

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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13. 2 Peter 3.1-18 [w/b Sunday 3rd December]

“.. grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord”

This study concludes the present series on growth: it's fitting that we round off the series with a third 'case study', looking at an individual whose parting word to the church is the exhortation to grow (2 Pet.3.18).

Peter is a man who features largely through the gospel records and the (first) part of the book of Acts with its narrative of the growth of the early church: we can readily see that the rough-edged fisherman whom we first encounter in the pages of the gospel has grown significantly by the time he is writing this letter towards the end of his life. This work of God whereby we grow in grace doesn't happen magically overnight but is spread across our lifetimes.

[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 2, 5 & 7. Do try as always to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. **Read 2 Peter.** Yes! Try reading the whole letter in one sitting and get a sense of why the apostle Peter is writing and what he is concerned to say.

How would you summarise the letter?

What do you think Peter is trying to get across to the recipients of his letter?

What would you want to say in your final letter to the church?

2. Read 2 Peter 3.1-2. Peter starts his conclusion to the letter by explaining his reason for writing a second time to the scattered believers (see 1 Pet.1.1-2).

Why is he writing this letter?

What do you think is meant by “wholesome thinking”?

Why is that important for us as believers, and how is that developed in us according to Peter?

3. Read 2 Peter 3.3-7. Having referred (obliquely) to the Word of God by reference to the ‘words’ of the prophets and the apostles, Peter picks up on the dismissive line often taken by the world when it comes to the Word of God.

What truth does Peter say is commonly dismissed by the ‘scoffers’ to whom Peter refers (vv.3-4)?

How does Peter counter this dismissive line (vv.5-7)?

Do you think there is sufficient teaching given by the church on “this ‘coming’ He promised”?

4. Read 2 Peter 3.8-10. The coming of the Lord was an integral part of the earliest gospel proclamation, and Peter addresses this theme now more specifically.

What two points does Peter make in vv.8 & 9 to ensure we have a proper perspective in relation to the coming of the Lord?

When you read v.10 what thoughts run through your mind?

5. Read 2 Peter 3.11-13. Peter elaborates on what the ‘day of the Lord’ will bring, highlighting not just the destruction, but also the restoration, of everything.

Why does Peter urge his readers to “*live holy and godly lives*”?

What is the promise to which we are looking forward?

Why is that an incentive to holy and godly living?

6. Read 2 Peter 3.14-16. As he draws his letter to a conclusion Peter addresses a series of exhortations to his readers: here he reinforces what he's just been saying.

In what ways has “the Lord’s patience” meant salvation for you?

It’s reassuring to find that even an apostle recognizes that parts of Paul’s letters can be ‘hard to understand’: why do you think Peter makes reference to Paul’s letters here?

7. Read 2 Peter 3.17-18. Peter rounds off his letter with a final two-fold exhortation which brings into sharp focus the burden on his heart for his readers.

What is the ‘caution’ he gives his readers, and what will putting it into practice mean for you?

At the end of this study (and indeed this series of studies on growth) what resolutions might you profitably make?