

2 Peter 3:18

How do I apply it?

I. Intro

II. How can I do or apply the exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” in my life NOW?

I. Intro

Last week we started the close of Peter’s 2nd letter with the “Devine expectation” and the “Believer’s responsibility” to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” We noted the expectation and responsibility...(GROW) we recorded the specific areas of growth...(Grace and knowledge) we also were blessed to be given the exact location and only place where we can find these two areas...(Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ). The truth is that the most effective way for the Christian NOT to stumble is to advance and move forward!! I confessed to you all that I suffer from a “self-centered preservation” that has adopted “intellectual agreement” as a way of keeping its self-alive to avoid obedience. It is because of this that the Holy Spirit led me to ask, “Three questions with regards to the “Believer’s responsibility” to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

1. The first of which we looked at last Sunday: What does this exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*”, mean?
2. Now we will examine: How can I do or apply the exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” in my life NOW?
3. And the following week will examine: How will I know if I have been applying the exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” in my life?

Again, by way of review we looked at: “**What things necessitate GROWTH**” and recorded **four truths about growth:**

- A. **For something to GROW it must already be alive!**
- B. **Life naturally leads to GROWTH!**
- C. **Organic GROWTH is a process and not instantaneous!**
- D. **GROWTH is specific and not random!**

Now we can look at the second of our three questions asked and answered by verse 18:

- II. How can I do or apply the exhortation of “***grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ***” in my life NOW?

It seems that Christianity has tried to answer that question by two very different viewpoints:

- A. **The first view is that growth is mechanical** and as such there is no way a person can Grow in grace while being planted in this world system. They say you will need to come out of this world to grow and because of the difficulty of ALL of Christianity to leave the world they have created both a special class of people as well as special locations to achieve this. We have seen different groups attempt this departure from the world as they try to create special communities in order to stimulate “GROWTH”. I saw one such place in our recent mission’s trip to Mexico as the Mennonite’s who originated in Germany, but faced difficulties sought to reestablish this special place in Russia before failing then moved to Canada and finally relocated to Mexico. The problem they realized wasn’t just government or location, but they have realized that it is an internal personal struggle as they kept on kicking out their own people for the fear of the world invading their special place until in the 90’s when they realized that they had kicked out more for the world then there was those in their special community who were “Growing in grace”! The

Roman Catholic church also did this by creating a special class of people calling them the Religious and laity and then established places for the religious to retreat from the world too called monasteries. But these haven't worked very well either and it is so exclusive that it cannot be seen as a way to achieve any separation and growth if only a few can even have access to it!

- B. **The second view is organic** and starts by what we saw last week that realizes that **we cannot make ourselves grow by changing our external environment**. The organic viewpoint sees that we can notice certain necessary conditions that promote growth and are essential to it and they can be found not in a "**special external place**" but in every heart that seeks to "GROW"! The Bible supports this viewpoint as Paul wrote in Eph 3:17-19 in his prayer saying, "***That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***" The author of Hebrews in 10:16 quoting the prophetic promise of such growth from Jer.31-33 said that "***This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.***" The work has already done by God in our hearts when we received Jesus. Now we are simply applying the conditions that necessitate growth and our responsibility to make certain that we are open to those conditions so that we will GROW!

Since this is an "organic" viewpoint We need to examine organically what necessitates growth naturally in the physical realm and then plug that into the spiritual realm. There are four things that are essential for growth:

1. **Sunlight**: The passage before has already given us this telling us that source of energy and light that is most essential for our growth is “Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”. So, the SUN = THE SON! He is the source of all we need to grow in grace as well as knowledge. He is the only one that provides the resources necessary for our maturity. Beyond Jesus being essential for our maturity looking at the organic realm of a physical plane I see three other elements that are necessary for our growth. Food, water, and air! Spiritual growth would be impossible without these three elements provided by Jesus.
2. **Food**: Think of any and all life and you will see the necessity of food for growth and as a Christian the Bible is plain with regards to what the Christian diet is to be on spiritually, the word of God. Peter had already commented on this in 1 Peter 2:2 “*as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.*” The Christian that doesn’t have a consistent diet upon the Word will become unhealth and stunt their growth in grace and knowledge of Jesus. Those who have grown in grace and knowledge have all done so by maintaining a constant diet upon God’s Word. Every Christian ought cultivate a heart of continually being a student of God’s Word as it is food for the Soul and the Spirit. Those who are immature in their faith are those who don’t read their bibles and are not seeking to apply its truths to their lives. It is for this reason that consistent attendance to a church that teaches through God’s word can be extremely beneficial to a parson’s maturity in Grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. I know of no other way to be healthy spiritually then consistency to the Word of God!
3. **Water**: The second essential element necessary for growth in grace and knowledge is “PRAYER” or “communication” with the Lord. It is what waters the word of God as we remind ourselves the truths we have you read. Such communication must not just be one-

sided where we talk to God but equally important that we learn to listen to God as we are still before Him. And think this is a time which we are meditating or contemplating on the truths of God's character and nature as seen in His Word and His creation. Prayer also involves "waiting" upon and not busying ourself with the "things" of this world and life. I think every believer can benefit from giving themselves a "timeout" at least 30 minutes a day where we can be still before the Lord with the cares and concerns of our heart not where we are telling Him what to do but rather listening to Him tell us WHO HE IS!

4. **Air**: Finally, if we are to have growth in grace like growth of the physical realm there must be "AIR" and I think that air for the believer is that FAITH in the work and promises of God. The faith isn't in our way being the best or that God will work things out in the way we want Him too, when we want Him too but instead that we have the faith and trust to believe that the way in which God's chooses to work will be in the way that is best and consistent with His character and nature and because of His love for us best also for us even when we can't see how! We will need to grow in this AIR that uses what we know to be true about God to interpret what we don't know about our present situation and circumstance and choose to breath the AIR of His nature instead of the lack of air of our understanding!

If the Christian is to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus they will need to do three things with regards to these essentially elements that ensure our growth:

- A. **We will need to avoid the things that keep us from these essential elements.** This is why Peter warned against the "junk food" of the false teachers as the danger wasn't just the poison of false teaching it was that it was keeping them from the healthy food of the above things. If we know that something is standing in between me and my growth in the

grace and knowledge of Jesus then I must be desiring to cut whatever it is off.

- B. **We will need to “exercise” in the right things as well.** As already mentioned the Christian life isn't just about avoidance it's about practicing the right things. I can avoid doing wrong habits but that alone won't enable my health to become strong that will take exercise and not just a right diet.
- C. **We will need to learn to rest.** I believe that this is far too often undervalued in terms of our practice. We can have all the necessary things for growth and even be avoiding the wrong things and exercising the right things but if we are not getting the rest needed it will hinder our growth. This is one area that I neglected for most of my ministry and have learned that I didn't grow spiritually as I could have and when Donna got sick and eventually went home with the Lord God showed me that He had placed me in a place where I had to learn to rest in Him and be still! We can spend all our time “trying to Grow” praying to God but see little maturity because we fail to rest in Him. I have grown in this area as I had no choice but to rest in His loving arms.

Now next we will conclude with the third question: **How will I know if I have been applying the exhortation** of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” **in my life?**