

Are You Growing?

by Bill Crews

Are You Growing — SPIRITUALLY? Don't just read the question. Answer it! Honestly! I could have asked: "Have you become a Christian?" or "Have you been baptized?" or "Have you been saved?" or "Are you a member of the Lord's church?" But I didn't. I rather asked, **Are You Growing — SPIRITUALLY?** Granted that you have become a Christian, but as a Christian, **are you growing?**

It is a sad tragedy when a Christian thrusts faith and a good conscience from his heart and out of his life, and makes shipwreck concerning the faith (**1 Timothy 1:19**). But it is equally sad and tragic when a Christian has a name that he lives, while he is spiritually dead (**Revelation 3:1; 1 Timothy 5:5**), or turns away from his first love and ceases to do his first works (**Revelation 2:4-5**), or is unable to teach others because he needs to be taught again the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God (**Hebrews 5:11-12**). Whether forsaking or neglecting, the end is eternal perdition. But by the grace and longsuffering of God we can become faithful and fruitful. **We can grow.**

One of the most beautiful sights to behold is that of a Christian growing, advancing, progressing, developing, maturing. And living things do grow, while dead things do not. When a Christian is **faithful**, *he grows* — in interests, in desire, in determination, in faith, in knowledge, in understanding, in wisdom, in love, in courage, in humility, in steadfastness, in all of those attributes and characteristics that are part of being a Christian. Through the avenues of fervent prayer, diligent Bible study, daily meditation upon the words of God, association with other Christians, working and worshiping with saints in a congregation, and efforts to live right and help others, he grows. He launches out and accepts and attempts tasks never done before. With God as his strength and stay and Christ as his helper, he becomes stronger, more firmly rooted and grounded, more capable. Spiritual things here and an eternal home hereafter come to mean more and more to him, and material things and this world less and less. For he is growing in Christ and toward heaven.

He is practicing the principles of **2 Peter 3:18** ("*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*"), and **1 Peter 2:1-2** ("*Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation*"), and **2 Peter 1:5-7** ("*Yea, and for this very cause, adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love*"), and **Ephesians 4:12-16** ("*For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love*") (That is a real mouthful; better read it again; it is easier to understand than it is to diagram, **BC.**), and **2 Thessalonians 1:3** ("*We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth*").

When the Christians who comprise a congregation grow, that congregation will grow — spiritually and numerically. One of the most encouraging aspects of the Roanridge church is the obvious growth of some of our members; it is a thing of joy to see you growing. Would to God that all the members would grow.

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