

“God Gives The Increase!”
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Introduction:

1. What Makes A Flower Grow?
 - We Enjoy The Colors & The Fragrant Scents Of Spring Flowers!
 - Which, Hopefully, Will Come In Just A Few More Months!
 - But What Makes Those Flowers Grow?
 - There Are Botanists That Spend Their Lives:
 - Planting / Watering / Fertilizing / