

Grow in Grace and Knowledge

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WARNING! We see this label everywhere. We find it on appliances to keep people from electrocuting themselves and on coffee cups to keep people from burning themselves with the hot liquid. The apostle Peter gave us a warning at the end of his second book to not get carried away with error or to lose our stability (2 Pet. 3:17). These warnings are meant to be life-saving: both physically and spiritually. Thankfully, with this warning Peter gives the solution for what we need to do in order to not get carried away or lose our stability. He says in verse 18 to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. But this can cause one to question what it looks like to grow in grace and knowledge and how can you know that growth is taking place?

In this solution Peter is not telling us that we are to be more saved, pardoned, or justified than we were at our spiritual birth. He is telling us that it is necessary for us to grow from our spiritual birth in the areas of grace and knowledge. It is important to note at this point that grace as discussed here is not defined as simply unmerited favor. It would not make sense for Peter to tell us to grow in unmerited favor. Grace is unmerited favor, but it also carries the connotation of reciprocal thankfulness that we should have. For example, have you ever heard someone “say grace” before a meal? This phrase refers to the thankfulness we feel for the blessings we received from God. Grace is not just one sided and it does not cease to exist after you are saved. You can almost think of it as Peter saying grow in thankfulness and knowledge.

What does it look like to grow in grace (or thankfulness) and knowledge of Jesus Christ? You must first look at His word. We should have a clear understanding of who Jesus is, based on His word, not on how we might feel about Him. 1 Pet. 2:2 teaches us that the word is food intended to nourish us as we grow in the knowledge of His word. We also see growth in grace and knowledge when we go through troubles and trials (James 1:2-4). These experiences and trials help us gain a new appreciation and a deeper understanding of God. We also see growth in grace and knowledge through our fellowship with God and one another. When you regularly worship both public and privately, you are expressing your devotion and acknowledgment of who God is and the importance He plays in your life. We also have the body of Christ with its various talents that are meant to build or grow each other when we are together (1 Cor. 12).

How do you know you are growing in grace and knowledge? I believe you can see an increase in four different areas. This first is love. We know that our God is love and when we understand and are thankful for who He is, our love for Him and others is expressed. 1 Thess. 3:12 teaches that we are to not only love but increase in our love for all people. We also should see an increase in our faith (2 Thess. 1:3). Knowing who Jesus is and what he has and will do for you increases your trust and devotion to Him. Increasing in knowledge should be evidence of your growth (Col. 1:10). This seems

obvious, but it is worth pointing out that in order to increase in knowledge we must not only read our bible, but study our bible. The fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) should be increasing in your life if you are growing in grace and knowledge as well. Jesus tells us we will be known by our fruit (Matt. 7:20). So the question is do you see increases in these four areas of love, faith, knowledge, and fruit of the Spirit in your life?

Growth is always seen in life. It sometimes comes with pain, but it is always good. If you do not see growth in grace and knowledge I would suggest you are not heeding the warning Peter has given us and are putting yourself in danger. If sin is stunting your growth, then confess. If it is desire, then pray. There is freedom and power in understanding who God is and who he has created us to be. It is only through this knowledge that we are truly able to work out our salvation by growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.