

BUT GROW!
II Peter 3:11-18

Introduction:

- A. *How many parents have ever said to their children,
“When are you going to grow up?”*
 - 1. *“It is time you grew up.”*
 - 2. *Usually we were speaking of maturity...*

- B. *Christians also should grow ...*
 - 1. *If we do not grow we can be deceived with false doctrine...*
 - 2. *If we do not grow we will not go forward...*
 - 3. *The way to avoid spiritual decline is spiritual growth...*
 - a. *Creation says, “Grow or you will become weaker and weaker...”*
 - b. *Even our bodies are being plucked daily as we lose an atom here and an atom there...*
 - 4. *In the end, the laws of death will claim all that is mortal...*

- C. *How sad when the body stops growing:*
 - 1. *Doctors are constantly trying to find out why some children stop growing....*
 - a. *Parents get concerned..*
 - b. *They want at least normal growth...*
 - c. *Some of our kids must be on “Miracle Growth.”*

2. *Growth is necessary for life:*

- a. *True of nations, corporations, organizations and even churches...*
- b. *Death is the penalty of non-growth.*

3. *In the third epistle of John he tells his beloved Gaius that he prays he might prosper and be in health even as his soul prospers ...*

- a. *What if our physical bodies should have only enough power to correspond to our spiritual health...?*
- b. *We might see the extent of our lack of spiritual growth...*

4. *I ask you this morning, "Are you growing?"*

- a. *I am speaking about you personally...*
- b. *Not your friend, your ministry, but you...*

D. *In order for the Christians to stand in Peter's day, he gives this direction:*

1. *"But grow in grace..."*
2. *The way to stand steadfast is to grow...*
3. *Look at verse 17:*

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

- a. *The way to stand is to go forward...*
- b. *The way to stand is to progress...*

c. The way to stay alive is to grow...

I. You Can Grow

A. The exciting news about growth is that you can grow:

1. There is no joy like growth:

- a. Children*
- b. Teens*
- c. Young Christians*

2. But, does not everything eventually stop growing?

- a. Physically?*
- b. Intellectually?*
- c. Socially?*
- d. Spiritually?*

3. If we base our growth on the curve, we will eventually decline...

- a. All curves come down...*
- b. We should be on a straight line in growth...*
- c. "I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining everyday;
Still praying as I onward bound,
'Lord plant my feet on higher ground.'"*

B. You can grow in GRACE:

1. To grow in grace is to grow in our sanctification...

- a. There are degrees in the development of grace...*
- b. So, there is such a thing as growing in grace:*

2. This growth is not something measured just in years of time...

- a. I would expect someone saved for several years to know more about grace than someone who has been saved a few months...*
- b. However, not necessarily...*
- c. Some grow faster than others...*
- d. I have experienced growth spurts of grace in my life ...*

C. Growth in grace is not something you can measure by feelings:

1. You may feel that you are not growing when in reality you are...

- a. Some people confuse enthusiasm and energy with growth in grace...*
- b. Some young preachers with all the energy to build a church get confused later when that enthusiasm is gone...*
- c. Same is true with young Christians...*

- 1) "Enthusiasm is gone so I must no be growing..."*
- 2) Not so...*

2. When you start a fire you put the kindling at the bottom:

- a. *Burns brightly...*
- b. *Soon the kindling is burned and the hardwood catches fire and flame dies down...*
- c. *There may be less light and fire, but there is more heat...*

3. *This is the way it is with grace...*

- a. *It begins with a flame and lays hold on the imagination and passions...*
- b. *Later grace appeals more to the soul and makes the Christian a solid piece of coal...*

Leviticus 16:11-12

11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself:

12 And he shall take a censer full of burning **coals** of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the veil:

- c. *He is no longer a little flame rising up to heaven where a puff of wind can blow it out, but a strong coal and the wind only causes it to become hotter...*

4. *Do not judge your growth by your feelings...*

C. *Do not judge your growth by your circumstances:*

1. *Some of God's plants grow best in darkness:*

- a. *Today you are in the Valley of Depression, that dose not mean you are not growing...*
- b. *That may be the best place to grow in grace...*

2. *Our worst circumstances may be our best places to grow...*

D. On the other had, do not think that you are growing because you are doing more:

- 1. Just because you are doing and laboring, dose not mean you are growing...*
- 2. Remember the church at Ephesus?*
- 3. Of course, if you are doing nothing, that is a sure sign that you are not growing...*

E. The main point is, "You Can Grow."

- 1. If you can grow....*
- 2. You should grow...*

II. You Must Grow

Psalm 92:12

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall **grow** like a cedar in Lebanon.

