



Growth only comes by watering of the SEED- ARE YOU GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD?

2 Peter 1: 2 - 4(NKJV) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This scripture is letting us know that we need a deeper experimental knowledge of God and it is affirming the deity of Jesus. He is our Lord and Savior. It is important that we have Spiritual growth and a greater personal experience with God in our life. It is said: many believers want the abundance of God's grace and peace, but they are unwilling to put forth the effort to get to know God better through relationship - spending time, studying, fasting and prayer. To enjoy the privileges God offers us so freely, we must grow in our knowledge of God and Jesus, our Lord. There is only one God, but He exists in three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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The power to lead a God honoring life, comes not from within us, but from God. I read we do not have the resources within ourselves to truly follow God. He allows us to be partakers of the divine nature in order to keep us from sin and help us live for Him. When we were born again. God by HIS Spirit, empowers us with His own goodness. Spiritual growth is real life for all believers, because God has already given us everything required to live a godly life. So, what does that mean? The Spiritual blessings that we need are already available to us here on earth, but we have to retrieve them. We are redeemed in Christ -Put the key in the ignition - turn on the lights. The power is made available to us all, we just have to utilize it.

Let's read **Ephesians 1: 3 - 6 Redemption in Christ "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.**

God is inviting us to praise Him for who He is, what He has done and what we trust Him to do. I read; we live in the physical realm -here on earth- with our problems, needs, struggles and, sin. So, whatever happens in the physical realm - begins in the spiritual realm (Heavenly places). For example, conflicts in our Home, Marriage, Job, Children and etc. is a spiritual problem. Although the conflicts are visible in the physical - here on earth, it is rooted in the spiritual, in nature or heavenly places. The heavenly places which refers to the Spiritual realm, is where God and Satan battle for our loyalty or commitment. My question is: **Who are we allowing to win, in the battle of your life.** We must learn therefore, when sin, problems and struggles arise, we need a Spiritual solution to our circumstances. If we are fighting in the physical, then we have already lost the battle. In order to be victorious, we must live with a spiritual mindset about life. Thus: "Set your mind on things above".

We are fighting wrong! God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places. **This is the Word! I cannot change the terms.** God has not left us alone and unequipped to navigate or steer through this life. It is only when we try to do it without Him and try to do it our way is when we cause unnecessary chaos. For those that are unaware, we are present in two places at the same time. We are physically located on earth - but we operate from Heavenly places. God wants our position in the Heavenly places to control our activity here on Earth.

I learned that only by operating from a Spiritual view will we have access to God's divine power and provisions, to deal with life and walk in victory in the physical realm. That's good! Spiritual blessings are available to us. Why you may ask; because God chose us, He drafted us before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless. **Choosing to sin, is failing to give God glory. When we do this, we are attempting to make God focus on and around us, when we are supposed to be focusing on and around Him.** We have got it twisted and we have approached things wrongly, just so we can satisfy our own selfish nature and desires. **For all who has forgotten, God created us for Himself, for His happiness. We belong to the Lord.** He has chosen us to be holy and blameless, so that the Church (That's us - it's not a building) will bring Him pleasure. When we pursue His pleasure, we then position ourselves to experience the blessings of God, which have already been preordained for us; its guaranteed, if you follow His

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plan. **The Earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof**, we cannot just storm up into His camp and start making changes. NO! Growth requires obedience - sacrifice and discipline.

When we know we grow. The key to spiritual growth is sharing in the divine nature, which enters into the life of every believer at the moment of salvation through the Holy Spirit. God's nature is entwined into our DNA, which includes our spiritual appetite and our godly behavior. I'm sorry to bust any bubbles of those who think they were just born with it. but the divine nature is planted in seed form and it does not immediately change into mature godly living, but rather, it gives every Christian, the ability to escape the wickedness, that is in this world because of evil desires. A seed cannot grow unless it is nurtured, watered and cared for. Some of us are letting our seeds die from lack of knowledge, watering of the Word, prayer, fellowship and relationship. This is why our spiritual seed is malnourished and has not grown into its full potential in the Lord. This is why people have been sitting in the Church for years, still in the cycle of despair and oppression. When the seed is tended to it grows and the life of the Spirit expands in our souls. Then, we began working more in the Spirit than in the flesh. Then the results are revealed or shown through the body, through righteous living. This is fruitful growth in the faith. There is a formula, there's a process, we have to follow the terms.

