parable of sower explained).
      1. **(v. 23)** – The aim is for germination and continued growth.
      2. **However, when the mind is worldly, and concerned with matters of the flesh, any attempt at growth is choked out.**
   3. **1 Corinthians 3:1-3a** – Carnality keeps us from progressing to meat.
7. Complacency
   1. **Revelation 3:14-18** – Laodiceans were lukewarm – they weren’t zealous for God, and service before Him. Why?
      1. **(v. 17)** – They think they are rich spiritually. **(Cf. 2:9** – Smyrna – ***“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich)”***) But they weren’t.
      2. **(v. 18)** – You think you don’t need anything, but you actually do!
   2. There is never a time in your spiritual walk where you should have the mindset of the Laodiceans. Christians must NEVER grow complacent.
   3. **There is always room, and need for growth. As soon as you do not think you can grow anymore, or that you do not need to grow, then you surely never will.**
8. Growth Contributors
9. Prayer
   1. **Ephesians 6:14-18** – Equipped with the panoply of God, AND CONSTANT PRAYER.
      1. In order to grow in spiritual things, and be equipped for battle, we must turn to God in prayer.
      2. **You have put on the armor, but you fully recognize that you cannot be victorious without God, so you turn to Him.**
      3. **Supplication** – entreating God in severe need. (***cf. Hebrews 5:7 – “who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear”***)
   2. **James 1:2-7** – Trials lead to endurance which is necessary to please God.
      1. **(v. 5)** – Wisdom is necessary to endure trials, and we must ask God for it. (Pray for wisdom before study, so that you can appropriate it through study.)
         1. Understanding the existence of trials.
         2. **Wisdom concerning how to overcome the trial and endure.**
      2. **(v. 6)** – This prayer must be in faith without doubting.
         1. **Doubting** – *diakrinō*; to separate thoroughly, i.e. (literally and reflexively) to withdraw from, or (by implication) oppose; figuratively, to discriminate (by implication, decide), or (reflexively) hesitate.
         2. More like ***“without [wavering].”***
      3. (**v. 7)** – Double-minded – in regard to serving God.
         1. **Pray for wisdom** – regarding making it through trials to please God.
         2. **Double-minded** – undecided on whether you actually want to take the path God will give you.
   3. We must pray to God in order to grow, that we may glean the necessary knowledge and wisdom from His word.
   4. **However, when we pray for knowledge, wisdom, and instruction, we must not be wavering concerning our devotion to God. *DO YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO DO, SO THAT YOU MAY DO IT?***
10. Bible Reading/Study
    1. **Reading God’s word** – **2 Kings 22:10-13** – King Josiah is having the ***“house of the Lord”*** repaired, and the book of the Law is found.
       1. **(v. 10)** – The book of the Law is read to Josiah.
       2. **(vv. 11-13)** – Hearing the words of the book, Josiah became filled with sorrow.
          1. Book was lost, but Josiah evidently knew parts of it – ***“And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (v. 2).***
          2. **Ignorant** – to a degree, because he did not have the book of the Law to read until now.
       3. **(23:1-2)** – Had the book read before all the people. (IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE A GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WILL!)
       4. **We must be familiar with God’s word if we wish to grow.**
    2. **Studying God’s word** – **2 Timothy 2:15** – rightly dividing the word!
       1. This diligence does not merely mean consistent reading, but a deep investigation of that which is read.
       2. ***“Study to shew thyself approved unto God” (KJV).***
       3. ***“accurately handling the word of truth” (NASB).***
       4. NOT ENOUGH TO SIMPLY READ – we must STUDY it to fully understand what it means.
       5. **What is the writer (inspired by the HS) conveying to us?**
          1. **Scripture is meant to be taken in its context, not simply used in any way.**
          2. **2 Peter 3:15-16** – Untaught and unstable people mishandle the word. (Diligence in study helps prevent such – hence v. 18)
11. Meditation
    1. **1 Timothy 4:13, 15** – Reading, doctrine (as an action – given to teaching – Timothy – requires study), Meditation.
       1. **Meditate** – *meletaō*; to take care of, i.e. (by implication) revolve in the mind. (Fill your mind as opposed to eastern religious meditation which is to empty the mind.)
       2. ***“Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.” (NASB)***
    2. **Psalm 119:15-16** – Fill your mind with God’s word, and consider what that means for you. *(How does it apply? The meaning within the context is meant to transform you, and influence your living. How so with each specific passage?*)
12. Application
    1. **1 Timothy 4:16** – Continue in these things, i.e. in practice! (This will save you!)
    2. **Philippians 2:12-13** – We work out our salvation, trusting that God is helping us in the process.
    3. **Luke 6:46-49** – God’s word is meant to be obeyed, not just heard.
       1. **(v. 48)** – ***“dug deep”*** – hard work on our part (previous things discussed), then lay the foundation on God’s truth.
       2. **Metaphor** – considering the spiritual man, the spiritual life – If subservient to God’s will in all things, then trials, tribulation, temptation, etc. will not prevail!

**Conclusion**

1. The Bible is clear about God’s desire, and requirement that we grow as His children.
2. We must not be indifferent about growth, but be seriously concerned.
3. **Give all diligence to spiritual growth!**