

SERMON NOTES

Growing Up 8 – Still Growing

The eighth and final sign of Spiritual maturity is that we are still growing.

2 Peter 1:5-11 (NKJV) - 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,
6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,
7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.
8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.
10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

These “virtues” are covered in the seven signs of maturity we have already covered in this series, but he says they must “abound” or “be increasing”.

OTHER PASSAGES THAT SPEAK OF CONTINUING GROWTH

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NKJV): 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Romans 1:17 (NKJV): 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV): 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Proverbs 4:18 (NKJV): 18 But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV): 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

Matthew 6:11 (NKJV) - 11 Give us this day our daily bread.

The 3 Churches in Revelation that had stagnated:

Revelation 2:4, 5 (NKJV): 4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.

Revelation 3:1 (NKJV) - "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

Revelation 3:16 (NKJV) - "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

His solution:

THE REASONS WE MAY HAVE STAGNATED

1. Pride / Taking His Grace in vain / forgetting we were saved from our sins -

2 Peter 1:9 (NKJV) For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

1 Corinthians 15:10 (NKJV) - 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. This can also include hurt / bitterness -

Hebrews 12:15 (NKJV) - 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

The solution - come back to the grace of God, humble yourself, and “do the things you did at first” (Rev 2:5)

2. THE worries and deceit and pleasures of this life and riches are competing for our passion, energy and affection and make us unfruitful.

Matthew 13:7, 22 (NKJV): 7 "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ... 22 "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

The solution - uproot and remove competing affections.

3. Fear / lack of faith / faith has died through disobedience –

Heb 10:35, 38-39 / Faith has died due to inaction / **disobedience** - James 2:26. “Repent and do the first works” Rev 2:5

Romans 10:17 (NKJV): So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

James 2:26 (NKJV): For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The solution - read His word and obey again.

4. Disconnected from a Church family.

Ephesians 4:16 (NKJV) - 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Psalms 92:12-14 (NKJV) 12 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing,

The solution - get connected, “planted” and “joined and knit together”.

CONCLUSION:

Hebrews 10:35, 38-39 (NKJV) - 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. ...

38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do **PRACTICALLY** in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.