

5-11-25 Everyone (Growing) Spiritual Growth is Intentional, Not Automatic

Week 2

Text: 2 Peter 3:17-18

Big Idea: Spiritual growth is intentional, not automatic

Last week, we looked at the importance of **“Everyone Gathering”** and summarized the message this way: **“The church is God’s plan A. There is no plan B.”**

Today our topic is **“Everyone Growing.”** Here’s what I’m hoping we learn and live out: **Spiritual growth is intentional, not automatic.**

Growth is not an accident, it’s a choice. A tree does not become strong by chance; it grows deep roots and stretches toward the sun. In the same way, spiritual growth is intentional, not automatic.

Too many of us are stagnant—not because we lack access to truth, but because we have settled for spiritual complacency. But we are not called to drift. We are called to grow!

2 Peter 3:17-18 gives us three powerful commands: **Guard, Grow, and Glorify.**

I. GUARD: STAND FIRM IN THE TRUTH

You, therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; (2 Peter 3:17)

The phrase **“beware”** calls to be wary and watchful of error because lethargic believers will bail on the Bible if they’re not on guard.

We are living in a time where false teachings are everywhere. The enemy is relentless, using:

- **Progressive Christianity** that distorts truth.
- **The prosperity gospel** that prioritizes wealth over surrender.
- **Worldly ideologies** that redefine morality. (secularism, gender and sexual issues)
- **Spiritual laziness** which leads to compromise.

If we are not actively standing firm, and on guard we will be swept away!

Hebrews 2:1 warns: **“Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.”**

Ephesians 4:14 reminds us that immature believers are “**tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.**”

that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Application: Are you on guard against deception? Are you deeply rooted in truth?

This is what the Lord says: “Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts away from the Lord. 6 They are like stunted shrubs in the desert, with no hope for the future. They will live in the barren wilderness, in an uninhabited salty land. 7 “But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. 8 They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit. Jeremiah 17:5-8 NLT

- Know what you believe, whom you believed in and be certain, also, beware that Satan wants to destroy you and will use cunning ways to lure you into his traps.

II. GROW: PURSUE CHRIST WITH PASSION

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

The best defense against deception is **spiritual growth**. If you stop moving forward, you will fall backward. There is no such thing as neutral in the Christian life!

Growth is a command, not a suggestion!

“But grow...”

- The word “**grow**” means to **enlarge, increase, and advance**.
- It’s in the **present active imperative**—meaning **we must keep growing constantly**.

D.A. Carson said:

“People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom.”

Where do we need to grow?

- 1. Grow in Grace:**
 - “**in the grace...**”

- Grace is not just what saved you; it's what sustains you.
- Are you increasing in your understanding of God's unmerited favor?
- Are you sure?
- How much grace have you been given?
- How much grace are you given out?
- What if God gave you the same amount of grace that you give others?
- If we (believers) are not careful, we (believers) can become some of the most miserable, jealous, selfish, entitled, victims out there.
- I mean some of you are friendly and graceful as a water moccasin. Some of us must tell people we are believers because no one can tell by our fruits. Some of us are so miserable, good night. We get SO worked up about some petty stuff.
- Well, you just don't understand how that situation is affecting me. You are right, I don't. But compared to what Jesus dealt with on the cross....
- Again, what if God showed you the same grace you show others?

2. Grow in Knowledge:

- **"...and in knowledge..."**
- This is not just **information** about Christ—it's **intimacy** with Christ.
- If we only grow in one way, our message will become muddled as we'll either become wishy washy or prideful about all we know.
- Most of us KNOW MORE of the Bible than we REALLY LIVE, or as one pastor quipped, *"We are educated far beyond our level of obedience."*
- Knowledge without grace makes us prideful; grace without knowledge makes us shallow. **We need both!**

This is the third time in this letter that Peter refers to Jesus as, **"our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1:11, 2:20).**

- **Lord.** He is Lord and Master, Supreme in authority.
- **Savior.** He is the One who rescues, saves, and sustains.
- **Jesus.** This name means the **"Lord saves."**
- **Christ.** This is the transliteration of the Greek word Christos, which means **"anointed one,"** or Messiah in Hebrew.

We **submit** to Him as Lord, we **love** Him as Savior, we **adore** Him as Jesus, and we **worship** Him as Christ.

Application: Are you growing deeper in grace and knowledge, or have you stalled in your faith?

Hint: If you are sitting in church with your arms crossed, jaw clenched, eyes rolling, mumbling under your breath because things aren't done your way, or maybe you haven't been included in something and you are offended, or you are angry because someone in the church hasn't spoken to you; it is safe to say that you are not growing in grace and knowledge.

You are being played by Satan and are a tool of his to spread pettiness, hatred, bitterness, complaining, and strife. AKA, you are not living the gospel, you are living contrary to it.

The parable of the ten talents **Matthew 25:14-29**.

III. GLORIFY: LIVE FOR HIS MAJESTY

To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:18)

The goal of spiritual growth **is not personal success—it's to glorify Jesus**.

- We **grow**, not for our own reputation, but to magnify Christ.
- We **stand firm**, not for our own security, but to exalt His truth.
- We **seek knowledge**, not for pride, but to reflect His wisdom to the world.

HOW DO WE GLORIFY GOD IN OUR GROWTH?

1. Grow through the Word:

- **Acts 2:42 – “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine...”**
- You cannot grow spiritually if you are not feeding on **God’s Word daily!**

2. Grow through Gathering:

- **Acts 2:46 – “Day by day, attending the temple together...”**
- Church is not optional for a growing believer—it is **essential!**

3. Grow through Small Groups:

- **Acts 2:46 – “...and breaking bread in their homes.”**
- True growth happens in **community**. **Isolation leads to stagnation.**

Can I challenge you in 2025 to be all in? The word EVERYONE is used at least 200 times in the Bible, and it means: All, every and whole.

Our assignment from the Almighty is for everyone to be on mission by gathering, growing, giving, and going with the gospel, all for the glory of God.

Application: Are you glorifying Christ by actively growing in your faith?

Conclusion:

IT'S TIME TO GROW!

My brothers and sisters, **spiritual growth will not happen by accident.**

- The world is pulling you away from truth.
- The enemy is luring you into complacency.
- Your flesh is resisting transformation.

But **God is calling you to grow!**

Imagine where you could be one year from now if you fully surrendered to Christ.

- What if you truly committed to the Word?
- What if you prioritized prayer?
- What if you got serious about discipleship?

Are you growing or are you drifting?

Are you pursuing Christ or just coasting?

Will you choose intentional growth today?

Call to action:

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP

- **Commit to daily Bible reading** – Let God's Word shape you.
- **Engage in a small group** – Growth happens in community.
- **Stand firm in truth** – Guard against deception.
- **Pursue Christ with passion** – Make Him your priority.

"Spiritual growth is intentional, not automatic. Let's commit to growing together in Christ, pressing on toward the goal, and reflecting His glory to a world in desperate need. This is our moment. This is our calling. Let's rise up and grow in Him!"

Closing prayer:

"Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts that long to know You more. Stir within us a hunger for Your presence. Let us not be content with where we are but ignite in us a relentless passion to grow in grace and truth. Strengthen our faith, deepen our love, and transform our lives for Your glory. May we shine brightly in a dark world as we commit to growing in You. In Jesus' name, Amen."