

“Go Deep...Grow”

2 Peter 3:15-18

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The last verse of scripture read was---“You must grow in the grace of and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Grow---Go Deep. How do we grow? How do we go deep? How do we Go Deep and Grow?

Do you remember the little capsules you put in the water and after waiting a while emerges an animal **(image)**? Those were so fun to watch. You wonder what they were going to be when they got done growing. Why some are even called Magic Grow Capsules. **(image)** Wow, I wish I could have a magic spiritual grow capsule.

I couldn't find a spiritual grow capsule---I did find a Gos-Pill though. But also I found something for those lonely hearts out there. **(image)**. “Grow a Boyfriend---He's always polite, he will never argue back, he will always agree with you, he never snores, your friends will love him.” And get this he expands to 600% of original size. Wow grows 600% of original size.

Now when we think of Grow---we think of measurements and numbers. Now I often refer to myself being vertically challenged. And to be honest...I'm okay with that because I can't do a single thing to make me taller....well I could walk on stilts....but I would break a bone...or wear platform shoes....but I'm not going there!

90 miles from my hometown of Centralia, Illinois is Alton, Illinois. In the Guinness Book of World Record it is recorded that the tallest man that ever lived in the world was born there. His name was Robert Pershing Wadlow **(image)**. He weighed 490 pounds and his height was 8 feet 11.1 inches. On his first birthday he was 3'5", At the age of 5 he was taller than his own mother at 5'7." His clothing was 3 times the normal amount of cloth. He has custom made shoes **(image)** -----size 37.

His growth was at an extraordinary rate. Sarah said that even if perhaps a puff of wind would have blown Southeast 90 miles down to Centralia perhaps I'd be a few inches taller. Now I know I will never be 8 feet 11.1 inches tall. I am going to have to settle for my current height. And by settle I do mean settle...I use to tell people I was 5'6" and 1/4. Now however, I'm down to 5'5." I'm a little down. I'm going the wrong way.

So I can't do anything and grow a foot taller, however, I can do something about how I grow with in the Lord. Unlike me and my height, I don't want to shrink but grow....maybe like the Grow a Boyfriend...to spiritually grow 600%

Our vision at PHUMC is ALL AGES! ALL IN! Our Mission is to GATHER God's people for worship. GO serve the community and the world. (see information in bulletin about our Response to Hurricane Harvey and also information in the bulletin about our Mission of the Month).

But also our Mission is to not just Gather and Go, but also to GROW. To Grow disciples of Jesus Christ. How do we do that? We grow as we Go Deep. As we Go Deep in His word we grow.

Scripture today was from 2 Peter. The disciple/apostle Peter wrote this letter to warn about false teachers as well as to encourage us to grow in our faith and knowledge of Jesus.

1 and 2 Peter are known as general epistles because they were written not to a specific church, but to the church at large. We are a church at large, and a large church so that means he was writing to us!

They are called an epistles, you know what an epistle is...a wife of an apostle---no an epistle simply means a letter. So Peter writes this letter to stimulate Christian growth.

Now the last few verses of Peters letter/epistle was read to you, but let's look at the first few verses of his letter. You are invited to open your Bibles, use your electronic devices and the scripture will also be on the screen.

2 Peter 1:2 New Living Translation (NLT)

² May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

As you GROW in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. But hold it---how do we grow in our knowledge of God and in our knowledge of Jesus. We cannot drop you in a bowl of water and watch you grow 600%. I can't stand and strain and say "ready or not, here I Grow." Growth doesn't happen that way.

³ By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.

God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. Ta-Da=His Word. We have receive this by coming to know Him and if we know Him, if He has give us everything, then we need to use what He has given us to grow.

⁵ In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

Well as it said it is to supplement our faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, supplemented with knowledge and self-control, and self control with patient endurance and godliness. That godliness has brotherly affection and that brother affection leads us to have love for everyone. Loving God! Loving All!

And not only that---⁸ **The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Who doesn't want to be more productive and useful?

⁹ **But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.**

Short sighted---seeing the now, but not the future. As a church we should not be short-sighted---we need to look ahead.

Many times myself as well as committees look at numbers. We look seats in the pew and there is some validity, credence and measurability and accountability in this. We can learn from statistics and numbers and trends.

However---I have to confess and remind myself of that it's not always about seats in the pews. Oh sure, when our new service begins on 11-05 at 11-05, I would love to know that we are at capacity at the then 8:05 and 9:30 service. Wow each service at seating capacity of 1700! Woo-hoo!!!!

But then you know a full sanctuary doesn't mean anything if you are just taking up space as a number. Our goal is more than numbers...it is making disciples of Jesus Christ. We can have great attendance and few disciples. A disciple is one who grows. I'd rather have disciples in the making than a full sanctuary with attendees just putting in their time.

So somebody may ask---"How can I grow?" Glad you asked. You can grow as you Go Deep! There are many opportunities for to you go deep and grow deep. **(Image)**

Small groups, Sunday small groups, Bible Studies, youth small group, family relationships, parenting home groups, special need ministries, young adult Bible Studies, Men's Ministries, Women Ministries, Breast Cancer Support Group, Grief Support, prayer shawl group, widows fellowship, sports groups (bowling, basketball, softball)

In these groups relationships are made, established, and grow.

At the end of the service in the lobby look for people with a whole list of these groups I've just mentioned with more information, place, and time of meeting, and descriptions. You can also find them at the Welcome Center and the Multi-Purpose Room.

Now these last few verses of 2nd Peter reminds us that Paul the apostle has written ways to grow in his letters to the churches. Peter says some of Paul's comments are hard to understand. Peter says

some twist scripture to basically say what they want it to say. The end of verse 16 of chapter 3 says “And this will result in their destruction.”

He then challenges us in verse 17 to be on guard so we don’t get carried away by these errors. He doesn’t want us to lose our secure footing.

One way to be on guard is to be in a small group/Bible Study. Pick up one of inclusive handouts today.

2 Peter 3:18 (NLT) ¹⁸ Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.

Rather you---Might want to think about growing----
Rather you---ought to consider growing---
Rather you---MUST grow.

Beloved you MUST grow to be the Christ followers and disciples we need to be to be the transforming agents for Jesus in this world.

We MUST grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Just as growing older is not an option if we want to live....to grow in the faith---study and groups is not an option if we are to be fully alive in Jesus Christ.

All glory to Him, both now and forever! Amen.