

## Do You Intend to Grow?

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 2:18).

You watched your children, and your grandchildren grow. You think, “They have grown in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and man,” and you are pleased, not with yourself, but with the growth of your children.

Personal growth can often be hindered, or advanced, by internal, as well as external conditions. The Apostle Peter said, “as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation” (1 Peter 2:2).

Growth has prerequisites: (1) Be free from sin: the Apostle Peter said, “Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking” (1 Peter 2:1). (2) Have spiritual rest: Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). (3) Have spiritual food: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). (4) Exercise: “But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

When the conditions for growth are met, the child of God will continue to grow by means of personal development: “Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love” (2 Peter 1:5-7).

When the Apostle Paul spoke of Israel, he said, “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3). In this text righteousness is a standard, more specifically, God’s standard. If a man does not subject himself to God’s standard, or according to the knowledge of God, he will develop his own, and when he does so, he is “self-righteous.” Zeal, yes; zeal that is according to the knowledge of God, no. The Apostle Peter said, “And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood

of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Peter 1:17-21).

For man to fail to grow is to rob oneself of the eternal kingdom, as Peter said, “Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10-11).

Remember the words of the Apostle John, saying, “But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). ret