

# GROWTH IN GRACE 1 PET. 2:1-2; 2 PET. 3:18

What does Scripture say – both in theory and practice?

## I. Growth is **possible**!

Maybe the most significant insight is that growth is merely assumed in both texts (growth, change, progress, maturing)! It is really beyond the need of explanation or defense!

### Thoughts:

- Growth is assumed
- Growth is assumed because there is life
- Growth is the normal state of affairs!

**1 Corinthians 6:9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, **1 Corinthians 6:10** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **1 Corinthians 6:11** **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

**Galatians 1:13** For ye have heard of my conversation **in time past** in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: **Galatians 1:14** And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. **Galatians 1:15** **But when it pleased God**, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, **Galatians 1:16** To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

**1 Timothy 1:12** And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; **1 Timothy 1:13** Who was **before** a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. **1 Timothy 1:14** And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

- Growth is more than possible, it is actually assumed

This is certainly **not** true for many / most in the ancient world and many / most today!

Romans: geographical & family / clan determinists

**Genesis 29:25** And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? **Genesis 29:26** And Laban said, **It must not be so done in our country**, to give the younger before the firstborn.

**Galatians 3:1** **O foolish Galatians** (ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται), who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

**Titus 1:12** One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, **The Cretians** (Κρήτες) **are** **always liars** (ψεῦσται), **evil beasts** (κακὰ θηρία), **slow bellies** (γαστέρες ἀργαί).

Racial / evolutionary determinism:

Chemical determinism:

Biological determinism

Genetic determinism:

## II. Growth is a **process** | is **progressive**

Maybe the best way to begin is to begin with some **false paths**:

- Lack of growth
- Substitutes for growth
  
- Growth as conformity
  
- Growth as an act of surrender

- Growth as a spiritual experience / gift

**1 Corinthians 12:31** But covet earnestly (Ζηλοῦτε) the best gifts (τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ κρείττονα): and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way (ὑπερβολὴν ὁδόν).

**1 Corinthians 13:1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. **1 Corinthians 13:2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. **1 Corinthians 13:3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

- Growth as purely service
  
- Growth as an experience / feeling
  
- Growth as an office / function

**Luke 1:80** And the child grew (ἡύξανεν), and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

**Luke 2:40** And the child grew (ἡύξανεν), and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

**Luke 12:27** Consider the lilies how they grow (αὐξάνει): they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

**Acts 7:17** But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew (ἡύξησεν) and multiplied in Egypt,

**1 Corinthians 3:6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase (ἡύξανεν). **1 Corinthians 3:7** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (αὐξάνων).

**1 Peter 2:2** As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow (ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ αὐξηθῇτε) thereby:

**2 Peter 3:18** But **grow (Αύξάνετε)** in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

**So, what is growth? What does it look like?**

**Ephesians 4:13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect (εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον)** man, **unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: Ephesians 4:14** That we henceforth be **no more children (νήπιοι)**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **Ephesians 4:15** But speaking the truth in love, **may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:**

**Mark 12:28** And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, **Which is the first commandment of all? Mark 12:29** And Jesus answered him, **The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: Mark 12:30** **And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Mark 12:31** And the **second** is like, namely this, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.**

**Galatians 5:22** But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **Galatians 5:23** Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

**Matthew 7:12** Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: **for** this is the law and the prophets.

**Exodus 20:1** And God spake all these words, saying, **Exodus 20:2** I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

**Exodus 20:3** Thou shalt have **no** other gods before me.

**Exodus 20:4** Thou shalt **not** make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything...

**Exodus 20:7** Thou shalt **not** take the name of the LORD thy God in vain....

**Exodus 20:8** **Remember** the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

**Exodus 20:12** **Honour** thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

**Exodus 20:13** Thou shalt **not** kill.

**Exodus 20:14** Thou shalt **not** commit adultery.

**Exodus 20:15** Thou shalt **not** steal.

**Exodus 20:16** Thou shalt **not** bear false witness against thy neighbour.

**Exodus 20:17** Thou shalt **not** covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

**1. Christlikeness**

**2. Loving God and Loving one's neighbor**

**3. The fruit of the Spirit**

**4. Obeying the 10 commandments from the heart**

**Romans 8:1** There is therefore now **no** condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **Romans 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from

the law of sin and death. **Romans 8:3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **Romans 8:4** **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**

**1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (βαρεῖαι).

**1 Corinthians 9:21** To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but **under the law to Christ** (ἐννομος χριστῷ),) that I might gain them that are without law.

**Galatians 5:18** But **if** ye be led of the Spirit, ye are **not** under the law. **Galatians 5:25** **If** we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 3:1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **1 Corinthians 3:2** **I have fed you with milk (γάλα), and not with meat (βρῶμα): for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.** **1 Corinthians 3:3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, **are ye not carnal, and walk as men?** **1 Corinthians 3:4** For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; **are ye not carnal?**

**Hebrews 5:11** Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

**Hebrews 5:12** For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be **the first principles (τὰ στοιχεῖα)** of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need **of milk (γάλακτος)**, and not of **strong meat (στερεᾶς τροφῆς)**. **Hebrews 5:13** For every one that useth **milk (γάλακτος)** is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a **babe (νήπιος)**. **Hebrews 5:14** But **strong meat (στερεὰ τροφή)** belongeth to them that are **of full age (Τελείων)**, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised (γεγυμνασμένα) to discern both good and evil.

## **5. The ability to handle the Word of God in the daily<sup>+</sup> decisions of life!**

### **Thoughts:**

- Every group has a definition
- Often the definition is understood / assumed
- Almost invariably the definition is partial, simplistic, and reductionistic

### **What do we **know** about growth?**

- It begins at salvation
- It continues throughout life
- It may have ups and downs
- It may involve a crisis / crises → turning points
- It will involve chastisement / pruning
- It flows from a love that will not let you go

**Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

**1 John 4:19** We love him, because he first loved us.