

"How to Grow Up and Not Give Up"

Acts 2:42

I. Introduction

- A. The most basic truth: to grow spiritually, you have to be spiritually fed
- B. The Word of God does the work of God by the Spirit of God as He works in the hearts of the people of God
- C. The Bible that once played a central role in our culture has been relegated to the coffee table or the bookshelf
 1. Nine out of ten American homes has a Bible, but a very small percentage actually spend time reading it, and even fewer still apply it
 2. One third of Americans don't know who gave the Sermon on the Mount; a large number thought it was Billy Graham
 3. The most widely known Bible verse is "God helps those who help themselves"—which isn't even a Bible verse; it's a Benjamin Franklin quote
- D. At the Pentecost, 3,000 new believers found themselves in a hostile environment: a Jewish population who did not believe

II. To Grow, You Must Learn

- A. Doctrine (teaching or instruction): *didaché*, truth imparted so that we can grow
 1. Doctrine has been minimalized by believers
 - a. "I'm not into doctrine—I'm into Jesus"
 - b. But we wouldn't know anything about Jesus if it weren't for doctrine
 2. We are given a manual of truth—the Bible—for our lives, but it has been disregarded by many in the church at large
 3. There is an unmistakable absence of truth in the pulpit
 - a. Theology has been discarded in favor of *me-ology* or *be-ology*
 - b. "There is a crisis of biblical knowledge in the American church" —Dr. Michael Vlach
 - c. Hosea 4:6
 - d. 2 Peter 3:18
 - e. Proverbs 19:2
 4. *Doctrine* is a word you should embrace and never be ashamed of
 - a. "One might say that the Holy Spirit opened a school in Jerusalem that day. The schoolteachers were the apostles, whom Jesus had appointed and trained, and there were three thousand pupils in the kindergarten!" —John Stott
 - b. Deuteronomy 5:1
 - c. Psalm 119:34
- B. This verse is a list of spiritual priorities; the highest priority is doctrine
- C. Are you devoted to doctrine?
- D. As you get to know your Bible, you will get to know your God
 1. J.I. Packer's book *Knowing God* is systematic theology

2. 2 Peter 2:2

III. To Learn, You Must Hear

- A. Listening is the key to learning; Matthew 11:15
- B. The apostles' doctrine—"by the prophet Joel" (see Acts 2:14-21)
 - 1. Apostolic teaching was expository; it was rooted in the power of the text rather than the personality of the teacher
 - 2. The apostles taught from the Scriptures and what it meant to their audience
 - a. Ephesians 4:12
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:18
 - c. Romans 10:14
 - d. Romans 10:17
 - e. "Rarely do we hear these days that a church is distinguished primarily by its preaching" —Al Mohler

IV. To Hear, You Must Commit

- A. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine"
- B. Matthew 4:4
- C. Continue in truth, continue in the Word, continue hearing and growing so that you can:
 - 1. Know God better; correct theology through immersion in the Word
 - 2. Know yourself better; correct anthropology, which is found in the Bible
 - 3. Live life better
 - a. All the *big* questions are answered in the Bible: *Who am I?*, *What is the purpose of life?*, etc.
 - b. Psalm 119:105
 - 4. Pray better
 - a. Romans 8:26
 - b. As you read the Bible, you start finding out what God wants, and when you find out what God wants, you start praying according to what God wants
 - c. There are ample examples in Scripture of how others have prayed in the past; this can lead to scriptural praying
 - 5. Help others better
 - a. You will be better to other people
 - b. The Bible wasn't written just so that you could help yourself
 - 6. Discern better; the Bible will keep you from error

V. Conclusion: tips to help your spiritual growth

- A. Get a Bible—whichever translation best illuminates Scripture for you—and read it consistently
- B. Make time in your schedule to study Scripture
- C. Get help; there are multitudes of study helps available, such as devotionals, study plans, etc.
- D. Tell someone; sharing what you've learned reinforces it

Figures referenced: Benjamin Franklin, Billy Graham, Al Mohler, J.I. Packer, John Stott, Michael Vlach

Cross references: Deuteronomy 5:1; Psalm 119:34, 105; Proverbs 19:2; Hosea 4:6; Matthew 4:4; 11:15; John 17:17; Acts 2:14-21, 23-25; Romans 8:26; 10:14, 17; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Ephesians 4:12; 2 Peter 2:2; 3:18

Greek words: didaché

Topic: spiritual growth

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