**SPIRITUAL MATURITY SERIES**

 “God’s Growing Grace”

 **Key Verses**: **2 Peter 3:18, 2 Tim 2:15**

**“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ…” 2 Peter 3:18 (KJV)**



**2 Peter 3:18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen. KJV

**You Must Grow To Live**

**2 Peter 3:18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. KJV

The Apostle Peter’s words require that all Christians are to grow. But grow is what way? We are to grow in the favor of God and in the understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, many Christians find themselves expanding in areas do not result in an increase of God’s favor on our lives or in our knowledge of who God really is. There are other Christians who chose to treat their faith in God like people treat fire insurance. They get the insurance for “just-in-case” and then pretty much go on living their lives as usual. Some people fear going to hell and believe they need a Savior to prevent that from happening; so that accept Christ as their Savior but after that the pretty much just sit around in life waiting for eternity to come and take them away.

**QUESTION**: Is accepting Christ as Savior the first and last tasks of a Christian?

The Apostle Paul leaves no room for wavering over the issue of Christian growth. **2 Peter 3:18** is written in the imperative tense; so what it is actually saying is *“You”-* “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ…” Most physical scientist agree that in order for something to grow, it must be acted upon; either from a “power-within” (having life within itself) or from a power from without (being effected from a life power from without).

**QUESTION:** When it comes to our Christian growth, are we being acted upon from a power within or from a power without?

No living part of God’s earthly creation has the option of simply standing still or maintaining a constant unchanging state or condition. Many theologians would argue that in reality, every Christian is growing; the real question is “in what area or in what way are we growing?”

**Malnourished Saints**

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

KJV

Have you been attending church for a long time but you feel you still have not grown and you are wondering why and what you missed?  Have you listened to sermons, attended bible studies, faithfully attended Sunday School every week, read numerous religious books, attended conferences, attended healing and deliverance services and did everything you were told spiritually, yet you still feel that something is missing and that you have not really grown? There are so many Christian who have sought outside or external sources that would somehow grow them up spiritually. So they go from conference to conference. Read spiritual book after book, attend church services and listen to Christian CDs and all such things: and still they only experience minimal spiritual growth. Consider this familiar scripture:

**2 Tim 2:15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. KJV

The hard facts of the matter is that there is simply no replacement for your personal prayer time and the study of God’s word. Having everyone else do your spiritual homework for you will not help you when you are the one that has to pass life’s tests!

**Could We Be Spiritually Malnourished?**

In the natural sense; some symptoms apparent in malnourished individuals are: more sensitive to heat and cold, longer recovery times, poor muscle development, tiredness and irritability. (just to name a few) – **QUESTIONS**: How might we use these natural symptoms of malnutrition and apply them in a spiritual sense to those who are suffering from spiritual malnourishment? How might immature Christians hurt the church?

**There’s No Replacement for the Real Thing**

The apostle draws a comparison between a mother’s milk and that nourishment that God provides through his word. God placed within the woman a source that generates milk that is pure and originates within her for the purpose of providing her newborn baby the nourishment that it needs to grow to become strong and mature. This factor compares to the “unadulterated” word of God. The word “unadulterated” means that it has not been diluted or mixed with any other substances. Another interesting comparison is found in **Matt. 5:13** in this passage Jesus mentions: Matt 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour (saltiness), wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. KJV Have you ever known salt not to be “salty?” Even rock salt that sat in the garage waiting for winter’s ice all summer long is still salty. In reality , the only way for salt to no longer be salty, you would have to mix it with some other substances.

Today, in our modern world, man has created formulas to replace the mother’s milk. The shortcoming of formula is that they lack the ability to exactly replicate the mother’s nutritional milk. God’s Word that comes directly from the pages of the bible to the individual readers without any external influence can be defined as the sincere milk of the Word. As Christians we too have attempted use other formulas to replace us drinking in the sincere milk of God’s word. We’ve replaced it with the formula for Christian music, Christian conferences, spiritual books and movies. Unbeknown to us, Satan is the chemist that is working hard to get us off of God’s word and addicted to some weaken unprofitable replacement!

**Heavenly People With An Worldly Appetite: Num 11:5-6 - Colossians 3:2** This passage in the book of Numbers records a time when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness and God was feeding them manna from heaven. The people grew tired of eating this bread of heaven and told Moses they longed for the food they had in Egypt when they were in slavery. Often after all God has done for us our flesh has still has a taste for the things of our old life. Satan will use this longing to wean us off of the sincere milk of God’s word. **QUESTIONS:** What worldly things do you still have a taste for? How does the scripture in Colossians speak to this matter?