

Growing in Grace

Introduction and Review

- Grace & sin conflict – sin rules over the person who is spiritually dead & cannot break free; grace rules over the believer who is spiritually alive & cannot return to spiritual death (Rom. 5:21).
- Grace & sin contradict – the teaching on grace does not encourage a believer to continue in sin, but rather to continue in the newness of life having “died to sin” (Rom. 6:1-4).
- The law of God is powerless to prevent people from sinning, but the grace of God is powerful enough to forgive any sinner & keep the believer holy (Rom. 5:20).
- Peter has warned true & false believers of the judgment that is coming when Christ returns – His delay in returning does not affect the certainty or consequences of His return!

I. Motivation to Grow (v. 14-16)

A. Believers are waiting (v. 14a)

“waiting” (προσδοκάω) means to expect something to happen. Therefore believers have an assured expectation of the return of Jesus bringing judgment along with the new heavens & earth (Jn. 14:1-3).

B. Believers are working (v. 14b)

Holiness is not natural or automatic for the believer, but it requires effort & work. “be diligent” (σπουδάζω) means to do something with intense effort & motivation. It involves maintaining unity (Eph. 4:3), bible study (2Tim. 2:15) & obeying the word of God (Heb. 4:11) – σπουδάζω.

C. Believers are considering (v. 15-16)

“count” (ἡγέομαι) means to think or consider in order to have a strong view or opinion. Unbelievers consider the return of Jesus as a myth believed by weak & gullible people (3:4). Unbelievers are **untaught & unstable** making them **unqualified** to interpret the Scriptures (1Co. 2:14) – *misinterpret current events & eschatology*. But believers consider the patience & delay as God’s mercy – giving time for unbelievers to be saved & time for believers to work out their salvation (Phil. 2:12-13).

II. Exhortation to Grow (v. 17-18)

A. Avoid false teaching (v. 17)

Believers must often be reminded of truths that we already know because we are forgetful – “knowing this beforehand” (1:12-13). False teaching & teachers prevent believers from growing in Christ – causes insecurity & instability. Believers must therefore guard their eyes & ears from false teachers & their teaching – video, audio & books. They have convincing arguments & appeal to natural senses – pleasure, power, materialism, etc.

B. Grow spiritually (v. 18)

*Believers must continue to grow spiritually & not become conceited or complacent. Believers must first grow in grace – God gives the special ability to handle any circumstance of life & learn from it (2Co. 12:9). God also gives the believer the ability to learn more about Christ in any circumstance of life – “knowledge”. Spiritual growth is progressing in a right relationship with Jesus thru biblical knowledge in **all** the circumstances of life.*

APPL: All believers must honestly face these realities – God gives both the motivation to grow & the exhortation to grow; He commands us to grow & gives us reasons for doing so. It is not enough to avoid false teaching & be in a place where you receive good biblical teaching, but God expect each of us to progress in the Christian life. You must grow in your love for God – prayer, bible study, meditation, memorization, holiness, humility, confession, consecration, etc. (Mt. 22:37). You must also grow in your love for your neighbor – forgiveness, sacrifice, patience, prayer, giving, hospitality, humility, compassion, deeds of mercy, sharing the gospel, etc. Peter says unless you are growing, you do not have assurance of salvation (2Pe. 1:3-11).

CONCLUSION

Therefore my beloved brother & sister this is real, genuine Christian living & growth. This life is only available through grace to true believers in Jesus Christ. You cannot live this way if you are not a true Christian. But if you are a true Christian, you must accept this as the way you are to live in spite the pressure, temptations, false teachings & hardships of your life. You must grow in the grace & knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is worthy of all the praise & glory! So what will be your response to God's exhortation & motivation for you to grow?

And if you are not a Christian, then you cannot grow by making commitments, vows, going to church, giving money, etc. The only way to grow is that you must first be given eternal life – you must be born again. And you cannot have eternal life without faith in Jesus Christ. But you must believe...

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