

## **GROWING AS CHRISTIANS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. All grow older, can't do much about that! Beginning a new year 2020. How are we growing except older?
- B. Good & bad side: bad is effects of age; loss of memory, deterioration of body; good side we gain experience & knowledge and grow closer to the Lord 2Cor 4:16
- C. Most growth (except growing older) is the result of deciding to grow. It requires effort on our part.
- D. Look at some areas in which we may grow.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. WE CAN GROW UP Heb 5:12-14**

- A. Everyone starts out as a "babe in Christ."
- B. Consider negative qualities children have Eph 4:14
  - 1. Easily deceived (too trusting) - Some predators prey on children because they are easy marks.
  - 2. Children fight & bicker: "You're not my friend anymore." 1Cor 3:1-3
    - a. Adults aren't too different. need to "grow up"
    - b. Mature Christians don't behave (think) that way
- C. Children have some very positive attitudes 1Cor 14:20
  - 1. Forgiving "I'm never going to play with you again!" Ten minutes later they're playing
  - 2. Must become like children in this respect Matt 18:3

#### **II. WE CAN GROW IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE 2Pet 3:18**

- A. Basic meaning of grace is unmerited favor
  - 1. God's grace is given, not earned (However, man must meet God's conditions before it is given)
  - 2. Grow in grace means a deepening of relationship with God
- B. Growing in knowledge comes from study
  - 1. Hobbies or interests may excite you to learn more
  - 2. Learning God's word more than just a hobby
  - 3. How often do we talk to God and He to us?
  - 4. Knowing God is more than just saying so Tit 1:16
    - a. Not just feeling or experience, it is believing what He reveals about Himself and His will
    - b. Lack of knowledge destroys Hos 4:6

#### **III. WE CAN GROW IN FAITH 2Thess 1:3**

- A. Faith is used in different ways in the Scriptures
  - 1. Obedient faith, action prompted by belief Acts 2:41
  - 2. "The faith" is NT doctrine delivered by the Holy Spirit Jude 3
  - 3. Personal faith = things in which I trust & put my confidence

- a. Jews confidence in flesh Phil 3:3-4 conviction was strong, but it was in the wrong thing
- b. Choose to have weak or strong faith Strong faith isn't something that just happens to us

- B. Rom 10:17 tells us how faith comes, & grows

#### **IV. WE CAN GROW IN LOVE Rom 12:9-10**

- A. Love one another fervently with pure heart 1Pet 1:22
- B. "Only love can be divided endlessly and still not diminish" - Anne Morrow Lindbergh
- C. Love manifests itself in many ways Rom 13:8-10
  - 1. Love is expressed through actions 1Jhn 3:18
  - 2. Love shown in forgiveness Lk 7:37-38, 44-47 (47)

#### **V IF NOT CAREFUL, WE CAN GROW WEARY Gal 6:9**

- A. Elijah became discouraged 1Kings 19, but God told him of 7,000 others who were faithful
  - 1. May go long time and see no fruit for labor "in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart"
  - 2. May be like Jeremiah, convince very few Jer 20:7-9
  - 3. We must endure to can gain reward Matt 10:22
- B. One of first indications of discouragement is lack of prayer Lk 18:1
- C. The key to overcoming discouragement: Heb 12:1-2

#### **VI. WE CAN GROW COLD**

- A. In our attitude toward God Rev 2:4
  - 1. Relationships require work
  - 2. Anybody married more than 2-3 months knows this
  - 3. God tells us how to keep from growing cold Jas 4:8; Rev 3:19; Heb 10:22-23
- B. In our attitude toward one another Matt 24:12
  - 1. Where divine law is not respected, love vanishes
  - 2. People not believing they'll answer to God, won't respect His word and will follow their own course
  - 3. Another way of describing indifference to one another Rom 12:15-16a

#### **VII. WE CAN GROW MORE WORLDLY Phil 3:18-19**

- A. Materialism can be difficult to avoid, we need material things for our physical survival We must remember:
  - 1. Material things are temporary 2Cor 4:18
  - 2. Material things will vanish away Heb 1:10-12
- B. In end, one thing matters - our relationship with God

### **CONCLUSION**

- A. All growing in some direction; either in our relationship with God or in our ties to the world. Where are we headed in the new year 2020?
- B. Consider the question asked by Peter in 2Pet 3:10-12