

GROWING

why growth matters, what it looks like and how it happens

“All over the world this gospel is growing.. ”
[Colossians 1.6]

‘Growth’ is the theme of this series of studies, and it’s begun with the prayer that it will prove to be a real growth point in our life, and lives, as God’s people here.

Growth is expected among God’s people, since the God who makes alive is the God who also makes things grow: and growth is exhorted upon them, as something which is neither occasional nor optional.

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

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2. 2 Peter 1.1-11 [w/b Sunday 17th September]

'Growth and the grace of God'

2 Peter is the letter whose concluding exhortation is to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet.3.18): and Peter begins with the same note as that on which he concludes.

The letter was written against the twin threats of increasing persecution (Peter himself was probably martyred under Nero a year or two after this letter was written) and the increasing distortion of the gospel through false teaching. It's with a view to believers being able to withstand both the external and internal threats that Peter stresses the importance of their growth in Christ.

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1. **Read 2 Peter 1.1-11.** At the centre of the passage is the exhortation to “*add to your faith..*”: we are always in this life no more than ‘a work in progress’.

In what areas of your Christian life are you able to recognize growth and progress over the last year?

What areas might you prioritise for growth in this coming year?

2. Read 2 Peter 1.1-2. The introduction is much more than just a formal greeting: instead it sets the tone for much of what will follow.

The Simon Peter here at the end of his life is very different from the Simon Peter we first meet: in what ways had he grown?

God in His abundant grace is the source of growth: how does God effect growth in us?

3. Read 2 Peter 1.3-4. Before addressing the sort of growth for which he looks, Peter here speaks about the 'resources' which make such growth possible.

We have been given "*everything we need for life and godliness*": what 'resources' has God given us to this end, and to what in particular is Peter referring here?

What does Peter mean by saying that "*you may participate in the divine nature*"?

4. Read 2 Peter 1.5-7. There's a list here of 7 qualities which are to 'supplement' mere faith. These are indicative of the ways in which the Lord means that our faith should blossom and flower.

This growth only comes, Peter suggests, as "*we make every effort*": what will such 'effort' on our part involve?

To what extent is there a 'progression' in this list, whereby one quality provides the necessary 'seedbed' from which the next will grow?

5. Read 2 Peter 1.8. Having described what makes growth possible (vv.3-4) and how such growth will be evidenced (vv.5-7), Peter now explains why such growth is important.

How do the efforts we make to supplement our faith by these qualities ensure that we are 'effective' and 'productive'?

Try to think of some believers whom you see as being effective and productive in their faith: how does that show itself?

6. Read 2 Peter 1.9. Peter clearly didn't think of these qualities as 'optional extras' in the lives of believers, but rather as the ways in which faith will normally develop.

Why are we 'short-sighted and blind' if, as believers, we don't have these qualities?

How does our remembering that we have been cleansed from past sins cultivate these qualities in our lives?

7. Read 2 Peter 1.10-11. The summons to “*add to your faith*” is concluded here with a final exhortation, impressing on our hearts the urgency and seriousness of his call.

Why is it so important that our faith is being deliberately supplemented in these ways, according to what Peter says here?

Having read and studied this passage, what practical steps might you take to ensure that you are thus ‘adding to your faith’?