

# HOW TO GROW UP SPIRITUALLY 1

Grow – increase or multiply

- A living thing – undergoes natural development by increasing in size and changing physically
  - Grow up – process of maturity or adulthood
  - Development
  - flourish
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- OT – often refers to the reproduction of livestock and to harvest – in plant life
  - NT – increase of the word of God (Acts 6:7) – spread of the message
  - Increase used both for the numerical growth of the church (Acts 16:5)
  - Today we are talking about spiritual growth/prosperity

## APOSTLE PAUL SPOKE MORE THIS THAN ANYTHING ELSE

*Spiritual prosperity.*

- Although St. Paul could soar into strange heights of revelation, his interest was not confined to cold theological constructs.
- Whenever he meditated on the final consummation of all things, he was always conscious of and concerned for the spiritual condition of the Christians of his day.
- He evinced deep, earnest and personal concern for those committed to his charge, for the Churches of which he had the oversight.
- They were always in his thoughts and in his prayers – praying for their spiritual growth
- We need to learn something by considering what, in St. Paul's judgement, were the marks of Christian prosperity, and how he viewed that prosperity.

**THE TRUE PROSPERITY OF A CHURCH CONSISTS IN THE GROWTH OF SPIRITUAL GRACES AMONG THE MEMBERS.**

- Our parameters or yardsticks of growth are far contrary to God's way of measuring growth.
- We make much of numbers, as though prosperity were a matter of arithmetic.
- we are too obsessed with "The statistics of the Churches"

- Statistics, which can never serve as a standard measure with which to discover the precious gem of godliness.

## **PAUL**

- St. Paul cared less for the number of members to Christianity than for the quality of the true Christians
- Today that is what we measure as growth – that is only a fraction of what growth is.
- We are so busy counting the number of attendants at church
- What about the measure of the growth or decrease of spiritual life?

## **Wealth and prosperity**

- St. Paul's idea of prosperity was not amassing or hoarding wealth
- It was not the construction of more impressive buildings
- Or driving flashy cars
- Or attaining higher social status
- Or All the other things about which some of us are so greatly concerned.

Are they bad to attain? No – but they should not be our main goal or the metrics for measuring growth.

Just because you do not have them, does not mean that you are not growing spiritually

- There are those that have them but a very much spiritual infants – regardless of how long they have been in salvation
- All Paul cared for was spiritual progress/growth
- Growth in divine graces – like faith in Christ, hope in the promises of God, love for one another and the knowledge of God.
- Those should make the main subject of our prayer and supplications
- Praying for their increase in us
- That comes from the knowledge the present graces in which we operate are not enough
- You have not arrived my friend
- The great Apostle Paul – said:

## **Phil 3:12-16**

*Not that I have already obtained this ( achieved, I don't have all together yet, I've not made it yet or arrived, not that I've already attained this goal of being Christlike), or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own ( I still need to grow, develop, change, I am*

*pressing on attain the image of Christ – he may be full formed in me ), because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us hold true to what we have attained.*

### **What is he saying?**

- There are some things I've attained – in life
- Was circumcised on the eighth day like any other Israelites
- Of the tribe of Benjamin – a Hebrew of Hebrews
- As to the law – a Pharisee
- As to zeal – a persecutor of the church
- As to righteousness under the law – blameless
- All very impressive credentials
- But in comparison to my journey of growth in Jesus – counted them all lose – rubbish
- All the very accolades that ordinary people would wave around and wear as badges of honor,
- I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for.
- All for the sake of Christ

All the things Paul was running away from – those the people counted as growth or success

- These Are the very things we are running towards today
- They are the ones we count as growth
- We've gone to the trash can and picked up rubbish – that is what we are now treasuring more than Christ
- No wonder we are so hooked up and addicted to the gospel of prosperity
- Is prosperity bad?
- NO

**Apostle John in his third Epistle Vs. 2** writes prays for his good friend Gaius,  
*“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers”* **3 John 2**

What am talking about is spiritual growth – towards maturation

- There must be distinct qualities in you that point to the fact that you are growing spiritually

There should be evidence that you are growing - maturing

**evidenced by:**

1. ***an increase in love for one another and for all, as we do for you- 1 Thess. 3:12***
  - brotherly love – 1 Thess.4:10
  - Love for all the saints/ Christians – Ephesians 1:15
  
2. **And knowledge of God – Col.1:10**
  - walking in a manner worthy of the Lord
  - fully pleasing to him
  - bearing fruit in every good work and
  - increasing in the knowledge of God;

### **STILL BABIES**

- Unfortunately - most of us a still baby – still requiring pampers changing

### **STILL CARRYING CHILDISH WAYS**

#### **1 Cor 13:11**

*When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.*

- That is why we need to grow.

#### **Heb 5:11- 6:1-2**

*About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*

*For though by this time you **ought to be teachers**, you **need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God.***

***You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.***

***But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.***

***Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.***

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **WE NEED TO GROW:**

- Of John the Baptist

**Luke 1:80**

*And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.*

- Of Jesus Christ

**Luke 2:40**

*And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.*

**2 Pet 1:5 - 8**

*For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Purpose of the fivefold ministry****Ep. 4: 11-15**

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*