

**Spiritual
Growth
For
Christians**

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Concerning spiritual growth, different Christians have different ideas and different measurements on this matter. Some Christians think that since they are busy following after the church calendar religiously, they must be growing in the Lord. Some think that since they are keeping new company with church friends and so they are growing. Some think that they have started reading one chapter of the Holy Bible a day, so they must be growing. Some think that they are now reading Christian books and so this must be evidence of spiritual growth. While all these activities are part of the outward form of growth, spiritual growth in the Lord is quite a different ball game as far as revealed Scriptures are concerned.

This is a brief study to give some biblical examples of spiritual growth of a Christian. The reason and importance of spiritual growth will also be covered. The child of God is encouraged to search the Scriptures to verify for himself whether he is indeed growing in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. May the Lord bless the study of His inspired, inerrant and infallible words!

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13-18)

Christians are supposed to look forward to a brand new world; a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. What causes Christians to fret in this life and in this world? It is because there is no perfect righteousness in this fallen world. This world is in very bad shape filled with injustice and trouble and it will not stop until God puts an end to this sin cursed world. The intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ in the affairs of fallen men in this world must take place before the Kingdom can become a reality. Solomon experienced the hopelessness in this world and his conclusion was that all was vanity. Because Christians are supposed to look forward to a better country, we are to be diligent to be found in Christ in peace without spot and without blame.

How do we achieve this most noble state of being found in peace and blamelessness in Christ? It is by growing in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever injustice we see, whatever trouble we might face, whatever trials we might have to go through, it is the because of the long sufferings of the Lord to save lost souls for eternity. There is this danger of being led away with the error of the wicked and fall from our own steadfastness though we know we are destined to a better world to come. So the remedy is to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not negotiable. There are no other alternatives.

Failing to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ can lead to dire consequences. When a child of God fails to grow in the Lord, he will be growing in the lust and frivolity of the god of this world.

Spiritual growth and backsliding are never companions in this pilgrimage on the face of the earth. A Christian is either growing or backsliding. He cannot be found in both states at the same time. There is no middle ground either.

If a child of God is not growing in Christ, the danger of being led away with the error of the wicked and falling from grace will become a reality for the child of God. Such reality will cause unceasing trouble to come upon this erring child of God. Chastisement from the loving God must come and will surely come. Spiritual growth for a Christian then is not an option to be exercised. It is a must for him if he wants to dwell in safety and getting over onto the other side of heaven with rewards and glory. If a child of God treats his spiritual growth with indifference, he will get into serious trouble sooner or later.

No one can imagine a child of God would not want to grow in the Lord. No one can imagine a child will not want to grow up healthily. If a child who cannot grow properly and healthily, he is sick. He needs medical attention. He needs help. He is a grief to his parents. His parents must be worried sick because of his conditions. Likewise, a child of God must grow in the Lord. If he is not growing, something is wrong with him. He is a grief to the Lord who loves him and gives him eternal life in Christ.

I remember when I first got saved in 1985, I kept asking the brethren what I must do. I wanted to know what I must do as a Christian. I wanted to know what I must do for Christ. I wanted to know what I must not do as a Christian. I wanted to know how to read the Holy Bible. I wanted to know how much Bible to read everyday. I wanted to find out more about my Saviour. The Lord is the Head of the Church and the Church is the Bride of Christ. Which bride will not want to know more about her future husband? Which woman will even consider getting a mail order husband and could not be bothered with what he looks like and what he likes and what he hates?

When a sinner is born again, there will be a transformation and not a reformation. If he tries to reform himself, he is not saved. He might think he is a Christian but he is not. There are many church going people in this world thinking that they are Christian but they are not. They have been deceived. Spiritual growth does not apply to them no matter what they are doing though all their activities may seem to indicate they are Christians. They have been misled by the sounds and fury of church activities.

A sinner will be transformed when he gets saved. He is translated from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of light of the Lord. He is born again and he becomes a child of God being quickened by the Spirit of God. He is not trying to turn over to a new leaf. Turning over to a new leaf is to try to work for his own salvation. No one can try to earn enough credits to earn himself a place in heaven. Salvation is a free gift of God. **For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8&9)**

When a sinner gets saved, he receives this gift of salvation from God without works. Moreover, he becomes a new creature in Christ and as such he has a new appetite. **Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)** As a new babe in Christ, he wants to be fed by the Lord. He is a newborn babe in Christ desiring the sincere milk of the word. **As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (1 Peter 2:2)** This is the natural desire of a new born babe in Christ. **And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:15)** Spiritual growth for a child of God and the words of the living God go together.

