

YEAR OF GROWTH

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1 Thessalonians 4:1

1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth

Growth Is Expected

A seed that is sown but produces no plant is disheartening. A child that fails to grow physically is cause for alarm. A Christian who does not grow spiritually is weak, rebellious, and lost.

The verses above are two out of many that declare the Lord's expectation of growth in the lives of His disciples. God demands that His children become more like Him in attitude and action. He commands that the Christian must grow, mature, and bear fruit (John 15:8).

1 Peter 2:2

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby

Growth Is Desired

God desires our growth. Likewise, we should desire to grow! One who loves the Lord wants to improve in his or her service to Him. One who is grateful for God's goodness longs to express thanksgiving in a life well-lived. One who reverences the holiness of Jehovah seeks to be more like Him in heart and hand.

If one desires to grow, he will naturally desire the spiritual nourishment that comes from the Word of God. The Bible explains the areas in which a Christian should grow. Furthermore, it guides in how to grow as God desires and expects.

2 Peter 1:5-8

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Growth Is Achievable

God has not commanded us to do something that cannot be done. The growth that He desires of us possible. The goal of growing spiritually is realistic and attainable. However, this does not mean that it is easy. Determination, devotion, and discipline are required.

This series of daily devotions will focus on building and maturing the characteristics that define us as Christians and please God as His children. We will study each of the “Christian Graces” found in 2 Peter 1:5-8 and the “Fruit of the Spirit” found in Galatians 5:22-23. Four weeks will be devoted to each of the following 13 attributes:

Study 01 – Faith

Study 02 – Virtue

Study 03 – Knowledge

Study 04 – Temperance

Study 05 – Patience

Study 06 – Godliness

Study 07 – Kindness

Study 08 – Love

Study 09 – Joy

Study 10 – Hope

Study 11 – Meekness

Study 12 – Humility

Study 13 – Peace

Our previous yearly series of daily devotionals have focused on prayer, memorization, and writing of the Scriptures. These tools will be useful and necessary for this series of lessons. You are encouraged to pray each day – specifically concerning the characteristic being studied. Pray for wisdom; pray for strength; pray for opportunities to exercise each spiritual attribute. You are encouraged to write out the verses that are referenced in each lesson. Memorize those that mention each characteristic under consideration. Being able to recall these verses will help in putting into practice each attitude.

Everyone will get out of this study what he or she puts into it. Remember that growth is slow. One does not immediately reap the harvest after planting the seeds. Yet, with time, effort, discipline, and the Lord’s help, growth and maturity will be seen.

2 Peter 3:18

18 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.