

**Series: "GROW!!!" Part 4: "GROWING MEANS BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS."**

**(Introduction)** We're in a series of messages we've called "GROW!!!" Things all around us as are growing, from spring through summer. BUT WHAT ABOUT US AS CHRISTIANS? ARE WE GROWING IN OUR FAITH??? ARE WE GROWING CLOSER TO GOD AND BECOMING MORE AND MORE LIKE JESUS?

Series Theme Scripture - **1 Peter 2:2-3 ESV** - Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, **that by it you may grow up to salvation**—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. Christians should **be like babies desiring the spiritual milk of God's Word...so we can Spiritually GROW.** **God does not want us to exist as spiritual babies in our faith...He wants us to grow up in our faith...to grow up in our salvation.**

Today being "**Mother's Day**", let's unpack further our theme of "**GROW**" by considering this: **Good mothers desire for their children to grow.** Mothers would not want their children **to remain babies and change their diapers for life!** Mothers want to see their **children fully grow up.** Mothers work hard to help their children mature in many ways...**physically, educationally, socially** and **HOPEFULLY SPIRITUALLY!** Good mothers will do all they can to assure their children are **well cared for, well fed, well educated, socially developed and a Godly mother should also greatly desire their children to grow spiritually.** You **read** to your children and **help them learn to read.** You **cook, wipe butts, wash clothes, give baths, dress children, tie shoe laces, teach the ABCs, etc.** It has well been said, "**A mother's work is never done.**" **BUT ARE YOU TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT JESUS? ARE YOU TEACHING THEM ABOUT GOD? DO YOU READ THE BIBLE WITH THEM? What are your parenting goals? Is your goal for your children to become sports heroes? Is your goal for your children to become millionaires? Or is your goal to help your children BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS???**

**The purpose of this series is for us to understand God desires us to GROW spiritually and also discover ways we can GROW!** Beginning next week, **we will deal with practical tips and habits** we should practice in our lives in order to grow spiritually. But today our "**GROW-GOAL**" is this: "**GROWING SPIRITUALLY MEANS BECOMING MORE AND MORE LIKE JESUS!**" This should be an important "**Grow-Goal**" of mothers and fathers...**to see their children come to faith in Christ and then grow more and more to be like Jesus!** This should be an important "**Grow-Goal**" for the church, **to see people become more and more like Jesus!** But this should also be a very important "**Grow-Goal**" for us as individuals...**for all of us to become more and more like Jesus!**

As we consider how "**growing means becoming more like Jesus,**" let's consider how **each of us need to grow more like Jesus.** **On this day where we honor mothers, also consider how mothers, and fathers, should help their children grow more like Jesus.** **That should be your goal...to raise children who are becoming more and more like Christ!** This also should be the goal of every believer...**to help others grow to become more and more like Jesus!** Consider these **truths** about becoming more like Jesus...

## **1. YOU MUST KNOW JESUS BEFORE YOU CAN GROW MORE LIKE JESUS.**

➤ **John 17:3 ESV** - And **this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

We have dedicated the past two messages focusing upon what it means to trust Christ as your Savior. I will not go over that content today. You can find it online in our sermon files. **But, we must realize before we can grow more like Jesus, we must know Jesus first!** **Jesus in His High Priestly prayer in John 17, prayed this -** **And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.** "**eternal life**" – perpetual life. "**know**" – to know absolutely. "**only true God**" – sole or singular; true and truthful God. "**Jesus Christ**" – Jehovah is salvation / the Anointed One, Messiah. "**have sent**" – to set apart and send out on a mission. **Eternal Life is absolutely knowing God, through absolutely knowing Jesus!** **Jesus was set apart and sent on THE MISSION to die on the cross for the sins of mankind, so that through faith in Him we might KNOW GOD.**

Be sure **YOU KNOW JESUS!** Be sure **YOUR CHILDREN KNOW JESUS!** Be sure **OTHERS KNOW JESUS!** Before we can **GROW** more like Jesus...before others can **GROW** more like Jesus...**we and they must absolutely know Jesus!**

## **2. KNOWING JESUS MEANS A CHANGE TAKES PLACE IN YOUR LIFE.**

*When a person trusts in Jesus, a change takes place in their life to make them more like Jesus...*

➤ **2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV** - Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** When we are "**in Christ**" by faith, **we are made**

**into a new creation. The old...including who we used to be and how we used to act, should be considered as dead. The old, is under the blood of Jesus...paid for by Jesus. We are born again...with a new existence, a new focus, with new opportunities. God makes us NEW!**

➤ **Galatians 2:20 ESV** - I have been crucified with Christ. **It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.** And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. **As Christians, we are to have this same attitude and approach to life that Paul states here. Through faith in Christ, we died with Him...crucified with Him. Thus, we are to no longer live as who we used to be, with the same old actions and attitudes. Why? Remember you died with Christ! The life you now live, is Christ living through your life! The life we now live is to be a life lived by faith in Christ...who LOVED US...and GAVE HIMSELF FOR US! Since Jesus so loved us and so gave Himself for us, we should live changed lives for Him...empowered by His Spirit living in us. We should live faithful lives of LOVE toward Him and GIVE ourselves for Him, because He loved us and gave Himself for us!**

