

## Grow in Grace and Knowledge

At the close of his second epistle, in [II Peter 3:18](#), the apostle Peter offers a stirring exhortation to all Christians: “**...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**”(NKJV) Peter encourages followers of Christ to take action, to “**...grow.**” This word is translated from the Greek term **AUXANO** which means: “to grow (*wax*)”, “...enlarge...increase.” (1) Basically, we are told that we should increase our “knowledge” of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ and His gospel and enlarge our understanding of how to better serve Him. In so doing, we will then grow in God’s “grace” - in His unmerited favor for us. Truly, all Christians should aspire and be dedicated to this type of growth.

Yet, many times, we Christians fail to grow! We started off as “young” Christians – “young” in the faith. We learned some of the basic principles concerning salvation and the gospel of Christ and our relationship with God. The problem is that many of us did not progress beyond that point and continue to exist today as “spiritual” children or teenagers. We choose to remain in this spiritually juvenile/adolescent state. The Hebrew writer uses this as the subject of his admonition in [Hebrews 5:12](#) – [6:3](#). He offers good, timely, constructive criticism of all Christians who should have “grown up” spiritually but have remained immature in the faith. In [Hebrews 5:12](#) – [13](#), the writer states:

***“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.”***

This brings up an obvious question: Why do Christians choose not to grow? One reason is that some do not become properly grounded in the faith and become easily discouraged when facing problems and crises that arise, especially criticism of their faith by friends and/or family. Others become too distracted by their jobs, family issues, hobbies, recreation, etc... and fail to set aside time for personal spiritual growth – time for Bible study, prayer, worship, and fellowship with those of “like precious faith.” Jesus examines some of these same reasons for failure of spiritual growth in His “Parable of the Sower” found in [Matthew 13:18](#) – [23](#).

Another reason why many fail to grow can be attributed to plain old complacency. This where we believe that we have reached the state in which growth is no longer necessary or desirable. We buy into the sinful, deluded, arrogant thinking that states that we know everything we need to know. We become content, satisfied with our own “Christianity” and stop studying our scriptures and searching for God’s instructions for our lives. Instead of being “diligent” Christians that have been “**transformed**” by the gospel for a higher purpose and calling, we have become “dead” Christians that are too “**...conformed to this world.**” (See [Romans 12:1](#) & [2](#).)

Brethren, we need to turn aside from all the reasons and excuses we have made for our continued spiritual immaturity and make the concerted effort, yes, effort, to grow in the

faith. Let us dedicate ourselves to daily, yes, daily, study of God's word, prayer, and service to our Maker. We need to emulate the attitude of the apostle Paul as he expressed it in [Philippians 3:13](#) – 14. He was not complacent. He did not “rest on his laurels.” He was not distracted from his goal. In v. 14, he confidently states: ***“I press toward the goal...”*** He saw and understood the imperative need for further spiritual growth. Like Paul, let us continue to enlarge our faith and increase our knowledge of the gospel. Let us also never lose sight of our goal and look forward to our ultimate salvation and our eternal home in heaven.

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#### References

(1) James Strong, A Concise Dictionary Of The Words In The Greek Testament, in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 17. Used by permission. All rights reserved.