

Growing is so important in many areas of life. We want our plants and gardens to grow. Farmers want their crops to grow. Ranchers want their livestock to grow. Corporations want their businesses to grow. Sporting teams want their fan bases and revenue to grow. Advertisers want their sales to grow. We want our investments to grow. We want our marriages to grow. We want our children to grow. These are just a few areas where we desire growth. As Christians we should desire to grow spiritually and in our walk with God. In fact, God wants us to grow spiritually and in Christlikeness and he has provided everything we need to grow in that godliness and Christlikeness. 2 Peter 1:3-4 says “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” Later in 2 Peter 3:18 he says, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Our passage today is 1 Peter 1:18-2:5 and it also speaks of growing because of the great deliverance God has provided.

¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.¹

1. Grace of the Lord (1:18-21)

Not only are we rescued and redeemed by the grace of the Lord, we also grow through the grace of the Lord. We are rescued from emptiness through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. We are redeemed through the sacrificial death of Jesus who is the Passover lamb delivering us from the judgment we deserve to becoming children of God through faith. The sacrificial death of Jesus as God’s provision for sin was not some afterthought. It was the eternal plan of God before he ever created the world. As Daryl Charles says, “This costly transaction, however, is presented in 1st

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New International Version*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 1 Pe 1:18–2:5.

Peter as no second thought or “plan B” in the counsel of God. Rather, the ransom, it is emphasized, was in the purpose of God “before the creation of the world,” even though it has been fully “revealed in these last times” for the sake of the saints.”²

N. T. Wright says “Peter is going to draw on several prophets in the coming passages, notably Isaiah and Zechariah. And he looks back to their days, realizing what it must have meant for them. They knew that God had more grace coming—grace that would rescue people from where and what they had been, and would give them a wonderful, glorious new destiny and hope.”³ Without the grace of the Lord we would not grow in our faith. We are saved by grace and we grow by the grace of the Lord.

2. Revelation of the Lord (1:22-25)

The second point is that we grow by the revelation of the Lord, his Word. The Word includes all scripture but in this passage the focus is on Jesus as the Word who is the ultimate revelation of the Lord. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” This eternal Word of God became human and lived on this earth. The writer of Hebrews says in 1:3-4 “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins he sat down at the

² Daryl J. Charles, [“1 Peter.”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews–Revelation (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 310.

³ Tom Wright, [Early Christian Letters for Everyone: James, Peter, John and Judah](#), For Everyone Bible Study Guides (London; Louisville, KY: SPCK; Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 54–55.

right hand of majesty in heaven.” N. T. Wright says when Peter speaks of ‘the word that was announced to you’, he seems to mean the message about Jesus the Messiah, about God sending him so that through his sacrificial death and his outpoured spirit people from every nation might be ransomed from their previous life, and given a whole new life and purpose in God’s service.”⁴ Wright emphasizes that Isaiah’s image about the word abiding forever is found in the passages of Isaiah that bracket the servant songs in Isaiah. In that section of Isaiah, “the figure that gradually emerges is the ‘suffering servant’, the one seen by the early church as a direct prophecy of Jesus and his sacrificial death.”⁵

Jim Samra writes that “Peter’s point is profound: the imperishable word of God (1:23, 25), which is the gospel message of Jesus’s imperishable blood (1:18–19), is preached to perishable people (1:24), causing them to be born again into an imperishable inheritance (1:4) through their imperishable faith (1:7).”⁶

The Word of God is eternal and stands the test of time even though it has faced critics and attacks. Bruce Barton shares the story of Voltaire who rejected God and the revelation in the Bible. “Voltaire was seemingly a deep thinker, a persuasive orator, a well-known

⁴ Tom Wright, [*Early Christian Letters for Everyone: James, Peter, John and Judah*](#), For Everyone Bible Study Guides (London; Louisville, KY: SPCK; Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 58.

⁵ Tom Wright, [*Early Christian Letters for Everyone: James, Peter, John and Judah*](#), For Everyone Bible Study Guides (London; Louisville, KY: SPCK; Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 59.

⁶ Jim Samra, [*James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Jude*](#), ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 119.

figure. He called his rival, Sir Isaac Newton, a “doddering fool” because of Newton’s contention that there would come a day when men would travel around the world. “For men to travel globally, they would have to travel at speeds in excess of sixty miles per hour,” scoffed Voltaire. “Any thinking man knows speed that high would cause one’s heart to stop beating.” That isn’t the only time Voltaire proved to be wrong. On his deathbed in 1778, he declared that within one hundred years of his death, the Bible would only be found in museums and in the archives of libraries. How fitting, then, that Voltaire’s house was purchased by the European Bible Society to produce thousands of Bibles annually—even to this day. Voltaire passed away like the grass, like a flower. The Word of God endures forever. Why? It is unique among all books in that it’s the only book that is living.”⁷

Barton writes that “The Word of God, as described by Peter in 1:23–25, is living and enduring. Thus, like milk, the essential nourishment for babies, it sustains life and gives growth. The psalmist described God’s words as pure: “The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. The commandment of the Lord is pure”. The purity of God’s Word means that there is no imperfection, no flaws, no dilutions, and that it will not deceive or lead people astray.”⁸ We grow through the revelation of the Lord.

