

## 2 Peter 3:18

“How will I know if I have been applying it?”

### I. Intro

### II. How will I know if I have been applying the exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” in my life?

#### I. Intro

For the last two weeks we have looked at the closing of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter verse 18 where we are clearly shown the “Divine expectation” and the “Believer’s responsibility” to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” We noted the need to understand three things about this exhortation due to our “self-centered preservation” that often adopts “intellectual agreement” as a way of keeping its self-alive to avoid obedience. The “Three questions with regards to the” “Believer’s responsibility” to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

1. The first of which we looked at last Sunday: What does this exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*”, mean?
2. Now we will examine: How can I do or apply the exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” in my life NOW?
3. And the following week will examine: How will I know if I have been applying the exhortation of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” in my life?

In response to the first question, we noted four truths with regards to: “**Things necessitate GROWTH**”:

- A. For something to GROW it must already be alive!
- B. Life naturally leads to GROWTH!
- C. Organic GROWTH is a process and not instantaneous!

D. **GROWTH is specific and not random!**

Then in answering our second question on application we examined four organic necessities for spiritual growth that mirrors the natural process in the physical realm:

1. **Sunlight**: The passage before has already given us this telling us that source of energy and light that is most essential for our growth is “Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”. So, the SUN = THE SON! He is the source of all we need to grow in grace as well as knowledge.
2. **Food**: Think of any and all life and you will see the necessity of food for growth and as a Christian the Bible is plain with regards to what the Christian diet is to be on spiritually, the word of God. Peter had already commented on this in 1 Peter 2:2 “*as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.*”
3. **Water**: The second essential element necessary for growth in grace and knowledge is “PRAYER” or “communication” with the Lord. It is what waters the word of God as we remind ourselves the truths we have you read.
4. **Air**: Finally, if we are to have growth in grace like growth of the physical realm there must be “AIR” and I think that air for the believer is that FAITH in the work and promises of God.

In light of the question in application I can up with three things the believer will need to do with regards to these essentially elements that will ensure our growth:

- A. **We will need to avoid the things that keep us from these essential elements.**
- B. **We will need to “exercise” in the right things as well.**
- C. **We will need to learn to rest.**

Now we conclude 2 Peter with the third question: **How will I know if I have been applying the exhortation** of “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” **in my life?**

## II. **How will I know if I have been applying the exhortation in my life?**

The final question I asked myself was based upon my understanding of my propensity towards “**self-centered preservation**” as I often convince myself that I am applying the word of God in my life and need not do so in some area. As it relates to growth and spiritual maturity in my life I believe that two statements can serve as reminders that may spare me from “**self-centered preservation**”:

1. If I think that I have “*arrived*” or that there is no more room for “growth” in spiritual maturity in my life than it is **a clear indication that I am NOT GROWING in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.**
2. Second, **my objective to Grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus is NOT being better than I was as that is subjective and nearsighted in its aim. NO, my aim is, and true measurement must only be to be continually more useful in displaying God’s glory as there becomes more of Him and less of me!**

There can be no doctrine of “perfectionism” as it is a contradiction to Peter’s exhortation to “GROW” as if we were “PERFECT” than we would have no need to grow! Our ambition is not to be impressive in comparison to our fellow Christian’s, instead it is to be more useful for our Lord! We are not looking at ourselves, instead we are looking at the Author and finisher of our faith. Along with those 2 reminders I see **four indicators that I’m applying the exhortation to Grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus:**

