

# The Next Step – Grow!

*You're saved and baptised, now what?*

**Text:** 2 Peter 3:17-18

## **Introduction:**

1. These are the Apostle Peter's final words to the believers recorded in Holy Scripture. He exhorts them to grow in their Christian lives. Now that you have been saved and baptised, you need to continue growing!
2. In this message we want to consider some Bible basics that will help us to grow as believers. We will consider an acrostic based on the word "**GROWTH**" with a truth assigned to each letter.

## **I. G – GROW IN GRACE (2 Pet. 3:17-18)**

Let's discuss the verse itself before looking at further practical helps to Christian growth.

### **A. The Context of Peter's Exhortation (Vs. 17)**

1. Peter is concerned about the very real possibility of the believers he is writing to going backwards in their Christian lives. He is concerned they could get seduced by error and fall away from their steadfast position. Peter is not suggesting loss of salvation but the danger of drifting from a position of spiritual strength and blessing into the error of the wicked.
2. The exhortation of verse 18 presents the blessed alternative to this danger. What these verses teach us is that we are either growing or drifting backwards.

### **B. The Content of Peter's Exhortation (Vs. 18)**

We learn several lessons about Christian growth in this verse.

1. Growing is a continual process. The word 'grow' is a command and it is in the present tense. The Christian life is a life of continual growth. Are you a growing Christian?
2. Growing involves both grace and knowledge.
  - a. 'grace' = we were saved by the grace of God and we grow by the grace of God. Col. 2:6 "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, **so walk ye in him**:" We are reminded that genuine growth is not generated through our own strength and power but through yieldedness to the workings of God in our lives. Remember the vine and the branches (John 15).
  - b. 'knowledge' = the knowledge Peter has in view is "the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This knowledge is both intellectual and experiential. In other words,

we need to learn about Christ but also grow in our relationship with Christ.

## II. **R – READ YOUR BIBLE DAILY (1 Peter 2:2; Job 23:12)**

1 Peter 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire **the sincere milk of the word**, that ye may **grow thereby**.” Job testified, “...I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.” (Job 23:12) To Job, the Word of God was more important to him than food. It was more important to him to feed himself spiritually than physically. Are you feeding yourself as a believer? The Word of God is our spiritual food and drink. It is like milk (1 Pet. 2:2), meat (Heb. 5:14) and honey (Psalm 119:103). If you hardly ate, you would become very weak physically and the same is true in the spiritual realm. If you neglect to feed yourself on the Word, you will become very weak as a believer. We need **a five fingered grip** on the Bible. Let’s briefly consider 5 ways we can maintain a hold on the words, Word of God:

### **A. Read the Word (1 Tim. 4:13)**

1. Have a daily devotional life.
2. Have a reading plan (e.g., one year through the Bible).

### **B. Meditate on the Word (Josh. 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:15)**

1. ‘meditate’ = to think deeply about (Oxford); To dwell on anything in thought; to contemplate; to study; to turn or revolve any subject in the mind (Webster).
2. Practical tip: Turn off electronic devices for your devotions so you can be undistracted!

### **C. Listen to the Word (Rom. 10:17)**

1. Make use of the Bible on audio.
2. Be under the sound preaching and teaching of the Word of God in the local church.
3. Make use of sound sermons.
4. Godly music that teaches Biblical truth can also be a powerful way to absorb the truths of God’s Word.

### **D. Memorize the Word (Psalm 119:11)**

1. Memorize chapter by chapter.
2. Memorize topically (e.g., key verses on the Gospel and salvation).

### **E. Study the Word (2 Tim. 2:15)**

1. Illustration: Difference between a tourist and an explorer.
2. Make use of the study opportunities in the local church (Bible college courses).
3. Use good study tools.

## III. **O – OBEY GOD AND GODLY AUTHORITIES (John 14:21; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; Heb. 13:17)**

Obedience is one of the great keys to growth and blessing in the Christian life. All through God’s Word we see the principle that obedience brings God’s blessing; disobedience brings God’s disfavour.