If a person who claims to be saved and has no desire to read the Bible, something is terribly wrong with him. No baby after being born will not desire milk to grow! Babies do not commit suicide. Have you come across babies wanting to commit suicide? Do you think a spiritual babe in Christ want to kill himself after being saved by rejecting the sincere milk of the word? It is as natural for a babe to cry for milk as it is for him to breathe. So when a man who claims to be a Christian after receiving Christ as his Saviour and he has no appetite for the words of the living God, something is very wrong with him. He is either spiritually very sick and needs help or he is not saved at all.

Something is wrong with that man who does not want to know more about the Saviour who loves him so much and died for him. Something is wrong with that man who does not want to love this Saviour who loves him. Something is wrong with that man who does not want to know more about the world he will be going to and spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ. Something is wrong with that man who spent all his time in this world to be so familiar and comfortable living in this sin cursed world and have no interest in the better country he is supposed to be going to spend for all eternity.

Spiritual growth for a child of God cannot happen without the word of God. It is through the word of God that he feeds on daily that will cause him to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Feeding on newspapers and writings in this world will not help him to grow in Christ. He will grow to be more worldly wise and savvy in the running of this world. As for the world to come, he has no clue at all. His whole life would be like the rich young man who was grieved when told to give up his possession for the poor to follow the Lord and be with Christ to have eternal life. Such Christians would be grieved leaving this world they love so much and be forced into a world to face the judgment seat of Christ to account for their deeds on earth.

Spiritual growth for a child of God must be learned from the words of the living God. Through the words of God, he will learn the whole counsel of God. He will not be babbling about Christ and Christ crucified only by taking Scriptures out of context pretending to be spiritual. Through the words of God, he will learn to apply the precepts from the Holy Bible in the life he lives in this world. If he tries to circumvent Biblical principles to justify worldliness living in this world, he is living in a backslidden state.

Every born again child of God has the Holy Spirit working in him to conform him to the image of Christ. The child of God must grow to be more and more Christ-like. He will want to improve upon his current status to be more holy even as he draws near to Christ. For the child of God is commanded to be holy because the Lord is holy: **Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:16)** Spiritual growth without holiness is fraudulent growth. It is a deadly deception.

It is pointless praying for holy living when the heart is pandering after the world to indulge in the flesh and hope the saints will accept him and

respect him. Because the Holy Spirit is working in the child of God, he will want to improve his performance in godly living to be separate from the world. This is inline with knowing this world will be burnt up in a ball of fire and he has no continuing city in this world. If a child of God is not mindful of the world he is going to and the expectation of him fit to be citizen of the kingdom of light, he will just live this life like the people of this world and you cannot tell he is a Christian from the people in this world. He is like Lot vexing his righteous soul day after day. He will lose it all just like Lot. He has lost his salt and he is good for nothing.

Spiritual growth in Christ comes under two aspects. They are growing in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord. Growing in the grace of Christ is experiential growth for a child of God. It is the grace that he personally experiences living this life of faith and waiting for the soon return of Christ. This grace of the Lord will lead him through many experiences in this life. This grace of the Lord will draw him closer to Christ under any circumstances in this life. The grace of God will lead him to live and act in such a way to conform him to the will of God. (Romans 12:1-3)

The grace of God will lead him to mortify the deeds of the flesh. **For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (Romans 8:13)** So the grace of God will lead him to holy living. The grace of God will lead him to sacrificial living as well. It will lead him to give for the cause of Christ even though giving may deny him of some personal needs and wants from time to time. **Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. (2 Corinthians 8:7)** This grace in 2 Corinthians 8 is about giving. Giving to help others in Christ is a grace. It is this grace where Christians are supposed to abound in. **And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (2 Corinthians 9:8)** The promise of no lack is true for those who abound in this grace of giving for the cause of Christ.

The grace of the Lord will lead him to love the brethren because Christ loves His Church. **And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: (1 Thessalonians 3:12)** It will lead him to live above the world and to deny his flesh. It will lead him to witness for Christ. **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)** It will lead him to increase in faith in Christ. **We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; (2 Thessalonians 1:3)** It will also lead him to abound in charity.

