

Marks of a Disciple
Growth into Jesus
2 Peter 3:17-18

One thing is certain...making disciples is a whole lot more involved than making converts. It involves a moment of conversion from trusting yourself to trusting Jesus, but that's just the beginning of the process, NOT the end. What happens (or should happen) after that?

"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." **2 Peter 3:17-18**

I. Growth Explained – Vs. 17

Peter explains what the opposite of growth looks like.

- **Easily Deceived by Others**
- **Regularly Nervous and Fearful**
- **Tossed around by Various Ideologies**

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 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, 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. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 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." **Ephesians 4:11-16**

II. Growth Exhibited – Vs. 18

There are two key areas in which disciples of Jesus must experience growth: 1) Grace, and 2) Knowledge. Both are rooted in the person of Jesus.

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of **grace and truth.**"* **John 1:14**

Growing in grace and knowledge is essential.

- **Jesus Washes Peter's Feet (John 13):** When Jesus came to Peter, he refused to allow it. Once Jesus insisted, Peter then asked for a bath. Foolish mistakes...
- **Peter Rebukes Jesus (Matthew 16):** Feeling good after hearing a compliment, Peter pulls Jesus aside to rebuke him for scaring the other disciples. Foolish mistake...
- **Promising to Die with Jesus, Peter Denies Jesus (Matt 26 & Luke 22):** Peter defiantly declared he would never deny Jesus, yet just a few hours later, he was cursing & denying any relationship with Jesus of Nazareth. Foolish mistakes...

Yet...

- **Peter Outruns John to the Tomb (John 20):** Despite the fact he'd failed Jesus miserably, he needed clarity! **Beautiful Passion!**
- **Peter Jumps in the Sea to Swim to Jesus (John 21):** Peter couldn't wait for the boat to dock before coming to him! **Beautiful Passion!**
- **Church History Tells Us:** Peter watched his wife crucified as he shouted to her, *"Remember the Lord!"* Peter himself begged to be crucified upside down, counting himself unworthy to die in the same manner as Jesus Christ. **Beautiful Passion!**

"Love without truth is sentimentality, it supports and affirms us but keeps us in denial about our flaws. Truth without love is harshness; it gives us information but in such a way that we cannot really hear it. God's saving love in Christ, however, is marked by both radical truthfulness about who we are and yet also radical, unconditional commitment to us. The merciful commitment strengthens us to see the truth about ourselves and repent. The conviction and repentance moves us to cling to and rest in God's mercy and grace." **Tim Keller**

Embracing a life-long journey of growth is extremely hard! But the good news is that it's not all up to you! In fact, you already have what you need...and that has been given to you.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence." **2 Peter 1:3**

If you have not yet received, by faith, the amazing gift of Salvation that brings the Holy Spirit of God to live inside you, then this is your first step of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *IVP Bible Background Commentary* – Craig Keener (1993)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A. T. Robertson (1933)
- *Complete Word Study Dictionary of the NT* – Spiros Zodhiates (1993)

