

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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11. 2 Chronicles 26.1-23 [w/b Sunday 19th November]

“He sought God ...”

The first of three ‘case studies’ we’re going to look at centres on Uzziah, a notable king of Judah: his reign is summarized quite briefly in 2 Kings (15.1-7) (where he’s called Azariah), but the writer of Chronicles (with a significantly different purpose and focus) gives a lot more space to the record of his reign and throws the spotlight on significant details of his life.

His story in this chapter really falls into two starkly contrasting parts - vv.1-15, which narrate his *growth*, and then vv.16-23 which narrate how it all went pear-shaped: a sobering reminder that there’s nothing ‘automatic’ about continuing growth in grace. We’ll look at the first part of the chapter in particular, but it’ll be worth having a read of vv.16-23 as well.

[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 & 6. Do try as always to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. **Read 2 Chron.26.1-23.** Reading the whole chapter will give you a feel for the contours of Uzziah’s life: the promising start to his life wasn’t matched by the less than glorious end.

How does the narrative of Uzziah’s leave you feeling as you end the chapter?

What is the primary lesson for yourself which to you take from a reading of the chapter?

2. Read 2 Chron.25.25-26.2. These opening verses introduce Uzziah to us against the backdrop of his father's death.

The writer alludes to the circumstances of his father's death (2 Chron.25.27f), the agreement of all the people in making him king (26.1) and Uzziah's age on being made king (26.1): what effect might each of these have had on Uzziah?

Have there been situations where you have had to take on responsibilities for which you felt somewhat ill-equipped? How did you handle such a situation?

V.2 highlights one major accomplishment through the long reign of Uzziah: for what 'accomplishment' would you like your life to be remembered?

3. Read 2 Chron.26.3-5. We're given here a summary of Uzziah's reign, and some background as to the way in which that reign started. The ministry of Zechariah is highlighted as having played an important part in shaping Uzziah.

Has there been someone like Zechariah in your life who instructed you 'in the fear of God'?

What does it mean to be *'instructed .. in the fear of God'*?
And how does that serve to shape you? [NB - this is the preferred rendering: some, using different manuscripts, speak of Zechariah as a man *'who had understanding in the visions of God'*]

4. Read 2 Chron.26.6-8. Following on the statement with which v.5 concludes, there is a record here of Uzziah's extensive military exploits and his considerable success.

God 'gave the growth' in Uzziah's day, not least in terms of battling against his enemies (see v.8): what are the 'enemies' against which we have to battle?

How do we (in our markedly different context) 'become very powerful'?

5. Read 2 Chron.26.9-10. Uzziah's interests were wide and clearly included architecture and agriculture: his perspective was 'holistic', with a concern for all aspects of his people's life.

What lessons might Uzziah's 'holistic' approach have for ourselves in the ministry we seek to exercise here at Gilcomston?

6. **Read 2 Chron.26.11-15.** These verses describe how well-trained, well-ordered, and well-equipped Uzziah ensured his army was.

What positive qualities do you think these verses reveal about Uzziah?

How can we ensure that such qualities are being developed in ourselves, both as individuals and in our corporate life?

7. **Read 2 Chron.26.16-23.** The final part of the chapter narrates a sobering end to a reign which had promised so much: a reminder that there's nothing automatic about continued growth.

Why did it all go wrong for Uzziah?

What lessons have you learned from this passage?