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

Our faith has to be more than just belief in certain facts. Our faith must result in loving actions towards others, growth in our Christian character and the practice of righteous discipline, otherwise, it will wither away. I read God has predestined to save a people who will be awards of His grace. Those who believe the Gospel are chosen in Christ. Faith without deeds or work is dead. Ask yourself is my faith passive or active. True faith transforms our conduct as well as our thoughts. If the way we live and the way we treat others remains unchanged, we have not truly taken in the truth, that we claim to believe. Some of us have dressed up the outside but the inside remains unchanged. Faith Without Works Is Dead.

Let's read **James 2: 14 - 17 (NKJV) "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**

We are watching people drown because we will not take action. We are all talk with passive words; like pray about when God has given us what we need to help. Reach out your hand and pull them out. Total commitment to Jesus is essential part of our faith and a person cannot be Christian

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simply by declaring the right doctrine or agreeing with a biblical fact. **We must be all in, in thought and action.** Godly, actions are the natural fruits of our true faith. A genuine Christian will have a changed life. The result of faith is a changed life that results in serving others and not copying the world around us. It is important that we have Spiritual growth and greater personal experience with God in our life. **God has given us everything required for life and godliness. The spiritual blessing we need are already available to us.** For the divine nature to express itself, evident in our life, we must make every effort to add to our faith the qualities necessary for spiritual growth. These are as we read:

1. **Goodness-** living to glorify God. Knowledge- responding to divine revelation, growing in the knowledge of God. Asking God for wisdom- that HE give generously.
2. **Self-control-** resisting sinful desires. Learn to say No. Stop giving in and ask God for strength. We have not because we ask not.
3. **Endurance-** not quitting until God releases us. We have to learn to press and stop giving up in the middle the distance is the same. So why not keep moving forward. Think about it...
4. **Godliness-** seeking to please God with our choices. Before we do anything we need to stop and think- Is this going to please, then God line it up with the Word.
5. **Brotherly affection,** caring for the well-being of other members of God's family.

Love compassionately- showing deep sympathy and concern for others who are suffering, with a desire to help or offer support, by acting with kindness, understanding, and mercy, rather than being indifferent or harsh, giving someone a piece of our mind and gossiping. No! but righteously seeking the well-being of others, including non-believers. They know we are Christians by our love. Stop living off of your emotions and get in your Word!

These qualities act as a nutritional bridge to support and enable believers, to adapt to God's view and live in obedience with it. When we replace our wicked thoughts and actions, with and allow these qualities to be shown in our lives; a healthy outcome is the result. These qualities are necessary to ensure that we as believers meet its daily requirements for spiritual essential benefits. God instructs us to add these qualities to our faith in order to activate the power for maturity and Godly living. If we have these qualities in increasing measures, the Word tells us; that we will not stumble or be useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord, the Jesus Christ.

Growing Christians produce spiritual fruit (good fruit) that God uses to bless others and bring joy. When we are growing in Christ, good fruit naturally displays itself and the result is positive. But if a person lacks these qualities, the Bible says they are blind and short-sighted and have forgotten the price, (The Cost), Jesus paid on the cross to make spiritual growth and spiritual productiveness, possible. It's not just about being saved. It is about being and making sure we are spiritually productive, growing and producing good fruit. God chose believers for the purpose of spiritual output. Therefore, we must make sure that the purpose for which God called us is what we are reaching for. There is a promise, if we do, we will be fruitful in this life and entry into the kingdom, where we will be richly provided with rewards.

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We cannot just live any way we want to and claim to be the Lord's. If we truly belong to the Lord, then, the example of our life will prove it. If we are not developing the qualities we've read about, we may still be outside of the household of faith. But if we are the Lord's our actions back up our claim of having been chosen by God and we will be able to resist the temptations of false teaching and self-indulgence. We are to live to glorify God. Are you tending to and watering the seed that God has placed in you to see it yield and mature good fruit for a Godly life? We do this by a relationship with our Lord. Following His example, praying and reading the Word of God; getting guidance and direction before we move in any direction. We have to learn and desire to know God better, so we can grow and persevere under trials doing God's will and loving others. These actions do not come automatically. They require our dedication and our discipline. They are not optional. This isn't a suggestion. It is noteworthy. We must choose all of these qualities as a regular and constant part of Christian life.

God empowers and enables us to do display these fruits. But He also gives us the responsibility to learn and grow. So, we have to stop being lazy and afraid, and do our part. The enemy lives off our fear. Fear has kept so many of us in bondage. It's time to break free! **Fear is not of the Lord.** We all have a job to do. None of us is exempt from carrying our Cross, from suffering, from trials and storms. They will come, but we must be anchored in the Lord. When we don't follow the Lord's plans, we miss out on the blessings and the rewards that he has for us. Get in your WORD and let it come alive in you.

Blessings,
Betty J Thomas (Advocate for Christ)

