**Growth and Sin**

*2 Peter 1:10-11*

**Introduction**

1. There is a relationship between growth and sin which we should understand.
2. Growth in Christ is intended to separate us further from sin.
3. While this is a process of maturation, at no point in a Christian’s life is sin ever tolerated or excused. This is why diligence in growth is paramount.
4. God can have no fellowship with sin, so if we wish to be with Him for eternity, we must be diligent in our growth to be more like Him, and an entrance into His kingdom will be supplied – **2 Peter 1:10-11**
5. The Nature of Growth
6. The New Birth is the Beginning
	1. **2 Corinthians 5:17** – all things are new.
		1. The newness is present, but in the current state in the body it is manifested by a decision to continually separate oneself from the old, and live accordingly with the new – **2 Corinthians 5:9, 14-15, 20-21; 6:1-2**
		2. Paul’s argument is that they need to remember they are new in Christ, and live accordingly so they do not receive the grace of God in vain.
	2. We are new, but in a real way we are much the same, though we have begun an upward trajectory to something vastly different:
		1. **1 Corinthians 3:1-4** – infancy in Christ, while a state of separation from sin, still possesses the vestiges of carnality – these must be eradicated through progress in spiritual revelation.
			1. Failure to progress is fatal.
			2. NOTE: **(vv. 1-2a)** – carnality excused (no sin involved); **(vv. 2b-4)** – carnality unexcused (sin involved).
				1. Before – a state of immaturity which could not digest the meat of the word.
				2. Now – a state of worldliness in sinful conduct as a product of their negligence to grow.
			3. **They were new in Christ, but they needed to continue to distance themselves from their old self.**
7. The Perfect Man is the Goal
	1. The purpose of Paul’s preaching – **Colossians 1:28-29** – state of perfection in Christ accomplished by gospel.
		1. **Perfect** – *teleios* – complete (STRONG)
		2. Not sinless perfection, but maturity – ***“that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” (ESV)***
		3. Parallel – ***“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.” (Galatians 4:19-20)***
			1. His doubts come from their immaturity.
			2. Entertaining “another” gospel, fighting among each other (**cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14-15; 3:3-4** – operating on worldly wisdom, being spiritually immature), etc.
	2. The measure of Christ – **Ephesians 4:13-15** – the standard is Christ, maturity in relation to the standard is the goal, as evidenced in ***“perfect”*** being contrasted with ***“children.”***
		1. **Colossians 4:12** – i.e. observing the will of God entirely.
		2. Not indicative of flawless perfection, but of maturity in walking in the will of God, discerning the will of God (meat in advancement beyond milk), and being meek before God (malleable, and responsive to His word).
		3. **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** – the whole man transformed and devoted to Christ by God’s grace.
	3. Perfection/maturity as manifested in the practice of love as God reveals it:
		1. **Galatians 5:22-23** – love as the fountainhead of all spiritual character in Christ. (**cf. John 14:15; Matthew 22:37, 40**)
		2. **2 Peter 1:5-7** – love as the crescendo of the list, the culmination of spiritual growth.
8. Progressing, Not Regressing
	1. Mistaken notion – since we always have room to grow (knowledge, character, deeds), we are always less than we should be, therefore less than what God would have us to be, and therefore in need of cleansing of sin (which leads to a need of perpetual cleansing the bible does not teach).
	2. Implications of growth – **Hebrews 5:12-14**
		1. **(v. 12)** – sin – by this time you ought to be, but you aren’t.
		2. **(v. 13)** – description of where they were initially, and it was right, but where they are now, and it is not right because they should be more.
		3. **(v. 14)** – description of what they were meant to become, but they had neglected.
			1. **(v. 14)** – They should have been here, but they were still here **(v. 13),** and were sinning because they had enough time **(v. 12).**
		4. **Growth implies a deficiency in the past when compared with the present.**
		5. **Growth implies a deficiency in the present when compared with the future.**
		6. **We are not judged in the present by how we will be in the future (more than expected), nor are we judged in the present by how we were in the past (lesser than expected).**
	3. Paul’s Perfect “Rule” – **Philippians 3:12-16** – speaking of leaving all to gain Christ, and attain to the resurrection (to life).
		1. **(vv. 12, 15)** – he has not been ***“perfected”*** (*teleioō* – v) but is ***“mature”*** (perfect – *teleios* – adj).
		2. **(vv. 12-14)** – until he has attained to the resurrection **(v. 11)** and is transformed **(v. 21)** he has much further to grow.
		3. **(vv. 15-16)** – this is the mindset of spiritual maturity – maturity is (in part) realizing you have more maturing to undergo.
			1. ***“only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk” (v. 16, ASV)***
