

Assurance of Salvation
Part 113

GROWING IN GRACE
– Its Characteristics

Characteristics

of
"Growing in grace"
(and in knowledge)

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.
2 Peter 3:18 (WEB)

To make the issue clear...

WHO or WHAT IS DOING THE "GROWING"?

- **God's grace?**
NO! His grace is already at 100%!
- **US?**
YES! We need to grow in his grace.

To make the issue clear...

DON'T FORGET THE "KNOWLEDGE" PART!

- We can't have grace without knowing:
 1. Jesus,
 2. his will, and
 3. what it means to "grow in grace."

(We'll look at the "knowledge" part at another time.)

To make the issue clear...

GROWING IN GRACE IS HOW WE KEEP FROM FALLING!

... be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.
But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2 Peter 3:17b-18a (NIV)

"Growing in Grace" – DEFINED

The "GRACE" part: God's grace* expresses itself by developing within us character traits that reflect the nature of God.
– God does this in all who belong to him.

The "GROW" part: These traits grow in their influence of our values and conduct.
– It's our duty to grow. (God has given us the power.)
– It's our duty to change the way we live.

* (Grace = God's "undeserved kindness.")

"Growing in Grace" – DEFINED

The "GRACE" part:

An expression of God's sovereignty.

The "GROW" part:

An expression of human responsibility.

God's sovereignty and human responsibility will **always** work together.

- Both will be present. = You are **SAVED**.
- or -
- Neither will be present. = You are **UNSAVED**.

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THIS IS YOUR JOB!

How "Growing in Grace" expresses itself

In HIDDEN ways: Some expressions of growth are **hidden** in the heart.

- They change our values (how we think).

In VISIBLE ways: Other expressions are **visible** for all the world to see.

- They change our conduct (what we do).

Examples

of these

CHARACTERISTICS

An ongoing desire to love, know and obey God.

Results? Certain things will increase in our lives:

- Increasing hate

- 1) for sin and
- 2) for the sinfulness we see in ourselves.

NOT!

I'M OK. I'M NOT THAT BAD!

- Increasing awareness that we are 100% dependent on Christ alone for our growth in grace.

NOT!

I CAN DO IT ON MY OWN... MAYBE A LITTLE BIT OF HELP SOMETIMES!



I'M DESPERATE!

It will be like a desire to satisfy a deep thirst.

As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.

Psalm 42:1 (NLT)



But our thirst will not be fully quenched, until we are in God's presence, where the "river of life" flows from the throne of God.

(What we look forward to.)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life—water as clear as crystal—pouring out from the throne of God and of the Lamb, flowing down the middle of the city's main street.

Rev. 22:1-2a (NET)

[He who was seated on the throne] said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

To the one who is thirsty I will give water free of charge from the spring* of the water of life.

Rev. 21:6 (NET)

* (The source of the river.)

Trusting GOD more and SELF less.

LIFE-CHANGING MATH!

ADD (+) More dependence on God.
SUBTRACT (-) Less confidence in self.

God's people know the value of this instruction:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NET)

Growing harmony and consistency of character.

- Maturity in character; stability. **EXAMPLES!**

This verse show us how our stability is influenced by the "knowledge" aspect of "growing in grace":

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

Ephes. 4:14 (NIV)

Increasing patience and perseverance.



- **Patience when suffering.**
 - Because we know that God is working in our lives. (Romans 8:28, etc.)
- **Patience with other people.**
 - Because we know our own weaknesses, and we know the need for others to be patient and perseverant with us!

Theme verse for interacting with other people:

... bearing with one another in love.

Ephes. 4:2b (NIV)

Increasing control over emotional outbursts and unrestrained passions.

- Restraining the passions and desires that try to control our conduct and thoughts.
 - The Bible says a lot about "self-control."

An example: Control over one's anger.

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

James 1:19-20 (NIV)

Increasing promptness in fulfilling one's duties toward God and neighbor.

- **These duties show love:** for God / neighbor.
- **Our goal:**
 - A more stable approach toward doing so; more consistency.
 - 100% love for both God and neighbor. (Not "either-or" or "half-and-half.")

1 Corinthians 13 show us some of the duties that express "love for neighbor." They are an expression of love; but we must be willing to do them!

Love is patient and is kind ... (etc.)

From 1 Corinthians... read the whole chapter!

Various lists of character traits.*

- **GRACE:** They are all expressions of God's grace within us.
- **GROWING:** If we are "growing in grace," they will be growing.
 - They will have an increasing influence on our values and conduct.

* (No list gives all of them. God's grace effects every aspect of character!)

Some lists focus on what God does in our lives.

>> The "GRACE" part. <<

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23a (NIV)

- If the Spirit is present, these characteristics will be present...
 - in increasing measure*, as we grow.

Some lists focus on our obligation.

>> The "GROW" part. <<

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:5-7 (NIV)

- This list of graces is an expression of the "life and godliness" mentioned in verses 3-4.

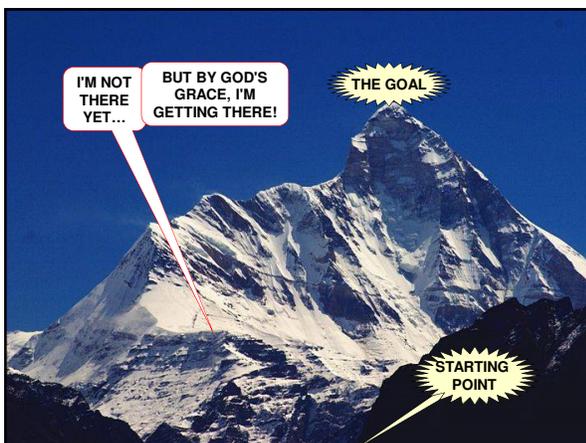
IN THE COMING WEEKS,

we hope to look at:



- The "ups and downs" of growth.
- The "knowledge" aspect.
- Fakes.

This guy wants to know more about it. Hopefully each of us wants to!



Your mission: Evaluation!

- **Test yourself!**
 - Are the characteristics of "growing grace" present in you?
- **Then grow!**
 - Learn more about the characteristics.
 - Exercise your "spiritual muscles" by doing the things necessary for growth!

Credits (1)

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