It will lead him to bear one another's burdens. **Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)** It will lead him to

empathize with others. It will lead him to be patient with others. It will lead him to forgive others who have wronged him. **And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)** It will lead him to walk the second mile for the Lord's sake. It will lead him to suffer for Christ's sake. **For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; (Philippians 1:29)** For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. **(1 Thessalonians 3:4)** Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. **(2 Timothy 3:12)** Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. **(1 Peter 4:16&19)** It is indeed by the grace of God that Christians can appreciate and endure sufferings for Christ.

The grace of God will lead him to be charitable. It will lead him to help others. It will lead him to pray for others. **Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16)** When a brother is in need, the grace of God will lead him to ask what he can do to help instead of just praying for the brother. The grace of God will lead him to shun evil and hold onto that which is good.

The grace of God will lead him to do things that edify others and things that are expedient instead of things that are lawful. **All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. (1 Corinthians 10:23)** Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. **(1 Thessalonians 5:11)** The grace of God will lead him to be all things unto all men that by all means he might save some. **To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. (1 Corinthians 9:22)** It is truly the grace of God that enables a Christian to deny himself and carry his cross for Christ.

The grace of God will cause him to want to fellowship with the saints. **That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3)** The grace of God will

lead him to want to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)** It is the grace of God that leads him to be a peacemaker and not a troublemaker. **Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (Mathew 5:9)** **And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. (James 3:18)**

The grace of God will lead him to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. **Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 1:3)** This grace of the Lord will help him to be zealous in this endeavour to be steadfast in holding forth the truth in the face of the enemies and adversity.

The grace of God will lead him to help others to grow in the Lord. **And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2)** The grace of God will enable him to endure hardness as a good soldier for Christ. **Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 2:3)** The grace of God will enable him to fight the good fight of faith. **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)** The grace of God will enable him to serve the Lord faithfully and follow Christ until he reaches safely over to the other side to meet Christ face to face. This is when the grace of God is perfected forever more living in the presence of eternal peace and joy when his work on earth is done. So growing in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely essential in this pilgrimage. Without which, the child of God will not become a perfect man and a useful and a faithful servant for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second aspect of spiritual growth is to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not growing in any knowledge but the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This knowledge of Christ comes from the words of the living God. It cannot be acquired from any other sources. Though the knowledge of Christ may come from the teachings of godly and faithful men in Christ, it must be verified from the words of the living God. The Christians in Berea confirmed this matter for they did not just accept what the apostle Paul told them. **These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11)** Laziness is the natural enemy of spiritual growth in the knowledge of Christ. Complacency is another common obstacle to spiritual growth in Christ.

The knowledge of Christ is the intimate knowledge of the Lord that a child of God should grow to know. Paul was so hungry to know more about the Lord Jesus Christ that he exclaimed: **That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Philippians 3:10)** Growing in the knowledge of Christ is to know Christ intimately. It is to know what Christ knows. It is to know the inner workings of the Lord who spoke the world into existence. It is to know the power of Christ's resurrection. Knowing the power of Christ's resurrection would have known it all. It is not about this earthly life. It is about life immortal in a world that sinners in this world will never hope to know.

The knowledge of Christ is to know everything in this world and in the world to come. **May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (Ephesians 3:18)** It is to know the physical dimensions of this world and in the world to come. It is for the purpose of having the capability to comprehend God's creation and relate with other saints on the workings of this world as well as for the world to come. It is to know what God did in the past, what He is doing now and what He will do in the future. It is to know why God did certain things in the past, why the world is in trouble now and why Christ must return in the future.

Growing in the knowledge of Christ is to know the love of Christ that passeth all understanding. **And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.**

(Ephesians 3:19) It is to know how much Christ loves Him though it is beyond his comprehension living in this body of death. It is to know why Christ loves him. It is to know what Christ has done for him. It is to know what else Christ will do for him. This growing in the knowledge of Christ will enable him to be filled with all the fullness of God. The knowledge of Christ will lead him to know what is true and what is not. The knowledge of Christ will lead him to know what is pure and what is not. The knowledge of Christ will lead him to know what is right and what is not. The knowledge of Christ will lead him to know what is acceptable and what is not. The knowledge of Christ will lead him to know what is God's good, acceptable and perfect will for him. (Romans 12:1-3)

