

## **GROW IN GRACE!**

Peter closes his second letter the same way he opens it, with a call to God's grace in Christ. 2Peter 3:14-18 points to three ways we are to grow: in grace, in knowledge, in Christ. The reason? For the glory of the Lord, in our lives today, and for all eternity. As verse 18 instructs, *"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."*

**1- Growth in grace is continual.** You recognize the word "grow" as an action word, and so it is in *koine* Greek, present, active, imperative. Peter is commanding the continual action of growing, as increasing, maturing. The word grace is "*charis*" in Greek, referring to the undeserved favor or gift of the Lord. Peter has labored in his second letter to show how the Christian life is all of grace, from beginning to end. As he closes his letter, he points to the end of human history, the time of judgment at the coming of Christ. In verse 14 he counsels, *"therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation."*

While we await final salvation, we are being "sanctified" which means to be made holy, like Christ. So Peter emphasizes, *"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and in the day of eternity, Amen!"* This echoes his themes throughout 2Peter.

**2- Growth in grace begins with the new birth.** New life in Christ has a starting point, a beginning, and a middle, and an end. In 1Peter 1:3 he writes, *"God has caused us to be born again to a living hope."* and 1Peter 2:2, *"like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation."* Jesus declared in John 3:3, *"you must be born again from above by the Holy Spirit."* The Bible presents salvation as a continuum, from birth to growth to full maturity. New birth, your regeneration, is the spiritual quickening by the Holy Spirit which brings a dead sinner to new life in Christ. This birth naturally results in growth, as its logical and spiritual consequence. Growing in Christ is not a matter of miles but maturity, and will reach its zenith when believers are resurrected in new glorified bodies to live with Him in heaven.

Spiritual growth is the process of sanctification. Once born again, believers then grow up into Christ, becoming more holy, like Him on earth, in preparation to be with Him for eternity. So in verse 11, Peter encourages *"lives of holiness and godliness"* in view of heaven. RC Sproul says, "While we are waiting, and being vigilant, we are called to be diligent concerning our sanctification; but not on a mountaintop disengaged from the work of the kingdom of God." We will grow in grace, because God provides the wherewithal to grow in His grace, as He transforms His people, for His glory both now and forever.

**3- Growth in Christ is all of grace from beginning to end.** Grace refers to divine favor, the unmerited gift of God, emanating from His nature and by His power. Grace is received in the new birth, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as in John 1:12, when you receive and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. John 1:14-18 shows how Jesus is grace incarnate, *"full of grace and truth"* and *"from His fullness we have received grace upon grace."* Therefore Hebrews 4:16 encourages us, *"let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* God's grace is poured out to us in unlimited supply through the Lord Jesus. And as God commands us to grow in grace, He provides every grace from His eternal riches in grace, sufficient for every need.

Peter himself experienced this grace in John 21, as Jesus restored him after his denial of Christ in John 18, and commissioned him to live his life for Jesus, making disciples who make disciples of Christ. The apostle Paul reminds believers in 1 Corinthians 1:7, *"you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."* As you await final glorification when Christ returns, your spiritual growth today results in transformation, as you become more like Him, by the Holy Spirit's power. As Paul says in Galatians 5:25, *"since we live by the Spirit let us also walk by the Spirit."* God supplies all you need. That's why Hebrews 10:25 instructs, *"stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more, as we see the Day drawing near."*

**4- Growth in grace is a corporate reality,** experienced together by believers in Christ. As in 2Peter 1, *"may grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."* Therefore he says, you all *"be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure; to be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* If you have trusted Christ for salvation, you are meant to grow in His grace together with all believers, so that your lives glorify Him, both now and forever! □