

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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6. 2 Timothy 3.10-4.8 [w/b Sunday 15th October]

Preach the Word

Elders are appointed in God's church to 'shepherd the flock of God'. That 'shepherding' ministry involves them first *knowing* the members entrusted to their care: we looked at that in the last study. Knowing their flock well, elders will also seek to ensure that the members of Christ's church are well *fed*.

Timothy had this pastoral or 'shepherding' responsibility for the church in Ephesus (see 1 Tim.1.3) and here in this letter to his younger colleague in ministry Paul is highlighting something of what's involved in *feeding* the people of God.

[There may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group: key questions for us as a fellowship in this study are questions 3, 4 & 5]

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1. **Read 2 Tim.3.10-4.8.** There's an urgency about Paul as he writes to Timothy - an urgency created by both the importance of the message and the imminence of his passing.

If you were writing to your minister with your own death imminent, what would you be the priorities you'd urge him to pursue?

2. **Read 2 Tim.3.10-13.** Paul rehearses the ‘costliness’ of the ministry which he has exercised: you can read the narrative of this costly ministry in Acts 13 and 14.

Why does Paul remind Timothy of these tough times and painful experiences?

Why is ‘persecution’ inevitable for ‘everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus’?

3. **Read 2 Tim.3.14-15.** Timothy is reminded by Paul of the benefit he has had of a godly mother and grandmother (see 2 Tim.1.5): this is how Timothy has been ‘fed’ from early days.

Who were those from whom you learned the truth of the Bible’s message in a way that ‘convinced’ you of its truth?

Can you say what it was about them that the Lord used to impact your heart and life so powerfully?

4. **Read 2 Tim.3.16-17.** This important statement about the Bible explains both the role Scripture has played in Timothy’s salvation and the centrality it has in Timothy’s ministry.

Read **2 Pet.1.20-21** along with this: what difference does it make to you knowing that the Scriptures originate in God Himself and are *His* word to us?

In what ways will the Scriptures *equip* us 'for every good work'?

How have you found the Word of God (a) making you 'wise for salvation', and (b) equipping *you* for every good work?

5. Read 2 Tim.4.1-2. The central task with which Timothy is entrusted is that of preaching the Word: he is to ensure that the flock are well fed and nourished.

Why, according to Paul, is preaching the Word a matter of such urgency and importance (v.1)?

How is Timothy's preaching of the Word of God to be characterised?

6. Read 2 Tim.4.3-5. Paul explains the context in which Timothy will be preaching the Word and what the challenges to that preaching of the Word will be.

Can you think of contemporary examples of the sort of thing Paul was thinking about in vv.3 & 4?

What do you think lies behind the fourfold exhortation of v.5? What explains each of these exhortations?

7. Read 2 Tim.4.6-8. These are the words of a man nearing the end of his ministry, and now providing encouragement to his successor in that same ministry.

What are the three ways he describes that ministry in v.7?

How does each description throw light on the nature of the preaching ministry he is exhorting on Timothy?

How does what Paul says in these verses encourage you to press on in the work to which the Lord has called you?