			2. Attained to what? – the mature mind **(v. 15)** of always pressing on to perfection (maturity).
9. Putting the Old Man to Death
10. Since the new creation in Christ is in need of constant progression toward the standard of Christ, he is likewise in need of constant progression away from the old man of sin.
	1. The newness of life is in view, not only of our resurrection with Christ, but our death with Him, and the continual recognition of that death to sin – **Romans 6:1-4, 11, 13**
	2. We are certainly already dead to sin as Christians, but we are also to continually reckon ourselves dead to sin – which is essentially a progression in that death, as we progress in the life with Christ.
11. We Have Put to Death, and Must Continue to Put to Death the Old Man
	1. Something we have done – **Galatians 5:24** (**cf. 1 Peter 4:1-2** – those who are suffering from Christ are those who have made the decisive act to live free from sin)
	2. Something we must continually do – **Romans 8:13** ***(“put to death,”*** verb/present/active)
		1. ***“if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (NASB)***
		2. **Romans 8:10-11** – body dead on account of sin, but given life through the Spirit to work righteousness.
	3. Something we have done, and continue to do – **Colossians 3:1-5**
		1. **(vv. 1, 3)** – you were raised, you died – **Colossians 2:11-12, 20** – put off body of sins, died from principles of world.
		2. **(v. 5)** – to those same people, put to death earthly members.
		3. **(v. 7)** – once walked…
		4. The flesh will still seek to lure us into sin, so in congruence with our decisive act to die to sin with Christ, we must continue to incapacitate our bodies and minds in regard to the activity of sin.
	4. We die to sin in baptism and are raised to a new life, but this does not mean our bodies and minds are indisposed to sinful allurements automatically. We must grow in that death, disciplining and subjecting ourselves with vigilance so that we remain indeed dead to sin (**cf. 1 Corinthians 9:27**).
12. NOTE: Old habits can die hard, and there are some things new Christians might not even know are sinful (ex: alcohol, immodesty, sexual immorality, etc.). While present sinful activity in the life of a babe in Christ may be attributed to their ignorance and immaturity, it does not negate the effect of sin in their life – death. Need for growth must never be mistaken as an excuse for, or tolerance of sin.
	1. Such a one must be diligent in study and growth to see what is right and wrong, and act accordingly. (**cf. Ephesians 5:8, 10 – *“finding out”* – continual**)
	2. Brethren must be diligent in convincing, rebuking, and exhorting with longsuffering and teaching **(cf. 2 Timothy 4:2**).
	3. We all must be willing to respond appropriately to such correction (**cf. Galatians 6:1-2, 6-8**).
13. God’s Saving Grace for the Christian
14. 2 Peter focuses on two major points:
	1. The second coming of Christ in judgment, and for salvation.
		1. False teachers saying He isn’t coming.
	2. The need to grow in order to be prepared for that day.
		1. The ignorant could be persuaded by the false teachers.
15. The Nature of the Everlasting Kingdom
	1. We want to gain entrance – **2 Peter 1:11**
	2. It is where righteousness dwells – **2 Peter 3:13**
16. The Nature of the Lord’s Coming
	1. He will come for judgment and destruction of the ungodly – **2 Peter 3:7**
	2. He will come for salvation of the faithful – **2 Peter 3:11-14**
	3. He will come at an unknown time – **2 Peter 3:10**
17. The Nature of Our Preparation for that Day
	1. The necessary warning against false teachers – **2 Peter 3:17-18**
		1. Deny the second coming – **3:3-4**
		2. Encourage lax morality – **2:18-19** – nothing to worry about if the Lord is not coming. (**Jude 4**)
	2. Diligence in growth which promotes blamelessness, and is given an abundant entrance into the kingdom – **2 Peter 1:10-11**
		1. (**vv. 5, 10**) – diligence in growth, add to your faith…
		2. **1:2; 3:18** – bookends the epistle.
	3. The longsuffering of the Lord (what the false teachers mistake for slackness concerning promise) – **2 Peter 3:8-9, 15**
		1. Judgment will come – **2:3**
		2. Reward will come – **3:12-13**
		3. God’s longsuffering gives us time to grow and transform to escape the punishment, and have confidence in the reward – **3:14-18**
			1. **(vv. 14-15)** – any time given is more time to distance ourselves from sin, and become more like Christ to be ready for his coming.
				1. He can deliver us out of temptation – **2:7-9**
			2. **(vv. 16-18)** – we must not make the mistake of the false teachers that twist God’s word to a tolerance of sin, but realize it is for our godly transformation.

**Conclusion**

1. We must realize that our decision to put on Christ is the first step in a lifetime of dramatic transformation.
2. We need to be diligent in our study and application of God’s word in order to receive the transformation God provides by His grace, and distance ourselves from sin.
3. God wants us to be transformed, and gives us all the resources we need to do so, including time to shed our past self entirely, and grow into the fulness of Christ.