

prayerful, tender, caring, loving, helpful, calm when attacked, firm, patient, kind, etc.

- 2) Growing in the knowledge of Christ is applying what He taught. He taught us to have faith, to pray, to live godly, to think purely, to pray for those who hate us, to seek first God's kingdom, etc.

*The third thing you can do which will enable you to grow is to ...*

### 3. Spend time with God in Prayer

#### a. To grow spiritually we need God's help

- 1) In my garden, I can water, feed, weed, shade, trim, and kill pests, but I cannot make plants grow. Only God can do that. The same is true in my spiritual life and yours.
- 2) Prayer is our means of seeking God's help.
- 3) Jesus left us with a perfect example of early solitary prayer. (Mark 1:35) "*And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*" Before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed earnestly. (Luke 22:44) "*And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*"

#### b. Prayer is communicating with God

- 1) It is worshipping God in thanksgiving, praise and song. Far too often, we neglect this part of prayer.
- 2) Prayer is discussing the Bible with God.
- 3) Prayer is sharing our burdens with God.
- 4) Prayer is seeking God's help.

**Conclusion:** Will you determine with God's help to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ this year? You can, if you will. **Study the Bible** (choose a plan and follow it). **Seek to apply** what you learn. Humbly be willing to make changes. **Spend time in prayer.**

Yes, these things will take time, but we make time for things we value.

As I said earlier, you cannot grow until you are alive. If you are not positive that you are a Christian, speak to me about it today. I would be thrilled to explain it to you from the Bible.

**Song:** The Bible Stands **178**

# It is Time to Grow

*5 January 2020 AM - 2 Peter 3:18 - Scott Childs*

**Introduction:** There are many things in life that we cannot force to happen, yet we can have an influence on them. You cannot force your garden vegetables to grow, but you can water, feed, and care for them to help them to grow. You cannot force people to like you, but you can be friendly and likable. You cannot force your children to be godly, but you can influence them in that direction.

In our text this morning, God commands us to "*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" Though we cannot force spiritual growth to take place in our lives, we certainly can have a huge impact on it.

**Transition:** This morning, I want to identify three things that you can do which will enable you to grow spiritually.

*The first thing you can do which will enable you to grow is to ...*

## 1. Study the Bible

We learn about God's grace and the knowledge of Christ in the Bible. The Bible is God's mind concerning everything we need to know to live the Christian life.

### a. We have a purpose for studying the Bible.

- 1) Some read the Bible to find fault in it. Others read it to find support for their opinions. Many read bits and pieces of the Bible to find comfort. Others read the Bible out of religious duty with little sincere interest.
- 2) Our purpose is that we might grow spiritually. Personal spiritual growth is a noble reason for Bible study. It seeks to fulfil God's command found in our text.
- 3) The Psalmist prayed "*Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*" (Psalms 119:133). He believed that the Bible could guide his steps and keep him from sin.
- 4) Among the final words penned by the apostle Paul before his martyrdom are these, (2 Timothy 2:15) "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" We must diligently study of the Bible to receive God's

approval and that we can rightly interpret what it says.

- 5) Here are some suggestions that will help you study the Bible with purpose.
  - a) Concentrate as you study and desire to learn
  - b) Ask God to open your eyes (Ps 119:18)
  - c) Look up words to make sure you understand them.
  - d) Compare what you find with other Bible verses on the same topic (Bible apps or software are great for this).
  - e) Find one principle each day on which you can focus. Write it down in a journal.
  - f) Seek to meditate throughout the day on the principle you found.

### b. We need a plan for studying the Bible.

- 1) The Bible is God's divine word. It is unique to every other book. To grow the most from your Bible reading, you must have a plan.
- 2) Starting in Genesis and reading to Revelation is not the best plan for reading the Bible. During difficult sections, you will be tempted to quit.
- 3) Plans you may want to follow include
  - a) Individual book study (choose a book, begin with a short one, and read it repeatedly, taking notes, continue until you feel you understand the book)
  - b) Topical study (study every passage on a particular topic)
  - c) Biographical study (study every passage on the life of a Bible character)
  - d) Read some from the OT, Psalms, Proverbs and NT each day. I find that this is the most helpful to me.
- 4) The best plan for you is **the one you use and benefit from EVERY DAY**. This is what God demanded of every one of Israel's kings. (Deuteronomy 17:18-19) "*And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them.*"

*The second thing you can do which will enable you to grow is to ...*

## 2. Seek to Apply What we Learn

### a. God commands us to grow in grace (Tit 2:11-14)

Growing requires more than just studying the Bible. You will not grow spiritually until you apply what you learn.

- 1) Grace is the supernatural enabling of the Holy Spirit to do God's will. We need God's grace for every area of Christian growth.
- 2) To grow, we must apply God's **saving** grace (Tit 2:11). You cannot make a dead plant grow, and you cannot make a dead spirit grow. Before you can grow, you must be alive. Spiritual life comes from receiving God's saving grace provided by Jesus Christ when He died and rose again to pay for your sin. **This is where growth must begin!**
- 3) To grow, we must apply God's **sanctifying** grace (Tit 2:12).
  - a) God's grace teaches us from the Bible sins we must stop doing ungodly things and worldly lusts.
  - b) God's grace teaches us from the Bible how to live in a way that pleases God (soberly, righteously and godly).
- 4) To grow, we must apply God's **satisfying** grace (Tit 2:13). Rather than worrying about the future, God gives us satisfying grace to look for Christ's return and our resurrection if we should die first. (1 Peter 1:13) "*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*"
- 5) God wants to give us grace (divine help) for every situation we face in life.
- 6) We will grow in grace as we learn more about God's grace and as we apply it to our daily lives.

### b. God commands us to grow in knowledge

Just like growing in grace, growing in knowledge is the result of applying what you learned in God's Word.

- 1) You may know much about how Christ lived while on this earth, but you will not grow in that knowledge until you seek to live more like Christ lived. He was humble,