

Assurance of Salvation  
Part 114

GROWING IN GRACE  
– Sovereignty and  
Responsibility

**"Growing in grace"**

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

The **ONLY** way we can keep from falling.



**Last week:**

- We saw some of the characteristics of "growing in grace" – what it means.
- These are the things we must do, if we want to obey the command to "grow in grace."

**But that leaves us with a problem:**

- We were born as "dead sinners," not "living growers-in-grace"!
- So how can we do this growing? And how can this growing be proof of our salvation?

**#1** The **NUMBER ONE** thing

that makes GROWTH possible and guarantees salvation for all "growers in grace" is this:

**The interaction between God's sovereignty and human responsibility.**



Since sovereignty and responsibility always work hand-in-hand ...

God's sovereignty      Human responsibility



This growth, if present, is evidence of our **SALVATION.**

Because of human responsibility:  
We have a role – a responsibility to grow.

- As we do the things necessary for growth, we can trust and praise God ...  
 ★ knowing that he is working in us.

For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.  
Philipp. 2:13 (NLT)

**Because of God's sovereignty:**  
**The growth will happen.**

- We will rely on God's power to grow... and will admit that our success is from God.

**WE NEED GOD'S POWER FOR ANYTHING GOOD!**

It is not that we think we can do anything of lasting value by ourselves. Our only power and success come from God.

2 Cor. 3:5 (NLT)

- If we choose to rely on God's power, we have a guaranteed end result:



**God will accomplish all the good he has begun in us!**

[God] who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philip. 1:6 (NIV)

[ ALL people who try to grow on their own (not relying on God's power), will fail. ]

**What about the FAKES?**

- What excuse is there for church-goers who do not grow?  
*Only one:* → **I'M A FAKE!!!**

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- [Responsibility]** They don't grow because they choose to not grow.
  - They choose to go a different direction.
- [Sovereignty]** They don't have God's power, so they don't grow.

**Sovereignty and responsibility, working together, guarantee that:**

- ALL people will have CONSEQUENCES that fit with their ACTIONS.

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- GOD'S PEOPLE** can have certainty that they are saved.
- THE FAKES** can have certainty that they will perish... (if they are willing to face the facts).

**EACH HAS GUARANTEED END RESULTS**

- THE FAKES** are not willing to rely on God's power.
  - Guaranteed result: The lake of fire.
- GOD'S PEOPLE** are willing to rely on God's power.
  - Guaranteed result: The kingdom of God.

**It all has to do with growing (or not growing) in grace.**

**1                      2                      3**

**There are THREE FACTS we need to know.**

– Otherwise, we will reach false conclusions about growing in grace.



1

FACT #1

1

- Ongoing growth will be present in the life of a genuine saved person (but not in a fake).



- If we ignore this fact ...
  - We can easily become complacent and make excuses for our lack (or absence) of growth.

2

FACT #2

2

- Though growth will be present, people will have different growth rates.



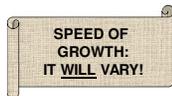
- If we ignore this fact ...
  - We can easily become discouraged (about ourselves) when we see other's strengths, and impatient when we see other's weaknesses.

3

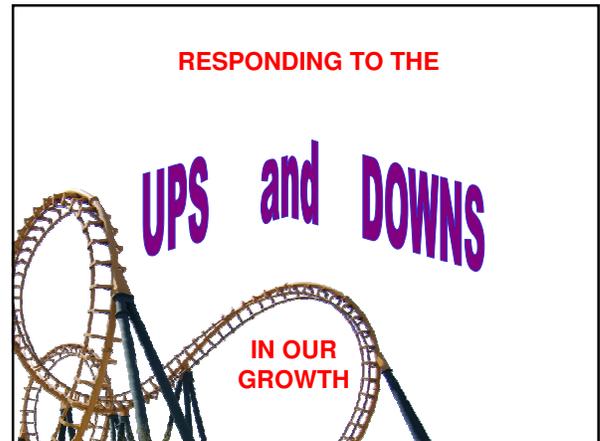
FACT #3

3

- We will have ups and downs in our growth.

