



While Jesus loves you right where you are, His love won't let you stay where you are. Those who KNOW Jesus are expected and empowered to GROW in Him, and GO to those who need to know Him. Today we discover what that looks like in real life.

KNOW. The **1st step** Growing Christ-like character is making sure you KNOW the One true God.

The Scriptures were given to us so that we could KNOW who God is and what God says.

The God of "The Good Book" wants you to KNOW Him!

"How can I know that I know Jesus?" Answer 2 questions:

1. What do you **believe** [about Jesus]? Do you follow the Jesus of Scripture or your "Build-a-bear" version?
2. How do you **behave**? If Jesus is King of your life, there should be some spiritual fruit in your life. Do you have a desire to walk in purity & share your faith?

* Biblical belief in Jesus is more than an intellectual ascent of knowing Jesus existed.

Biblical Belief = Total Trust

Sadly, much of 'Christian culture' within America has swallowed an unbiblical lie from the enemy that says, "Just believe in Jesus. You don't have to live holy. In fact, you CAN'T live holy, so why even try." That's the **opposite** of what the writers of the New Testament epistles/letters say.

Here are a couple of examples:

James/Jacob, the half-brother of Jesus taught that real faith/belief led to good works.

James 2:18 CSB But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and **I will show you faith by my works.**

Real **faith** or total trust LEADS to **works**, actions that show what you believe. People don't do good works to BE made right with God; they do good works because they ARE right with God.

Paul agrees.

Titus 1:16 CSB They claim to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.

It's one thing to **claim to know God**, but our **works** demonstrate whether we really do or not. Paul expects believers to live holy lives.

Romans 12:1 CSB Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God**; this is your true worship.

Get that? What we do with our bodies is to be **holy** and **pleasing** to God!

Here is **Simon Peter's take**, one of 3 closest of disciples of Jesus.

1 Peter 1:13-16 CSB ¹³ Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ **As obedient children**, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. ¹⁵ But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; ¹⁶ for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.**

One of the evidences to make sure we KNOW Jesus = **desire and pursuit to live HOLY lives.**

No desire nor pursuit of holy lives? Look at **John's heavy response** (one of the 3 closest disciples of Jesus)

1 John 2:3-6 CSB ³ **This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commands.** ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know him," and yet doesn't keep his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps his word, truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ **The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked.**

› **QUESTION** What is the evidence **how we know that we know Him?**

Answer: Obedience. Lack of obedience indicates lack of trust.

BIG TRUTH: Christians are empowered & expected to be growing in and going in Christ-like character.

We must first KNOW Jesus (turn from sins and putting total trust in what Jesus has done for us). Jesus finds us right where we are, but He doesn't leave us there. He loves us too much. Now it's time to **GROW** in Christ-like character.

GROW. The **2nd step** in Growing Christ-like character is making daily decisions to develop spiritual disciplines.

How in the world can we grow Christ-like character? Here's how.

2 Peter 1:3-7 CSB ³ His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. ⁵ For this very reason, **make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness**, goodness with **knowledge**, ⁶ knowledge with **self-control**, self-control with **endurance**, endurance with **godliness**, ⁷ godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**.

Each characteristic in this passage is perfectly demonstrated by Jesus Himself. Followers of Jesus are to **make every effort to supplement your faith**, to give our best to grow in these Christ-like characteristics.

Supplement your **faith** (trust) in Jesus with **goodness** [NET *excellence*, NAS *moral excellence*, ESV *virtue*]. We must convert what we believe into how we behave. And the behavior of the believer is to be moral excellence - PURITY.

Knowledge. God wants you to grow to know WHY you believe WHAT you believe. You must READ and LEARN from the Scriptures and from OTHERS. Ask your questions. Dig deeper. Become a student who grows in knowledge. Don't stay in spiritual infancy. Pursue knowledge of who God is and what God says!

Self-control & Endurance. These attributes are essential parts of growing to maturity. When we are tempted to sin or strike back when treated poorly, we step back and do what's right...over and over again. The more you respond with self-control, the more endurance is developed. Don't wallow in your past. Get up! Develop self-control and endurance in the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in you!

Godliness. *Michael Green* defines godliness as "*a very practical awareness of God in every aspect of life*".² Jesus lived practicing the Presence of God every minute of His life on earth. How might that impact your thoughts, attitudes, & actions this week?! Paul wrote Timothy, "*Train yourself in godliness*" (1 Tim 4:7).

🕒 **QUESTION:** *What are YOU doing to train yourself to be aware of God in every aspect of your life?*

Brotherly affection & love. Jesus treated those who obeyed God as family (Mark 3:35). Further, Jesus modeled the ultimate picture of sacrificial **love**, as the ultimate servant gave His life as a ransom for others (Mark 10:42-45).

² Michael Green, *Peter and Jude*, 70.

So what's the OUTCOME of developing these Christ-like characteristics?

2 Peter 1:8-9 CSB ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.

The person who grows in these Christ-like characteristics will be **useful** and **fruitful**. The person who refuses to pursue these Christ-like characteristics is **blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins**. Obviously, that is NOT acceptable in the life of those who claim Christ.

Christians are empowered & expected to be growing in & going in Christ-like character.

GO. The 3rd step in growing Christ-like character is taking Jesus to our Christ-less culture with our lives & lips.

Many claim Christ, but few obey Christ.

Why is that? There are at least 3 reasons:

1. **Some people don't want to be confronted with their sin.**
2. **Some people don't see the difference in Christians.** *If we're gonna make a difference, there's got to BE a difference.*
3. **Some Christians don't care enough to share.**

What if our loved ones were badly hurt or worse? What are we waiting for?

We must be prayerful & careful with the opportunities to share our faith in Jesus. Paul writes it this way.

Colossians 4:2-6 CSB ² Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, ⁴ so that I may make it known as I should. ⁵ **Act wisely toward outsiders,** making the most of the time. ⁶ **Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt,** so that you may know how you should answer each person.

Pray and stay alert for what? We must be prepared to act wisely and use **gracious and savory speech toward** those who don't know Jesus yet - **outsiders**.

FEET2FAITH

1. **KNOW who God is and what God says by staying in the Scriptures daily.** Take the 10-minute challenge & pray throughout the day.
2. **GROW by doing what God says and doing life with other believers.** In your discussion groups you have talked about what you have learned, how you have been challenged and encouraged. You have shared what you have read & prayed together.
👉 Write down the name of another believer that you WILL contact this week to talk purposely talk about spiritual growth.
3. **GO to your friends & family and show who Jesus is** (pray, serving & share why).

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Want to talk further? Please contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), or another follower of Jesus soon!

Reading Plan this Week: "The Good Book" - chapters 36-40 (Scriptures: Rom 8, 1 Cor 13, Gal 5, James 1, 1 Jn 3)

1. **After discussion, we will share Communion together.** Warning: If you are not yet a believer or you are not living in obedience, simply don't take the bread or juice. No one will ask why and no one will judge you for being honest with yourself and God.