A. Remember, when you stop growing, decline starts:

- 1. The moment you become satisfied...*
- 2. Never accept your present spiritual condition as your best...*
- 3. Remember that God was "The God of Jacob."*
 - a. God was not content with Jacob....*
 - b. God is not content with me or you...*
 - c. Jacob, the sup-planter, became Israel, the Prince of God...*
- 4. That is what God's grace can do...*

B. You may not be totally responsible for what you are, but we are responsible for what we remain...

1. The grace of God saved us and the grace of God can change us...

*“What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
I have light in my soul for which long I have sought;
Since Jesus came into my heart.”*

2. There is no reason why you should not grow...

C. You Can Grow You Must Grow

III. How You Should Grow

A. Vitally

1. Make this a vital part of your life...

a. Priority...

b. We neglect our spiritual lives so much...

2. First, it is vital that we are alive - we cannot grow unless we are alive...

a. Growth depends on life...

b. “He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

3. It does not matter about your environment or your

circumstances, you will never grow unless you have life...

4. *This is vital...*

B. Nutritionally

1. *See to it that you get the right nutrition...*

a. *Wrong nutrition or lack of good nutrition will cause stunted growth...*

b. *What kind of diet are you on?*

2. *If you digest what you read in newspapers, magazines and see on television, you are not going to grow in grace...*

a. *A sea gull was caught and caged and fed only grain for several months...*

1) *Its natural food, of course, is soft fish...*

2) *The sea gull died and it was found that all the hard grain had changed its stomach into a gizzard...*

b. *What have you been digesting?*

3. *The Bible says, "Eat ye that which is good."*

a. *"Taste and see that the Lord is good..."*

b. *I Peter 2:2*

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may **grow** thereby:

b. *No book can help you grow in grace like the Bible...*

- 1) *It will build you up...*
- 2) *It will edify you...*
- 3) *It will help you to be thoroughly furnished to every good work...that is grace...*

4. *Grow Vitally*
Grow Nutritionally

C. *Atmospherically*

1. *A couple had been spending an evening in a disco with all the smoking and drinking...*
 - a. *They walked outside...*
 - b. *“What is that I smell?”*
 - c. *“That’s fresh air!”*
 - d. *They had been in the wrong atmosphere...*
2. *We need to be careful of the atmosphere in which we live...*
 - a. *A lot of air these days is polluted...*
 - b. *Not the place to grow in grace...*
 - c. *Be careful where you go...*
3. *Get some deep breaths of heavenly air and spend time in prayer with our God...*
 - a. *Jesus did...*
 - b. *“Take time to be holy,*

*Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His word,
By looking to Jesus,
Like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct,
His likeness shall see.”*

4. Grow atmospherically

D. Ergonomically

II Corinthians 9:8

8 And God *is* able to make all **grace** abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

- 1. Show me a person who is not working for Christ, and I will show you one who is not growing in grace...*
 - a. A working person will become a hungry person...*
 - b. Same is true with a spiritually working person...*
 - 1) They are hungry for the word of God...*
 - 2) Hunger for the grace of God...*
- 2. What work are doing for the Master?*
 - a. Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.”*

- b. Are you working?*
- c. You can work without growing, but you cannot grow without working.*

Conclusion:

A. So you see:

- 1. You Can Grow*
- 2. You Must Grow*
- 3. How You Should Grow*

B. Are you growing?

- 1. Do you want to?*
- 2. Will you begin to grow today?*

C. Under the right conditions, anything that should grow, that God designed to grow, can and will grow...