### A. Obey God's Word

Resolve in your heart that whatever the Word of God says, you will obey it with God's grace and help.

1. The Christian life commences with submission to God's command to repent and receive Christ (2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17).
2. Obedience is motivated by love and leads to growth. John 14:21 "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and **will manifest myself to him.**" Illustration: A parent's relationship with an obedient child vs a disobedient child.
3. Obedience needs to be wholehearted and complete. God is not pleased with partial obedience! 1 Samuel 15:22-23 "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as **in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.** For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." So often we content ourselves with the thought that we are obeying some of what God has commanded while we make a deliberate choice to disobey other commandments. God views this as rebellion, not obedience!
4. Obedience means being a doer, not just a hearer of the Word (James 1:22-25)

### B. Obey God's Man

1. Being under a godly pastor in a Biblical church is a very important part of your Christian life. Resolve to obey your pastor unless he deviates from the Word of God and requires something unbiblical (Acts 5:29).
2. If you are saved, that makes you one of God's sheep (John 10:27-28) and that means you need to belong to a flock (local church) and be under one of Christ's under shepherds who can feed you and lead you in the things of God (1 Pet. 5:1-4). An online preacher cannot shepherd (pastor) you in the true sense of the word. You may benefit from another biblical preacher's ministry (e.g., online sermons) but you need to be in a local church yourself and have your own pastor.

## IV. W – WITNESS TO OTHERS (Prov. 11:30; Mk. 16:15)

If you've been saved, tell others how they can be saved too! Confess Christ before men (Matt. 10:32). Don't keep the good news to yourself! If you have good tidings (and you do!), don't "hold your peace" (See 2 Kings 7:9).

**A. The Great Commission is the Church's Primary Work (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46-48; Acts 1:8).**

1. It is not just for pastors and full time Christian workers but for every Christian. This was the example of the early church in Acts. Acts 8:4 "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where **preaching the word.**" The word 'preach' here is the word 'evangelize'. Wherever the early Christians went, they spread the Gospel and sought to bring people to Christ.
2. John Wesley said, "You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work. And go not only to those that need you, but to those that need you most. It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance."
3. If this is the church's primary task, why are so many churches and believers neglecting it?

**B. Some practical ways you can be a witness for Christ**

1. Share your testimony with family and friends. Mark 5:19-20 "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and **tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.** And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel." Sharing what Christ has done for you is a simple and powerful way to start.
2. Get involved in the weekly outreach ministry of the church. Learn from those more experienced. Memorise key salvation texts (e.g., the Romans road). The best way to learn to share the Gospel is to actually do it!
3. Make use of Gospel tracts (Gospel seeds). Keep them handy (e.g., in your car, hand bag, wallet) and give them out wherever you go. Letter box your suburb. Leave one on the bus or train seat before you get off at your stop.
4. Invite people to church where they can hear the Gospel preached.

**V. T – TALK TO GOD IN PRAYER (Phil. 4:6)**

Prayer is a rich and multifaceted exercise but we can learn the basics from our Lord's model prayer (Luke 11:1-4).

**A. Adoration (Vs. 2)**

1. Worship God in prayer. Worship Him for Who He is and for what He has done.
2. Thank God in prayer. 1 Thess. 5:18 "**In every thing give thanks:** for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

**B. Petition (Vs. 3)**

1. Ask God for your needs. He is a loving Heavenly Father who has all power! Prayer on a very simple level is asking and receiving. Remember that God will answer in his time and in his way. So often we get discouraged because we have a pre-conceived idea of how the answer should look instead of putting the matter in God's hands and looking for His direction in the situation. Illustration: Lady without work who wouldn't consider working in another industry.
2. James 4:2-3 "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, **yet ye have not, because ye ask not.** Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts." Here we see two reasons
  - a. We simply fail to ask!
  - b. We ask for the wrong thing.
3. Remember, God promises to supply our needs, not all our wants (Phil. 4:19)

#### **C. Confession (Vs. 4a)**

1. Confession of sin is a vital part of maintaining our fellowship with God. When we sin as God's children, our relationship is not affected (that is settled by virtue of the new birth) but our fellowship is affected.
2. Learn to keep short accounts with the Lord and with others. Learn to humble yourself quickly and admit your wrong. Have the attitude expressed by the hymn writer, "Nothing between my soul and the Saviour". Illustration: Brother who had a motor bike accident and checked if he was right with God while flying through the air.

