

LIVING AS PILGRIMS

Growing as Christians

TEXT: 1 Peter 2:1-12

INTRODUCTION: Peter was once an unschooled fisherman. When He came to Christ, he didn't just start on the ground floor. He started in the basement. By the time he writes this letter he is an apostle, a respected member of the original twelve. He was known as a fervent preacher of the gospel and a faithful, mature follower of Christ and a leader of the saints.

But Peter still remembered what it was like to be a babe in Christ. So guided by the Holy Spirit, he writes to his fellow believers whom he considers sojourners, temporary residents of this world and says, "Here is how you can grow as a Christian." Obviously, these words will have great application in the life of a new believer, but they are beneficial for those of us who have been saved a good while as well.

- This is true first because a Christian always can and should grow more as long as we are camping out in this world.
- Secondly, we who have grown some in the Lord ourselves should be helping other new babes in Christ to grow in their Christian life as well.

1 Peter 2:1–12 1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

4 Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

7 Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,

"The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"

8 and *"A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense."*

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

I. GROW THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD.

1 Peter 2:1–3 1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

After you were saved, you knew there were sins in your life that needed to be laid aside like malice, deceitfulness, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking, which would include bad language and such verbal sins as gossip and slander.

But there is more to growing as a Christian than just quitting the most obvious of sins. You are like a newborn baby. You are in fact, a babe in Christ. Now you need to learn and grow. This you can do by bringing the Word of God into your soul as a baby brings milk into her body for nourishment and health.

If you have really tasted the grace and graciousness of the Lord by being genuinely saved, you will desire this pure milk of the Word of God.

A. Why does The Word of God cause us to grow?

1. Because it is God's Word, not man's word.

2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

2. Because it is a perfect word.

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

3. Because it will help you to know God.

Not as the world thinks of Him.

As He really is.

- **Father**
- **Son**
- **Holy Spirit**

4. Because it will teach you the right and best way to live your life.

- a. **Personal life**
- b. **Family life**
- c. **Relationships**
- d. **Work**
- e. **Play**
- f. **Business**
- g. **Government**
- h. **Purpose**

II. BE A LIVING STONE IN GOD'S HOUSE.

1 Peter 2:4–10 4 Coming to Him as *to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

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A. Notice that Peter himself identifies Christ as the Rock, the Cornerstone upon which the church is built.

B. But every saved person also is to be a part of Christ's church.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1. God takes believers and uses them to build a spiritual house.

The church is nothing without its cornerstone, but the church is to be more than just a cornerstone; it is a whole building.

2. The members of the church also make up a holy priesthood, of which Christ is the High Priest.

a. As priests, we are to offer spiritual sacrifices.

- 1) The sacrifice of praise
- 2) The sacrifice of service
- 3) The sacrifice of witness

And do it in a way acceptable to God through Christ.

- 1) Our praise should please Christ, not ourselves.
- 2) Our service should be what He desires, not just what we want to do.
- 3) Our witness should be for His glory, not for our glory.

III. LIVE HONORABLY SO AS TO SILENCE A CRITICAL WORLD.

1 Peter 2:11–12 11 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

CONCLUSION: There are three parts to making disciples – growing believers:

1. God's part
2. Church's part
 - Evangelize the lost
 - Provide discipleship opportunities
3. New believer's part
 - Desire the pure milk of the Word
 - Become a part of the spiritual house – the church
 - Live the Life of Christ you are taught