The knowledge of Christ will lead him to be able to distinct between the doctrines from the Holy Bible and false doctrines from the enemies of the cross. **We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (1 John 4:6)** The knowledge of Christ will help him in contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 1:3) The knowledge of Christ will equip him to defend the pure gospel against false gospels preached by ministers of Satan. **But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. (Philippians 1:17)** The knowledge of Christ will equip him to be able to help others to come to a better understanding of the Scriptures. (2 Timothy 2:2) **Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4)** The physician Luke used his knowledge in Christ and wrote a twenty-four-chapter book to help Theophilus to come to a perfect understanding of the gospel of Christ. The knowledge of Christ will equip him to teach others about Christ and the doctrines of the Holy Bible. The knowledge of Christ is not to be kept for personal enjoyment but to be taught to others so that all may grow together in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The knowledge of Christ will teach him to speak the truth in love so that all may grow together unto Christ, the Head of the Church. **But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is**

the head, even Christ: (Ephesians 4:15) The knowledge of Christ will equip him to be skillful in the word of righteousness. **For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (Hebrews 5:13)** The knowledge of Christ will help him grow and not remain as a babe in Christ. It is not God's will for Christians to remain as babes. Babes are not very useful to fellowmen. Babes are naturally helpless and need help to grow. The knowledge of Christ will equip Christians to help young Christians grow in the Lord.

The knowledge of Christ will help him to grow in the unity of the faith. **Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:13)** The knowledge of Christ will help him to grow unto a perfect man and not a childish man wallowing in the flesh and swallow up by the world. The knowledge of Christ will help him attain unto the full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The knowledge of Christ will deliver him from being a dwarf in the faith.

The knowledge of Christ will teach him to know what to avoid and who to avoid. **Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. (1 Corinthians 7:2)** **O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: (1 Timothy 6:20)** **But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. (2 Timothy 2:23)** **But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. (Titus 3:9)** Babes and young children are naturally quarrelsome. They can become a nuisance. So Christians must grow otherwise they can be irritants where Christians sometimes have to rebuke them. They must learn to avoid opening their mouths for the wrong reasons. They must avoid asking foolish questions and to be contentious. Young children are also proud of their little knowledge that they have learnt. They must avoid opening their mouths to cause contention.

The knowledge of Christ will teach him who to mark according to the Bible and for what reason they are marked. **Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (Romans 16:17)** These are people to be marked for his own spiritual safety. These people who cause offence and divisions contrary to doctrine must be marked and avoided.

Only foolish Christians will act like Eve to entertain the Serpent and get into trouble. These offensive people who cause offence and divisions are a threat to Christians and unity in Christ. **Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (Philippians 3:17)** This is another category of people to be marked for the right reason. They are to be marked as examples to follow in the most holy faith. These are faithful Christians and soldiers of the Lord that will enable young Christians to grow healthily in the Lord. So they are to be marked and to learn from so that Christians may all grow together in the unity of the faith.

The knowledge of Christ will keep him from wrong company. **But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. (1 Corinthians 5:11)** And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. **(2 Thessalonians 3:14)** These are dangerous people calling themselves Christians but their very works betray their faith. Their infidelity and rebellion are contagious. They are traitors of the faith by their walk. They stumble the saved and the lost alike. They are to be avoided for personal spiritual health reason. In fact, such Christians should be quarantined for the health of other Christians. Until they feel ashamed of their conduct and manner of life, they should not be accepted back into the fellowship of the saints. By shaming them, it is an act of charity. It is done in hopes of repentance from such erring children of God.

You cannot do marking and avoiding if you do not have a judgmental spirit. The knowledge of Christ will teach him to have a judgmental spirit. **And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; (Philippians 1:9)** This growing in love involves all judgment. Only those who refuse to grow will want to be delivered from a judgmental spirit. Christians are commanded to grow and abound in all judgment. Notwithstanding, the knowledge of Christ will deliver him from a self-righteous spirit. There is a difference between a judgmental spirit and a self-righteous spirit. A judgmental spirit is to know all truths based on the words of the living God. A self-righteous spirit is to adopt an attitude of holier than others, which is a manifestation of pride.

The knowledge of Christ will prepare him to abound in hope. **Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:13)** The knowledge of Christ will help him to be grounded and stablished in the faith. **Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:7)** The knowledge of Christ will lead him to fruitfulness and to abound more and more in his walk. **Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. (1 Thessalonians)**

Growing in the knowledge of Christ will complete the other aspect of spiritual growth for a Christian. Growing just in the knowledge of Christ can be just head knowledge without growing in the grace of Christ. Knowledge alone will not do. For we are told: **Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. (1 Corinthians 8:1)** Knowledge alone can lead to spiritual pride. It is easy to give mental assent and consent to a creed. Practical application of biblical truths for a Christian requires the grace of God. Grace and knowledge of Christ are to be spiritual companions of growth for a child of God. Without these twin engines of spiritual growth, a child of God can grow to become off balance.

