

Lesson 197

TEXT 2 Peter 1:1-11; 3:17,18

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES 1 Samuel 2:26; 3:1-21

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain the guidelines that God's Word presents to bring about spiritual development. They will recognize that to be a strong Christian, spiritual growth is necessary.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. — 2 Peter 3:18

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. — 1 Peter 2:1,2

**ANSWER
TITLE:**

Grow As a Christian

**SEARCH
TITLE:**

Growth

REFERENCE INFORMATION

In studying the life of Peter, it is possible to see the evidences of spiritual growth which led to his place of eminence among the followers of Christ. It was with prophetic insight that Jesus remarked, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas." *Cephas* and

Petros, both mean "rock." The key to Peter's second Epistle is the word *know* or *knowledge*. Spiritual knowledge and growth are closely related and necessary to the Christian who would "neither be barren nor unfruitful."

YOUR OPENER

Growth

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:1-11; 3:17,18

KEY VERSE: Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. — 1 Peter 2:1,2

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RESPONSES

1. In the first verse of our text, Peter addresses his remarks to “them that have obtained like precious faith.” As your class mentions this, continue the discussion with the knowledge that “without faith it is impossible to please him” (Hebrews 11:6). Bring out that faith is needed before a person can be born again. Thus, spiritual growth begins with faith.

2. The two things mentioned are *grace* (the unmerited favor of God) and *peace* (one of the evidences of being born again). In discussion, develop the thought that we do not deserve forgiveness for our sins, but because of God’s love He extends grace and mercy. Continue by referring to Romans 5:1, showing we have peace after we are justified (born again). This gives us the foundation on which we can begin to grow.

3. Our faith must be focused on Jesus Christ and His power. Discuss the students’ responses of ways this can be done: prayer, church attendance, the study of God’s Word, etc. Emphasize that learning to know Christ through the study of His Word is very important, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Direct the discussion to the fact that as we read the Word we recognize other spiritual needs in our lives: sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost, divine healing, etc. As we exercise faith to attain these, spiritual growth takes place in our lives.

Spiritual growth is possible only by faith in the divine power of God. The precious promises help us toward our goal of being partakers of His divine nature and being a part of the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Diligently using our faith in those promises in every action and decision of life will add growth in the virtues mentioned as God multiplies grace and peace. Growth, victory, and an abundant entrance into eternal life will be the results. What rewards for our effort!

1. In our text the Apostle Peter writes concerning “growing in grace.” From what starting point does spiritual growth begin?

2. What two things mentioned in verse 2 of our text are evident in the heart of one who is born again? How do you think these contribute to our spiritual growth? See Romans 5:1.

3. To grow spiritually, where must we keep our faith focused? What are some ways this can be done? See Hebrews 12:1,2.

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. According to our text, what assistance does God give to help us grow spiritually?

5. List the seven increments of Christian graces that we are to add to our faith, and give a spiritual definition of each.

6. What will be the results of adding these to our lives?

7. If a Christian does not add these graces to his life, what will be the spiritual result?

8. Write a goal that you have for your spiritual growth. One reference that could be used is Ephesians 4:13-15.

4. Verse 4 brings out that the precious promises of the Word of God were given that we might be partakers of the divine nature. Peter was assuring Christians that by believing the promises of God and meeting the requirements of those promises, they would grow spiritually. Using a circle response (refer to page 34 of the Teacher's Handbook), ask each student to specify one of God's precious promises. Zero in on how these promises help us grow, bringing out that most of them offer encouragement or a motivation for continuing to serve God and to do our best for Him.

5. VIRTUE — courage to conform to a standard of right: moral excellence
KNOWLEDGE — the intelligence to know Christ and His Word
TEMPERANCE — moderation, wanting to please God
PATIENCE — long-suffering, waiting by faith for God's promise
GODLINESS — holiness, pursuing His divine nature
BROTHERLY KINDNESS — showing love to others by our actions
CHARITY — divine love perfected through His power
Discuss the definitions as given by your class. Endeavor to help them realize that they must apply these to their personal lives if they hope to grow spiritually.

6. From verse 8 we understand we will be fruit-bearing, and verse 10 assures us that if we add these to our lives we shall never fall. Continue the discussion with the thought that we must be doers of the Word and not hearers only. *Adding* implies "action taken, a conscious effort expended." The fullness of these graces will not be gained all at once, for this will require repeated exertion. Ask your students to draw a parallel between this and the continued efforts expended to strengthen a particular physical muscle.

7. The result will be spiritual blindness and backsliding. Discuss with your class how neglecting the pursuit of these will cause spiritual disaster. Continue the discussion, focusing on God's mercy. If one does backslide or lose the love of God from his heart and life, there is a way to return to God. This is through repentance.

8. Suggest the development of a plan as to how each one could measure his spiritual growth. One thought might be to set a goal which could be reached within the duration of this quarter. Each goal should be something personal, not necessarily one to be shared with the entire group. Summarize the lesson and objective by bringing out that, no doubt, we all want to be a part of the Body of Christ. We need to grow spiritually as individuals and, in so doing, help to bring about a growth to the whole body of believers.

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YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How do we gain the knowledge of God and Jesus that will multiply our grace and peace?

What do you think is meant by "giving all diligence"?

How would you define the following: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity?

How do these qualities contribute to Christian growth?

Compare growing spiritually with the growth of a tree. All the parts must develop properly to prepare it to meet obstacles. Strength in the trunk and deep roots to withstand wind, deep roots to derive necessary moisture in dry times, bark to resist insects and disease, are all very necessary.

Did you ever feel unhappy about something someone did to you? What does Matthew 6:12,14,15 teach us about forgiveness?

How does seeing the need for forgiveness and being able to forgive tie in with the subject of our lesson—spiritual growth?

What will happen if one does not grow spiritually?

What are some of the things that help us grow spiritually?

How do daily prayer and Bible reading relate to our growth as children of God?

In our ANSWER story, Trisha, in telling her mother what Tony did, added, "I'll never _____." Why was it the wrong thing to say?

What did Tony offer his sister because he had broken her doll?

THINGS TO DO

With your students' help, list on a blackboard the things that contribute to spiritual growth (Bible reading and study, prayer, petition, praise, church and Sunday school

attendance, Christian associates, etc.). Everything we "devour" either helps us grow or is unhealthy for us. We need a balanced "diet" of the right food to keep us spiritually strong.

Bring some plants to class, both diseased and healthy ones. Parallel the plants' needs for proper nutrition to the Christian's need for proper spiritual nutrition.

Show your class some pictures of several kinds of food, including desserts and snacks. Have the students choose what they would like to eat for a meal. Is it all nutritious? healthful? Discuss what "foods" Christians need for maintaining good spiritual health.

Answers for ANSWER

Add These and Grow!

God wants you to gain strength in your Christian life. Below are some things that, if added to your life, will help you grow into the kind of person God can use. There are eight different types of paths below. Each one contains a word of something you need. Start with the bold letter and follow through the line to find the word. Write the words on the lines provided.

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|------------|
| Faith |
| Virtue |
| Knowledge |
| Temperance |
| Patience |
| Godliness |
| Brotherly |
| Kindness |
| Charity |