➤ **1 John 3:3 ESV** - And **everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.** Note the word "everyone." If you are someone who hopes in Jesus...who hopes in His return... you are to live a clean life for Him...**those who trust in Jesus are to live pure lives because He is pure!** The verse before this tells us "when He appears we shall be like Him." **But that doesn't mean we should not be like Him before He returns. Because of Jesus is coming back, and we do not know when, we have extra motivation to live pure lives for Him now!**

➤ **Ephesians 4:17-24 ESV** - 17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, **that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do,** in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 **But that is not the way you learned Christ!**— 21 assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 **to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,** 23 **and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,** 24 **and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.** Paul writes to the Ephesian church and begins by telling them what he is saying **is a testimony in the Lord...thus truth!** **Paul tells the Ephesians they must not continue to walk like others who do not know Christ. Paul says those who do not know Christ have futile minds, darkened understanding, are alienated from God due to their ignorance of Him. They have hard hearts and are living callous lives because they have given themselves up to practice sensuality and were greedy to practice every kind of impurity! The reason Paul details all this out is in order to contrast how a true follower of Christ should live a changed life! The way those who do not know Christ live IS NOT THE WAY BELIEVERS LEARNED CHRIST! (Assuming they really know Christ.) Because a person who knows Christ, should PUT OFF THE OLD SELF, that belonged to the life you lived before knowing Christ! That manner of life is corrupt and filled with deceitful desires. The believer in Christ is to PUT OFF THE OLD SELF, AND BE RENEWED IN THEIR MINDS through the Holy Spirit. The believer in Christ is to PUT OFF THE OLD SELF and PUT ON THE NEW SELF...CREATED AFTER THE LIKENESS OF GOD...WHICH IS IN TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS. Growing more like Jesus means a change takes place in your life!**

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### 3. GOD DESIRES FOR **EACH CHRISTIAN TO GROW UP TO MATURITY.**

Mothers don't want children to be babies forever. Neither does God want His children to be spiritually immature!

➤ **Ephesians 4:11-16 ESV** - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 **until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,** 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, **speaking the truth in love, we are to grow**

**up in every way into Him who is The Head, into Christ,** 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, **makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.** God provided people to equip believers to become spiritually mature. (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor teachers.) God did this because He desires for us all **to GROW as The Body of Christ. (A Body should grow!)** God desires for us to grow mature in our faith, **to be fully like Jesus! Jesus is the measure of our spiritual growth! Jesus is the stature we should strive to be** (not the stature of someone else in the world). God desires for us to grow mature in our faith **so we can be stable in our faith; not be affected by waves of false doctrine in the world! A sign of such maturity is LOVE...speaking the truth in Love and growing up in every way to be like Jesus! Jesus is THE HEAD and Christians are The Body, so the Body goes, does, etc...what the Head says! Jesus, The Head, desires the Body to grow together and build each other up in Love! Being Like Jesus Means Growing in Spiritual Maturity to become more like Jesus.**

- **1 Corinthians 11:1 ESV** - Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. **Wow! Paul says to imitate him, as he is an imitator of Christ! Can any of us dare say that? AND YET WE SHOULD HAVE THE GOAL OF SAYING THIS! As mothers, as parents, let us so imitate Christ we can confidently tell our children to imitate us! (They will imitate us you know!) Let's give them spiritually mature examples to follow! Let us give the world spiritually mature examples of Christ!**
- **Colossians 3:1 ESV** - If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.** Spiritually mature Christians, are to **SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE...WHERE CHRIST IS NOW...instead of the things of the world! What is the focus of your life...things that are above, or things that are of this world?**
- Here is God's Purpose for you - **Romans 8:29 ESV** - For those whom He foreknew He also predestined **to be conformed to the image of His Son,** in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. **God knew you before you were even conceived! God knew you in eternity past! God predetermines for believers to be CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON! "conformed" - to be jointly formed; similar; root words - to be associated with; a companion with / to be adjusted in shape or nature. God desires for each follower of Christ to be jointly formed together with Christ...to be similar to Christ...to be associated with as a companion to Christ! God desires to adjust believers in shape and nature, to be spiritually mature in Christ!**

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#### 4. WHAT DOES BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS LOOKS LIKE?

- **Becoming More Like Jesus means More of Him and Less of You!** **John 3:30 ESV** - He must increase, but I must decrease."
- **Becoming More Like Jesus means You Think Like Jesus!** **Philippians 2:5 ESV** - Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,... More about this in a moment.
- **Becoming More Like Jesus means You Love Like Jesus!** **John 15:12 ESV** - "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
  - **Ephesians 5:2 ESV** - And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
- **Becoming More Like Jesus means You Walk the Jesus Walk!** **1 John 2:6 ESV** - Whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.
- **Becoming More Like Jesus means You Serve Like Jesus!** **Philippians 2:5-9 ESV** - Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
  - **Matthew 20:25-28 ESV** - But Jesus called them to Him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. **But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.**" **Note: Serving others may cost you something...maybe even**

**suffering!** **1 John 3:16 ESV** - *By this we know love, that He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.*

**(Conclusion)** **Our "GROW-GOAL" today is understanding "Growing Means Becoming More Like Jesus."** **God desires for us to GROW more and more LIKE JESUS! Before you can GROW like Jesus, you must KNOW JESUS! Knowing Jesus means a change takes place in your life...many changes...Jesus did not save you to leave you the way you were! God desires for each and every Christian to GROW UP TO MATURITY! What does that look like? IT LOOKS LIKE THE LIFE OF JESUS! [Prayer]**