



Reflections

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. (1Pe 2:1-3 NKJ)

Peter's admonition to grow in the Lord as we partake of His Word has never been more important than in this modern age. Many have come to believe that being in Christ is a mere religious practice that is fulfilled by being part of a local assembly and doing good works. Others accept that one must receive Christ as their savior, but at that point they become satisfied that they are saved and choose not to grow in the Word or in relationship with Jesus.

Jesus taught that we should "hunger and thirst" for His Word and for His righteousness. Being in Him is to result in being new in heart, mind, and walk. In Him we are to be transformed and are to walk in "newness of life". Paul tells the Colossians: *...we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. (Colossians 1:9-12 NKJ)* Walking in Him is to please Him through obedience to His Word and by increasing (growing) in the knowledge of God. Jesus has made it possible to be reconciled to the Father through His finished work on the cross but we are not to take such a gift lightly. Historically many have sacrificed life and health in service to Him. By comparison we must ask: Am I growing in the Lord? (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Watching our grandkids measuring themselves by marking the door jam to see if they have added new inches to their height and then seeing the delight in their eyes when the new mark is higher than the previous one, reminds us that growing taller is important. I can remember when my own height exceeded that of my mom and then my dad. What a milestone it was! Now that the grandsons are looking down on me from heights that I did not reach, it is a special reminder that growing taller is a measure of the reality that physical growth is

indeed happening. Other milestones such as getting a driver's license, or getting a summer job, or graduating from high school and moving on to college, military, or career, each demonstrate that growing up is even more important than merely getting taller.

Voices, attitudes, interests, and abilities all change as we grow and when we see those who grew physically but have not grown in their maturity, we wonder: what happened? It is normal to grow physically, but without growth in maturity, people often become adult-sized kids living only for their own self-interest. The Scripture calls us to a life of obedience, freedom from self-indulgence and sin, and to a walk that serves others as well as our own needs. How then, do we practice such a walk? How can we grow in our walk with the Lord?

Jesus taught us that God knows what our needs are and that He will care for those needs if we seek first His kingdom. *For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:32-33 NKJ)* He encapsulates this principle for the Scribes when they asked Him what the first commandment was. He answered them... *"The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. ³⁰ 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. ³¹ "And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mark 12:29-31 NKJ)* In giving them this answer, Jesus summarized the basic hallmarks of a mature person who walks in the light of the Word. The result of such a lifestyle can be seen by the fruits of the Spirit being the evidence of the Holy Spirit living within the believer who has accepted Jesus as savior.

Let's put some "marks on the door jam" of our life to measure our growth. *Do we have a hunger for the Word, or is spending time in the Word still a challenge? Does our prayer time focus on the needs of others or just our own? Do we have regular times of prayer? Do we pray over the choices we make? Does the Word in our hearts result in behaviors pleasing to the Lord? Do we love those around us enough to share Jesus with them? Do we have a servants heart or do we spend our resources only on our pleasures? Do we acknowledge God in all that we do?* Did the marks on the "door jam" of your life demonstrate that you have grown? Let's purpose to seek first to be pleasing to the Lord and, as a result, we will grow as we walk with Him. **Pastor Doug**