GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST

**Read Proverbs 2 vs. 1-6.** In Solomon’s wisdom he tells his son the following:

1. If you receive my words
2. And treasure my commands within you
3. So that you incline your ear to listen to wisdom
4. And apply your heart to understanding
5. If you cry for discernment (making good judgments)
6. And lift up your voice for understanding
7. If you seek her (Knowledge) as silver
8. And search for her as hidden treasures
9. Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find knowledge of God.

Knowledge of God has to be a, desire a passion. Something that fills our lives. Something that molds our way we conduct ourselves. Is it easy? NO. Is it impossible? NO. It is all based on what we want to do.

Let me give you an example: My grandson Colton loves to play soccer. One Saturday he came down from Atlanta to work on a project. As we worked through the day he was very attentive. Later that afternoon, he heard our neighbors playing soccer. He got ancee. He quickly lost attention on what we were doing. I finally let him go and he went over to the neighbor’s house and played soccer until dark. We do what we love and desire to do. Our growing in the knowledge of Christ should be the same way.

Today, I’m going to talk to you about growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Our lesson is found in **2 Peter chapters 1 verse 1-3.** **Let’s read** those verses.

This letter was written by Peter. He did not live a perfect life. In fact, as you recall, denied Jesus three times. This was the lowest time of his life. Later in his life, he was corrected by Paul when he was in the company of the Jews, he would not associate with the Gentile Christians. He discovered from the Lord through the example of Cornelius that God was no respecter of persons. Now we see that he has written this letter. It is fitting for Peter to talk about growing in the grace and knowledge of God and Jesus his Lord. He has experienced that growth in himself.

This is a lesson for us today. Are we growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? If we have the same knowledge as we did last year, we are not growing. If we are not studying His word and making application, we are not growing. If we just listen to what others are saying about God’s word and not searching the scriptures like the Berean's, we are not growing. In another way, if we are not listening and digesting what others may be doing or saying to make us better, we are not growing.

We can’t be like the Christian Hebrews that were not growing, but were falling back to have to be taught the elementary teachings of Christ.

**Read Hebrew 5 verse 12…to 6 vs. 1** we need to press on to maturity.

Today I want to answer two questions.

1. What does the bible teach about “growing in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ?
2. Why should we be growing in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ?

A major scripture that talks about increasing our Christian graces is found in **2 Peter 1 verses 5-7.**

**Let’s read**.

Let’s look at these qualities.

1. The first one is doing your best in your faith. Doing your best in your faith or applying all diligence will keep you from falling back into the lusts of this world. How many times have we seen new Christians that over time never grow. They fall back into the world? They stop coming to services, they don’t want to learn. They do not leave the lusts of the world. They are not growing. Our challenge is that we should be helping them. We cannot just “dunk” them to leave them to their own devices to learn. We have to be training them. We can teach by example, but as we learn in a number of scriptures, when Paul is telling Christians to put away something, he also tells them to add other characteristics. We need to help other and ourselves to put away old things and put on the new. I am talking about helping others in the faith, but what are you doing to grow in the faith? **Let’s read Hebrews 10 vs. 35-39.**
2. As we continue to grow in the faith, but we add moral excellence. When we grow in the faith we can start supplying moral excellence or virtue that is striving to be good. To be Christ like. Pay attention to the words we say and also how we say it. Before we became a Christian, we might have cussed, or lied, or mistreated others. When we become a Christian we stopped doing those things. Peter talked about this in **1 Peter 4 verse 3,4.** These things some had done, but now they have put away these lusts of men.
3. As we build on our faith, our virtue, we continue to grow in knowledge. You grow in adding knowledge, learning what God’s will is through the scriptures. An example of this is in **1 Peter 3 vs. 8-9.** Another example is **1 John 2 vs. 1-3.** We learn that we have an Advocate that will help us with our sins. We learn that we need to keep His commandments. In today’s world, people listen to the world, they listen to their preacher, and they listen to false doctrine. We have to search the scriptures to make sure we are following our Lord Jesus and not people.
4. As we grow in knowledge, we gain self-control. We are growing when we learn to control our emotions. We can’t fly off the handle if we don’t get our way. We can’t always have all “my way” You have heard the expression, “you are playing in my sand box. If you are in a person’s sandbox, that person wants to control everything. We have to learn to play and live together in harmony. Self control is what I am talking about and not controlling others. What I mean by this is the LaGrange church needs to work in unity for the same goal for all to go to heaven. Humbleness is a virtue we all need to live by. We can’t let pride take over our lives. Growth as a Christian is to act like a Christian.
5. The next growth quality is perseverance. A person who exercises self-control will not easily be discouraged or want to quit. He wants the best for the church. He goes beyond his own personal prejudices or desires. This is a point when a Christian has truly matured. He is looking out for the interest of the body of Christ and not his own interests.
6. When one has reached this level, he has godly attributes. Christians are continually aware of God’s presence. We know that our lives and our way of life are in God’s hands. God and His Son desires for us are always in our actions. We should be asking the question, “If Jesus was standing next to me, would I be doing what I am doing or would I act the way I am acting?
7. Our next growth is brotherly kindness, or being kind to your brothers and sisters in Christ. We have to care about each other. We read **Philippians 2 vs. 1-4**. To grow, we must have the interests of others at heart. We should never want to do anything to discourage other Christians, but to encourage. If the world calls out the church that meets here as not following the “morals” of the world, then I want to be a part of that group of Christians. Today, we are not suffering enough as a Christian. We want to be seen that we are not of this world. We want to be known in the extremes, “A friendly church”, “loves one another”, “supports each other”, “cares about each other”, “gives not gets”, “helps not hurt”, “is goal-oriented for all to go to heaven” That is how we should be spoken of.
8. The last step as we build on these qualities is love. So what does this mean to our growth as a Christian? To me it means we have taken that next step and will bring us closer to that heavenly home. We have the love of God, Jesus Christ and for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We know God is love. **Read 1 John 4 vs. 15-16.** We have a clear message that we are to love because we are of God. If we are not of God, then love is not in us.

**Read 1 John 4 vs. 7-8**. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers multitude of sins.

All this takes a diligent effort. We have to be persistent in chipping away at our sinful life, turning ourselves away from the sins of this world to a spiritual level: to be not of this world.

Question #2: Why should we be growing in the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ?

First our goal on this earth is to be Christ-like. To be called to a purpose. **Read, Romans 8:28 Colossians 3:9-11.**

Failure to grow is an indication that we forgot why we became a Christian in the first place. We want a way to have our sins forgiven. We want to present ourselves to God and He invites us in. We don’t want to knock at the door, and He does not let us in.

If we are growing, we will never stumble. **READ 2 Peter 1 vs. 9-11.**

Does this mean we will never sin? We will sin, but stumbling means we could fall short of our ultimate goal of salvation. We never want to stumble.

We want to be able to say what Paul said in **2 Timothy 4 vs. 6-8. READ**.

So what is your condition? Are you growing as Peter has written to us through the inspired word, or are you going the other way?

What about those in the audience that have not even started the journey?

Do you believe you are a sinner? Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God who can save you from your sins? Is He the Christ the Son of the living God?

Do you want to truly repent of those sins and be baptized for the remission of your sins? If so, please come. The baptistery is full of water. You can be saved now. Please come as we stand and sing.