- A. **My examination must NEVER be an examination or comparison with others:** If it is this then it is most likely a “self-justification” to stay the way I am as I am examining another at my expense. We are “Justified by faith” and NOT by thinking we are better than another believer who is on the same path we are! Our growth and comparison whether or not we are growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus and that isn’t based upon what another is or isn’t doing!
- B. **My examination must NEVER be based upon my activity:** Our growth in Grace and knowledge isn’t visible due to our business and activity in spiritual pursuits. Physically the most immature are often the busiest especially children when compared to adults. When start out our examination our won maturity with thoughts of self-justification that sounds like badges of honor or trophy’s we are claiming activity as the indication of maturity.
- C. **My examination must be upon the standard of the word of God:** The next two way of self-examination serves as the standard, first it must be based upon the word of God. Our test is to see the maturity described in the Bible then to lay our life next to it to see if we are growing towards int’s truths or away from them. The Christian is clearly seen in the New Testament writings, it is also helpful when we see in the Bible the characteristics that given to us that the writer declares as not signs of maturity in growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.
- D. **My examination must be upon the conformity to the character of Christ:** In Paul’s letter to the Philippians, he wrote to them in 2:5 “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christi Jesus...” Our examination can best be seen in our conformity to the life that Jesus lived while here on earth. The gospel accounts of how he lived in this world give us a

clear example of how to view our growth in His grace and knowledge.

Sometimes I find in my own life it is easier for me to gage my progress in Growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus by *what ought NOT be seen in my life*. So, looking at this a different way by asking the question with regards to my spiritual maturity; “*What are the characteristics of an immature life?*” Again, this can be seen in the physical realm as we can see six characteristics or signs of immaturity that are normal when a person is young and growing but as they mature ought to be seen far less frequently in the spiritual realm:

1. **Instability**: A child is unstable and can quickly change as they are emotion driven. They can be easily frightened, easily depressed and discouraged. They can also because of these emotions can be easily persuaded to change positions to benefit better emotions. While this is normal is a child it ought not be normal in a mature believer who is growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus.
2. **Lacking understanding**: They lack experience and understanding which tends to make them prone to a lack of discernment. Paul wrote about this immaturity in Ephesians when in Eph 4:14 he wrote, “*that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine..*” The immature Christian is always the first victim of false teaching as they haven’t grown in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.
3. **Arrogance / insecurity**: Immaturity often manifests its self in an insecurity that is seen in self-promotion and excessive communication about one’s own self. Immaturity likes to be the center of attention, like to be an exhibitionist that wants to be out front, talking about their experiences, education examples but always in the positive. They love to talk about all the things they are doing to show themselves as mature believers. When they lack the education if they are older they will boast in their biological age and years in

Christ to indicate their maturity in Christ.

4. **Prone to excitement**: Another sign of immaturity is that a child is in love with entertainment and the spectacular and exciting experiences. These “experiences” are what they gage maturity upon as it never requires transformation of their character. Large numbers are indication of anointing and the larger the better as it creates more thrills and chills.
5. **More interested in experiences then relationships**: The immature believer is more interested in the “teacher” then what is taught! Paul had to correct the Corinthian church as it want to compare and identify with the teacher more than grow in the truth that was being taught. Most of the immaturity in this regard also centers around the “spectacular” and the reason for this is that such adherence requires NO personal transformation. Speculation upon end times, stand against things that has a following and politics are usual topics that appeal to the immature!
6. **More interested in the gift then the giver**: Finally, the immature are always more interested in the “gifts then they are in the graces” of a Christ like character! All the attention being paid upon the “blessing” and no attention upon He who alone has *“Blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.”*

I believe that I ought to regularly ask myself three questions with regards to my growing in grace and knowledge:

- A. **Am I the worst sinner I’ve ever met?** Do I see and recognize first and foremost the blackness of my own heart before I recognize the blackness of others hearts? Am I wanting more to be delivered from my own faults and failures above pointing out others?
- B. **Do I recognize that this world is not going to improve?** Am I less surprised by the

wickedness, do I understand that the state of the world is a spiritual problem and can only be changed by the work of Christ? Am I less lured into the temporary trinkets and bobbles of this world?

- C. **Do I love God more than I did?** Do I desire more of Him and less of me? Do I seek a deeper relationship with God above only asking that He gives me more of what I want? Is my greatest ambition in this life to see that every moment of the day that He will be glorified in my life?

I pray that we make the correct answer to these questions our life quest!