



Grow

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. (1Peter 2:1-2)

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2Peter 3:18)

It is noted in previous studies that Peter writes to Christians—people who had been born again (1Peter 1:23). It is also noted, in chapter two, that they were told to change their diet since they had been born again (1Peter 2:2). They had to develop a new appetite, to long for something different to satisfy their needs. A change in diet was necessary for growth. This growth is a spiritual growth. Paul also writes of the growth from children to full-grown: “*we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*” (Ephesians 4:14-16). As Christians grow in Christ, their faith grows as does the love for one another grow. “*We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater*” (2Thessalonians 1:3). There are some prerequisites to consider for this spiritual growth.

Proper Food

It is clear from the text that a prerequisite for growth is proper food. This is true concerning the physical and this is true spiritually, also. This food is the word of God—“*the pure milk of the word.*” Life is connected with the word. The quotation from Scripture that Jesus used to counter the devil is very telling: “*It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD’*” (Matthew 4:4). What word do you feast upon? Food is not only necessary for growth but must be had in proper amounts and at the proper age: “*by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an*

infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (**Hebrews 5:12**). All need food regularly (**2Timothy 4:1-4**). All need to put forth the effort to eat (**2Timothy 2:15; 1Timothy 4:13**).

Proper Exercise

Another prerequisite for growth is exercise. As with proper food, this is true spiritually just as it is physically. Christians must discipline themselves. *“Have nothing to do with worldly fables ... On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness ... bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come”* (**1Timothy 4:7-8**). Walking is one of the most basic and popular forms of physical exercise. Scripture, in many places, stresses the importance of proper walking. Examples include: *“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life”* (**Romans 6:4**) and *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them”* (**Ephesians 2:10**).

Proper Protection

Spiritual growth must also include protection. Physical growth demands proper clothing—protection from the elements—the same is true spiritually. Peter writes, *“all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE”* (**1Peter 5:5**). Paul also gives details in this area: *“put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity”* (**Colossians 3:12-14**). Another area of protection needed for spiritual growth is protection from the enemy. Paul writes of the Christian’s protection, *“Put on the full armor of God ... take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm”* (**Ephesians 6:11-17**). A third area of protection is protection from disease. The spiritual disease that leads to death is sin (**James 1:13-15**). However, Jesus is the great physician (**Matthew 9:12**).

It is sad to see a child who does not grow. It is worse to see a child of God who does not grow. Some never venture far from the baptistry. All should remember Peter’s instruction, *“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*