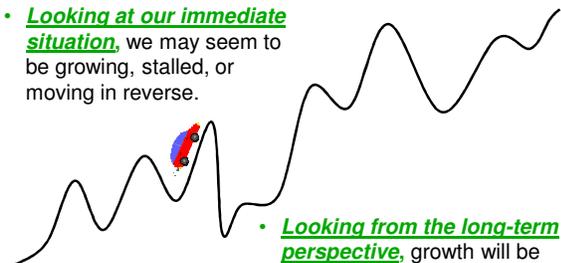


- If we ignore this fact ...
  - We can become discouraged when our growth slows down, and self-confident when it speeds up.



Emotionally, growth may seem like a roller-coaster.

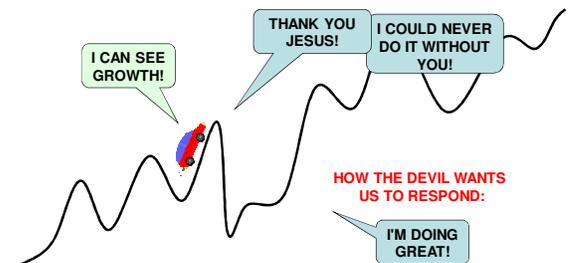
- Looking at our immediate situation, we may seem to be growing, stalled, or moving in reverse.



- Looking from the long-term perspective, growth will be visible.

When we are growing ...

OUR PROPER RESPONSE TO GROWTH:



I CAN SEE GROWTH!

THANK YOU JESUS!

I COULD NEVER DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

HOW THE DEVIL WANTS US TO RESPOND:

I'M DOING GREAT!

**When things aren't going so well ...**

OUR PROPER RESPONSE TO THE DOWNSLOPE:

I'M GOING DOWNHILL!

HELP!! I NEED YOU, JESUS!!

I CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT YOU!

HOW THE DEVIL WANTS US TO RESPOND:

I'M NO GOOD! GOD DOESN'T WANT ME! (ETC.)

**The significance of ONGOING growth**

I'M HAVING A "DOWN TIME," BUT GOD IS STILL GROWING ME!

GOD, HELP ME TO GO THE RIGHT WAY!

- This *ongoing* presence of growth is PROOF that we are SAVED.

★ **It's the same way with PHYSICAL LIFE!** ★

I'M FEEL WELL!

I AM SICK!

EITHER WAY, I'M STILL GROWING!

ON THE OTHER HAND...

**If your long-term "growth" is more like this...**

LOTS OF MOTION ... BUT GETTING NOWHERE

**YES, YOU OUGHT TO BE CONCERNED...**

★ **BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY:**

You need to:

- Pay attention to what the Bible says about your condition, > and <
- Follow its instructions for change.

LAZINESS WON'T SAVE YOU!

We do not want you to become *lazy*, but to imitate those who through **faith and patience** inherit what has been promised.

Hebrews 6:12 (NIV)

**If you have decided to follow Jesus and are not being fake about it, YOU HAVE THE POWER TO FOLLOW THE BIBLE'S INSTRUCTIONS.**

become *lazy*, but to imitate those who through **faith and patience** inherit what has been promised.

Hebrews 6:12 (NIV)

## SUMMARY:

1) Growing in grace is possible because human responsibility and God's sovereignty work together.

### • RESPONSIBILITY:

– **GENUINE:** Those following Jesus will be willing to have this type of growth.

– **FAKE:** The fakes won't be willing to put forth the necessary effort.

### • SOVEREIGNTY:

– As we grow, we will realize that God made it possible; so we will give him the credit for it.

2) Growth requires a willingness to make changes in our values and how we live.

### • FAKES:

– "I want to go to heaven; but I'm not really interested in changing my values and the way I live. I may say I'm interested, but I'm not going to do the changing that is necessary."

### • GENUINE:

– "I realize I must change my values and the way I live; and I love God enough that I am willing to do so. You can see by my actions that I am changing; because God gave me the power to do so!"

## Your mission: YOU HAVE A JOB TO DO!

(We all do.)

### • We've looked at 2 issues:

- Our responsibility to grow.
- God's guarantee that saved people will grow.

### • YOUR MISSION: Focus on the "grow" part!

- If growth is your ongoing way of life, you know you are saved.
- If you're a FAKE, you won't be doing this growing. (The most you will do is pretend.)

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