#### **D. Supplication (Vs. 4b)**

1. Ask God to keep you from sin and evil. Without His protecting, preserving hand, there is no telling what we might do, think or say on a given day.
2. Ask God to keep you from the self-sins.
3. Ask God to keep you from Satan's darts.
4. Ask God for protection from the world's temptations.

## **VI. H – HABITUALLY ATTEND THE HOUSE OF GOD (Heb. 10:25)**

Being a faithful part of a local, Bible-believing, Bible-based, Bible preaching New Testament Church is a vital part of your Christian growth. Think of all the ministry of the Word that takes place at our church and the opportunities this presents for growth if you will make the effort to come!

### **A. Go to the Right Church**

Not every building that has the word "church" on the sign is a true New Testament Church. Not every group of people who meet together

constitute a church. What would be a good criterion for finding the right kind of church? The following questions may help.

1. Is the Bible the sole authority for faith and practice? 1 Tim. 3:15  
“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, **the pillar and ground of the truth.**” At the top of your list should be whether a particular church is being faithful to the truth of God’s Word. The pillar and ground of the truth means the church is to be:
  - a. **The Propagator of the Truth.** The word ‘pillar’ refers to a column (e.g., like a pillar in the temple). The temple at Ephesus had 127 pillars which supported the roof. The church displays the truth as a witness to a world filled with error. Our job is to be “holding for the word of life” (Phil. 2:16)
  - b. **The Protector of the Truth.** The word ‘ground’ refers to a firm foundation, base, stay or prop.
2. Is the whole council of God proclaimed faithfully? (Acts 20:27)
3. Is the work of the Great Commission its central mission? (Matt. 28:19-20)
4. Is it structured and organised along biblical lines with the biblical office of pastor in place and deacons if they are available? Are things done decently and in order? (1 Tim. 3; 1 Cor. 14:40).
5. Does it practice biblical separation from sin, the world and false doctrine? (2 Tim. 2:19; 2 Cor. 6:17)
6. Does it stand for sound, biblical doctrine? (1 Tim. 3:16; Acts 2:42).

## **B. Love your Church**

The church is exceedingly valuable to God so it should be to you too!

1. Christ loves it – Eph. 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even **as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**”
2. Christ paid for it with His own blood – Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood.**” Note: Paul is speaking to the elders of the Ephesian Church. The local church is in view.
3. Christ is building it – Matt. 16:18 “...**I will build my church;** and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
4. Christ is its Head – Col 1:18 “And he is **the head of the body, the church:** who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.”
5. Christ is present in it (Rev. 1:12-13)
  - a. Rev. 1:12-13 “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; **And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man,**

clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

- b. Rev 2:1 “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, **who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;**”
- c. The local church is where Christ is moving and working. It is where His presence is.

### **C. Be Faithful to your Church (Acts 2:42)**

The first church is a great model of faithfulness to follow (Acts 2:42):

1. Faithful to Church Doctrine – “the apostle’s doctrine”.
2. Faithful to Church Fellowship – “and fellowship”.
3. Faithful to Church Ordinances – “and in breaking of bread”.
4. Faithful to Church Prayer Meetings – “and in prayers”.
5. Faithful to Church Attendance – “continuing daily with one accord in the temple” (Vs. 46). Some complain about attending 3 services a week but the early church met every day!
  - a. Heb. 10:25 “**Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”
  - b. Plan now to attend as many of the services and meetings of your church as you can. Decide in your heart never to miss a service **unless providentially hindered.**

**Conclusion:** Will you endeavour to take these steps and grow as a Christian?