

Growing Up: 2 Peter 3:18

“But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ”.

A baby that is born into this world experiences all kinds of challenges and hurdles. Amidst all these odds, the baby with the assistance and aid of its parents, overcomes them and grows into a strong adult. The process of growth and development can be at times very challenging, depending on the circumstances and the environment the baby is exposed to. Regardless of the challenges, no parent desires that their baby remain an infant; dependent upon them at all times. Every parent dreams of that day when their child is mature and fully developed in all phase of their life. It is very easy to understand the parallel: a person who is born into the kingdom of God is spiritually an infant and immature. Yes, new birth is a glorious and eye opening experience which unveils countless obstacles and opportunities to grow, thrive and prosper.

God does not want anyone to remain stagnant and dormant in their Christian life. At the same time, it would be extremely helpful to all concerned to face the fact that the new birth produces not a mature Christian, but a spiritual babe- an infant who is capable of growth in the moral and spiritual likeness of Jesus Christ. Some of the problems that every Christian faces in their lifetime can only be resolved through experience, development and time. An immature Christian has the potential to affect not only his own life, but even hamper the lives of those around him. Continued immaturity on the part of some Christians has plagued the church throughout its history. The Bible itself reveals many incidents where the church went through roller coaster rides of division and discord due to immature Christians in the church. Paul tackles such issues with the Corinthian churches and accuses them of acting like babies instead of mature men. We can never overlook the fact that immature Christians can affect the cause of Christ and make a Christian witness ineffective.

God wants all of us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. To grow is to gain some convictions concerning what is right and what is wrong. The scripture itself assist us in knowing what is right, what is not right, how to get right and how to live right. Spiritual maturity brings discernment, which helps in

our crucial decision making process and discerning the mind of God. It is very interesting to note what has been recorded of our Lord Jesus Christ- "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with both God and man (Luke 2:52)." How can one overlook the importance of the well balanced growth of our Lord: growth that affects every arena of life, intellectual, physical, spiritual and the social. As the new child grows physically, mentally, and emotionally, even so there are a number of different areas in which the child of God is to grow. Yes, the child of God needs to grow in grace. It is very important to note the significance and role of grace in our lives. The grace of God which brings salvation to all mankind, the grace that enables us to say No to ungodliness, the grace that is made perfect in our weakness. God's grace is the divine side of the salvation experience. God's grace is God's activity of moving to meet the sinners need on the basis of divine love and mercy, rather than on the basis of human merit. It is grace on God's side that makes it possible to be saved by the human response of faith (Eph 2: 8, 9). Through faith and obedience the new convert can continually enter into a deeper experience of God's grace.

Apostle Peter in his epistle instructs that the child of God needs to grow in the knowledge of our Lord as well. This growth ought to be both intellectual and experiential. When we scan the scriptures we can grasp the manner and the mind of Christ dealing with different types of people. Once we understand the dealings of Christ with people we can easily understand how he operates and deals with people even today. However, intellectual knowledge itself is not sufficient; we need to get to know him intimately and personally. This is only possible when we respond to him in a positive manner in our everyday walk with him. When we walk and talk with him and allow him to impact our everyday lives and decisions, we get acquainted with him intimately. This level of intimacy will help us to experience the presence and the power of the Lord in a new dimension. As years pass by we should not only know more about him, but we should know him better. May we continue to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ!