

Hebrews 6.1-3

Unto Perfection...

Growth in Christ is NOT optional for the Christian. We are created, called and saved to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, so that we might display the manifold wisdom of God in Christ. But we have fallen victim to a mindset which relegates all spiritual knowledge to the accidental or circumstantial variety, since many believe that truth is a relative thing. However, God has delivered to us, His Word which is the objective, propositional truth. His Word not only contains truth, it IS truth. And as such we are called to grow in that truth with the grace that God provides.

Charles Spurgeon gives this illustration, which I think is an excellent place to begin.

"There was once in London a club of small men, whose qualification for membership lay in their not exceeding five feet in height; these dwarfs held, or pretended to hold, the opinion that they were nearer perfection of manhood than others, for they argued that primeval men had been far more gigantic than the present race,

and consequently that the way of progress was to grow less and less, and that the human race as it perfected itself would become as diminutive as themselves.

Such a club of Christians might be established in most cities, and without any difficulty might attain to an enormously numerous membership; for the notion is common that our dwarfish Christianity is, after all, the standard, and may even imagine that nobler Christians are enthusiasts, fanatical and hot-blooded, while they themselves are cool because they are wise, and indifferent because they are intelligent."

It is not normal, nor is it acceptable for Christians to fail to grow up in grace. God commands growth!!

I. THE NECESSITY OF GROWTH

- a. There are only two possible states, growth or decay
- b. Failure to progress opens the door for old habits which return with renewed vigor and increased power.

i. Demon returning

Matthew 12.39-45

ii. Regaining weight

iii. Stopping smoking, drugs, gambling addiction, etc.

c. God is shamed when His people do not grow

d. It a tragic thing when those for whom Christ died willingly return to their ruinous behaviors, like a dog to its vomit and a swine to its mire.

Proverbs 26:11 (NKJV)

11 As a dog returns to his own vomit, So a fool repeats his folly.

2 Peter 2:22 (NKJV)

22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

II. DIVINE PROVIDENCE

- a. All of God's work in our lives is aimed at our growth and maturation. He has called us to maturity. We are all to aim at being theologians and should be a people who are hungry for the truth of God.
- b. God provides the grace that first of all makes us live and able to take on nourishment from His hand.
- c. God provides His Word and teaches us from His Word which is the primary source of all truth.
 - i. To deny access to people is evil
 - ii. To downplay the importance of God's word is both foolish and wicked
 - iii. To refuse to avail yourself of all it contains is foolish beyond all possible exaggeration and amounts to spiritual suicide.
- d. God also teaches us by His own hand as He navigates our lives and governs our circumstance, which He creates for our good and for our growth into the likeness of Christ

III. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY –

Two human parties share responsibility for that growth. The teacher and the student. Both have a part in working for the growth of the student.

- a. The Teacher Required to teach the whole counsel of God with clarity and faithfulness.
 - i. Be mindful of the state of the student
 - 1. This is NOT to support changeable doctrine, this is maturity in understanding.

Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV)

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today,
and forever.

- 2. This is NOT to believe that someone can find knowledge that is not based on God or that has never been given before. This is NOT about new revelation or supposed truth that is outside of scripture's scope

ii. Seek to prepare the word delivered so that it is digestible by the flock.

1. Rightly dividing the word

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

iii. Deliver what is appropriate for the hearers

Jesus said “feed my sheep, feed my lambs” ... But some pastors put the food so high and lofty that they seem to have read the text to say “feed my giraffes” - CHS

iv. Be sure to seek the wisdom of God to that end

v. Do not withhold that which needs to be heard simply because the message will not be well-received –

2 Timothy 4.1-5

1. Cowardly
2. Leaves me responsible and culpable for your sin –

Ezekiel 3.17-21

3. Leaves you in danger

vi. Do not deliver things that are not needful simply because it is my preference

1. Verse by verse
2. Do not speak to what I know of your life directly... I am to deal with your sin on a one on one basis, as a pastor, Not publicly from the pulpit.

b. The student –

i. Required to receive the whole counsel of God and to seek to apply it to your life.

1. Obedience to the word

2. Submission to the elders who watch over your souls –

Hebrews 13:17 (NKJV)

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

3. Active practice of application
 4. Personal labor towards understanding and growth
- ii. Required to seek to understand a right view of the Christian life.
1. Not proof-texting to support your own bias...
 2. This means reading the Bible and examining your own life, ideas, opinions and works in light of its teaching.
 3. Adjusting your life, ideas, opinions and practice in light of its teaching...

- iii. Required to be a watchman over your own soul and the brothers and sisters whom God has joined you unto - mutual accountability
 - 1. Exercise the things you have been learning
 - 2. Strengthen those things which God is forming in you
 - 3. Frequently review your character and seek to understand what progress you are making and what progress is still needed.
 - a. Neither false humility
 - b. Nor undue harshness
 - 4. Do all you do in the sure understanding that you can do nothing without God and so must be completely and humbly dependent upon Him for all!