

GROWING IN GRACE
"The Obstacle of Spiritual Growth"
2 Peter 3:18

INTRODUCTION

1. GRACE @ work:

- a) It is by Grace we are SAVED.
- b) It is the same Grace that releases Holy Spirit power so that He can LIVE through us.
- c) AND it is the goal of this Spiritual Growth to produce HOLINESS in the believers life.

2. **1 Peter 1:14-16**

3. That means living in conformity with the Person of Christ and the Truth of Scripture.

4. Jesus referred to this flow of God's Grace and Power when He stood up in Jerusalem one day @ The feast of Tabernacles and said:

- a) **John 7:37-39**

5. Vs 38

- a) *"Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

6. Vs 39

- a) This promise is to EVERYONE who believes in HIM.

7. **HOWEVER** - There is an obstacle of Hindrance to this flow of GRACE that will hinder Spiritual Growth.

- a) What is that Hindrance? **SIN**

8. **WE HAVE THREE FORMIDABLE FOES WAGING WAR AGAINST US.**

- a) **FIRST** - The World (an Evil System)
 - 1) **1 John 5:19**
- b) **SECOND** - The Flesh (our old Desires)
 - 1) **Romans 7:14-15**
- c) **THIRD** - The Devil (an Evil Person)
 - 1) **Revelation 12:9**

9. **BUT HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS!!!**

- a) We are not alone, because Jesus has OVERCOME the WORLD.
 - 1) **John 16:33**
 - 2) **1 John 4:4**
- b) Jesus has OVERCOME the FLESH (Evil Desires)

1) *Romans 7:25*

c) Jesus has OVERCOME the devil and stripped him of his power (an Evil person)

1) *Hebrews 2:14*

I. SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD

A. A LOSS OF FELLOWSHIP

1. *Romans 5:1*

2. The loss of Fellowship is the issue for Christians.

a) Why because our relationship with God was eternally settled @ Salvation.

b) *Romans 5:19*

3. Justification in the New Testament is a legal term that means to be declared righteous.

4. When we come to Christ for the forgiveness of sin, God places our sin on Christ's account, AND credits Christ's righteousness to our account.

a) This allows God to render a legal decision, declaring us **RIGHTEOUS** because we are in Christ.

b) *2 Corinthians 5:21*

1) This is the WONDROUS EXCHANGE

2) This is the EXCHANGE of our SIN for Christ's Righteousness by which we are made FIT to ENTER HEAVEN.

5. If you have never put your faith and trust in Christ for Salvation, *you have already been declared guilty in the courtroom of God.*

B. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD MUST BE NURTURED

1. *1 John 3:9*

2. This has to do with sin that contaminates the life of a believer.

3. **QUESTION:** How many of us here today struggle with sin?

4. Listen Up: The day is coming when Jesus will deliver us not only from sin's power, but from its very PRESENCE.

5. **UNTIL THEN** we must deal with it!!!

a) However, we have a **POWERFUL ALLY** - God's **GRACE!!!**

6. **Simple definition of Grace:** *Is God's inexhaustible supply of goodness whereby He does for you what you could never do for yourself.*

7. **VERY, VERY IMPORTANT:** As **GRACE** flows to us and **THROUGH** us, it stimulates the **GROWTH** of our **NEW NATURE**.

8. **1 John 3:9**

a) *"for God's seed abides in him"*

9. **THAT SEED CANNOT SIN!!!**

a) It is impossible for anything that comes from God to be contaminated by sin in any way!!

1) Our **NEW NATURE** is without flaw and cannot sin.

b) **BUT WE STILL STRUGGLE** with sin because our **NEW NATURE** is living in the **OLD HOUSE** of our sin contaminated flesh.

10. **Roman's 6:6**

11. Our New Nature exists in the **OLD FLESH**, and they are **DIAMETRICALLY** opposed to each other.

a) **Galatians 5:17**

II. WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SIN TO GOD

1. **QUESTION:** Do you feel like sin might have the upper hand in your **BATTLE?**

A. **GOD HATES SIN**

1. **1 John 1:5**

a) *"God is light"*

1) Light stands for absolute Holiness and Purity.

2. **ALWAYS REMEMBER** - Darkness and Evil cannot exist in perfect light.

3. **FACT - SIN REPULSES GOD**

a) **Exodus 19:21-24**

1) God has place **"NO TRESPASSING"** signs around His Holiness.

4. **KNOW THIS:** NO SIN can exist in God's light (presence).

a) We have to realize that our sin; even as believers; creates a barrier between us and a **HOLY GOD**.

5. **1 John 1:5**

a) "In Him is no darkness @ all."

B. WE ADJUST TO DARKNESS

1. Stepping from light into a darkness.
 - a) Your eyes need some time to adjust.
 - b) AND before you know it, you can function and get around.
2. Here's the big problem - we adjust to sin, GOD DOES NOT.
3. God and sin are not compatible.
 - a) AND sin cuts off fellowship with God.
 - b) When fellowship is cut off, there is no growth.
4. **SPIRITUAL GROWTH MUST HAVE LIGHT**
 - a) God's Grace is experienced in the light.

C. SIN IS A CONTRADICTION TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1. **1 John 1:6**
 - a) "If we say that we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness"
 - b) "we lie and do not the truth"
2. **PLEASE LISTEN UP:** "If you Practice sin and fail to deal with it - God will not show up in your life.
3. **VS 7**
 - a) Now we are talking about "*fellowship with one another*"

D. WE MUST WALK IN THE LIGHT

1. Vs 7c
2. Vs 8
3. The darkness in us is most fully exposed when we come into the **PURE LIGHT OF GOD'S HOLY PRESENCE.**

III. THE NEED FOR CONFESSION

1. WE HAVE 2 CHOICES:
 - a) Cover Up

b) Clean Up

2. 1 John 1:9

3. Cf. Vs 7

a) "*cleanses us from all sin*"

1) "*cleanses us*" - means "and keeps on cleaning"

A. CONFESSION IS AGREEING WITH GOD

1. 1 John 1:9

a) "*confess*" - means to agree or say the same thing!!!

2. 1 John 1:9

a) "*sins*" - plural

3. 1 John 1:9

a) "*faithful*" - means it's a guarantee

B. KEEP CONFESSIONS UP TO DATE

1. 1 John 1:9

a) "*and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*"