3. Obedience to the Lord (2:1-3)

⁷ Jon Courson, [*Jon Courson’s Application Commentary*](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 1549.

⁸ Bruce B. Barton, [*1 Peter. 2 Peter. Jude*](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Pub., 1995), 50–51.

The third point is that we grow through our obedience to the Lord. Joel Green writes that “new life grows out of and is centered in the word of God. Or, as Peter claims, their obedience is to “the truth.” New life puts on display the transformation of believers’ patterns of thought, a transformation that is generated and cultivated by the word of the Lord.”⁹ Our spiritual growth is demonstrated in our obedience to the Lord. Peter said that as God’s children we should demonstrate a sincere love to one another. He also says that in our obedience we need to rid ourselves of the old sinful lifestyle. The picture is one of putting off dirty clothes. Jim Samra emphasizes how “Children inherit patterns of behavior from their parents. Before Christ these were patterns of disobedience, but now, having been given a new Father, Christians are the recipients of patterns of obedience and holiness from God.”¹⁰

We need to keep ridding ourselves of the behaviors and thoughts that are not pleasing to God and grow spiritually. We are not left to do this through our own strength but through the strength of the Holy Spirit as we cooperate with his work in our lives. Scot McKnight writes that “We must understand that true spirituality is neither just an experience nor a technique but a relationship of obedience and trust to the one and only living God, the Father of Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, and that he has sent the Holy Spirit to guide and nurture us in our spiritual formation. Until we understand theology (and let this overwhelm our

⁹ Joel B. Green, [1 Peter](#), The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 51.

¹⁰ Jim Samra, [James. 1 & 2 Peter. and Jude](#), ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 118.

ideas and practices), we will not develop true spiritual formation. All true Christian development is the result of knowing God the Father, participating in the work of the Son, and submitting to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”¹¹ To emphasize his point Peter uses the metaphor of a baby craving his or her mother’s milk. Jim Samra writes that “just as a baby who feeds constantly from her mother’s breast will grow more than a baby who feeds only occasionally, so a Christian who craves the Lord and regularly experiences him will experience more-sustained and healthy growth as a believer.”¹² Peter tells us to crave this pure spiritual milk. Grant Osborne writes that “We crave God’s milk because we have experienced how delicious, refreshing, and fulfilling it is. As we grow in him and realize his goodness, we naturally want more.”¹³ As we continue to experience God we will grow more in our faith which will be demonstrated in our obedience to the Lord. We grow through obedience to the Lord.

4. Worship and Service to the Lord (2:4-5)

The fourth point is that we grow through our worship and service to the Lord. In verses 4 and 5 we see that as we come to the living stone, Jesus Christ, we are like living stones being built into a spiritual house to be a kingdom of priests worshiping and serving

¹¹ Scot McKnight, [1 Peter](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 119–120.

¹² Jim Samra, [James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Jude](#), ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 127.

¹³ Grant R. Osborne, [“1 Peter.”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 176.

the Lord through our spiritual sacrifices. In scripture Jesus is presented as the rock, as the stone, as the cornerstone. The imagery here is of the true temple of God and Christians function as priests in this temple. N.T. Wright says that “Peter believed that all God’s promises to Israel had been fulfilled in the Messiah, Jesus himself, and that therefore all who belonged to Jesus had now been brought into that ‘people of God’, that true Temple. The one true God was now living in them! The ‘Temple’ had been rebuilt—not in Jerusalem but all round the world! That is the great truth on which everything else in the letter will depend.”¹⁴ As priests we worship the Lord and offer spiritual sacrifices to the Lord in our daily lives. Bruce Barton reminds us that “We see from Scripture that every part of our lives—our jobs, activities, recreation, attitudes, giving, outlook, goals—should be given as a spiritual sacrifice to God. When we learn to please God and follow his directions and guidance, all we do delights him. These sacrifices are “spiritual” because we can only give ourselves to God with the Holy Spirit’s help.”¹⁵

The Lord desires us to grow spiritually. We grow as we cooperate with his work of grace in our lives. We grow spiritually as we allow God’s Word to deepen in our relationship with the Lord, and to shape our thoughts and lifestyles. We need to spend time in God’s Word. We grow spiritually as we keep ridding ourselves of the sinful lifestyle as we cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit and walk in

¹⁴ Tom Wright, [*Early Christian Letters for Everyone: James, Peter, John and Judah*](#), For Everyone Bible Study Guides (London; Louisville, KY: SPCK; Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 63.

¹⁵ Bruce B. Barton, [*1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude*](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Pub., 1995), 55.

obedience to the Lord. We grow spiritually as we worship and serve the Lord.