Spiritual growth is a continuous process. There is no such thing as accelerated growth for Christians. No born again child of God can grow up in a hurry. Only those who had gone to the grave need not grow anymore. Spiritual growth takes time to mature. It does not cause a child of God to grow up overnight. It is not an instantaneous occurrence. Salvation is instantaneous but spiritual growth is not. Salvation is not a process but spiritual growth for a child of God is a process.

The world is moving on to be burned up in a ball of fire and the Kingdom of God is coming to be established on earth. The saints are marching to Zion, the beautiful Zion specially prepared for those who love the Lord. Babies need to be carried along the way to glory land. Young kids need hand holding to walk properly. If a child of God is not walking along the way, he is falling backward. He is backsliding while everyone is moving on. If after many years a child of God still needs a lot of help from others to help him walk to Zion, he is not growing well.

If a child of God after a long time is still talking to himself and talking about himself and nothing but himself, he is very self-centred. Maybe he has contracted spiritual autism! He should be able to help others to grow but he is still having trouble with his self-centredness and self-absorption. He has encountered trouble somewhere along his growth. Perhaps someone has stumbled him! Perhaps it is some pet sins he does not want to give up! It is his refusal to face up to the truth in the Holy Bible that causes his stunted growth. Stunted growth is actually an embarrassment. It is not the will of God for Christians to stop growing in Christ.

Spiritual growth is a continuous process of adding to his spiritual life. **And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)** Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity are critical components in the growth process of a Christian. Without adding all these elements of growth to his life, he is not growing. He is then liable to fall. He will become barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ if he is not abounding in all these vital elements of growth. There is no other way than adding up all these

critical spiritual qualities to his portfolio of spiritual growth. Any missing element will render his portfolio incomplete.

The reason why we still need to grow is because we are still not perfect. **For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)** We are still not perfect and we need to grow because we see through a glass darkly. There are many areas we still have not experienced and there are many things we do not understand. We are not seeing our Lord face to face yet and so we must continue to grow. Until we see our Lord face to face, growing in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary. **But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)** This is when spiritual growth is perfected. Until we reach this state, we have to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual growth will cause a child of God to always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing that his labour is not in vain in the Lord. **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)** As a Christian grows in the Lord, his work in the Lord will abound more and more because he knows that his labour will not be in vain in the Lord. Spiritual growth is a must for every born again child of God. **In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (Ephesians 2:21)** The purpose of spiritual growth is to build up the believers in Christ that grows unto a holy temple in the Lord.

Spiritual growth is the responsibility of the child of God to avail himself to be taught by the Holy Spirit through the words of the living God. Spiritual growth is vital to a Christian's joy in this life. Without growing healthily in the Lord, the child of God's spiritual senses will not be properly tuned to incline himself towards the things of Christ. He will not know how to go about doing the Father's business in this life. He will be living a wasted life. The joy of the Lord will be missing and the peace of God that passeth all understanding will be marred. Instead of marching joyfully unto glory land, he will be enduring unto the end of a wasted life.

So brethren, have you been growing or are you retarding? Do you still have the desire to grow in the Lord? Do you still want to grow to be more and more Christ-like and to be more and more useful for the Lord and to fellowmen? Are there any areas you are still lacking behind in your growth? The people of this world like to talk about personal development hoping to achieve self-actualisation. What about your spiritual life? Besides growing old and growing weaker, are you still growing in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you want to grow some more? You will not graduate from this process of growing until you hit the grave. Your convocation will only take place at the second coming of Christ. How much time will you set aside to cultivate your own spiritual development? Do you spend all your time just to chase after some illusive fame and unstable and uncertain riches?

If we are not growing, the danger of being led away with the error of the wicked will be hanging like a sword over our head. Then falling from our own steadfastness becomes a reality. Misery becomes our companion and trouble our lot. If a child of God looks forward to a glorious future, there is only one way and one direction for him to move forward; that is, to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Growing and backsliding do not go together. A Christian is either growing in Christ or backsliding from Him.

It is time to take stock on your spiritual growth and be a responsible Christian. You have to start doing something and ask the Lord to help you in this endeavour. You are not asking for wealth or fame. The Lord will certainly be pleased to help you grow. No parents will not want to help his child grow. You can surely trust the Lord to help you. In order to be useful for the Lord and to fellowmen, there is no other way than to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. May you set your affection on things that are above and not on things in this world so that you may truly grow in the Lord. May the Lord grant you success in your spiritual pursuit!

If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kjb-asia.com.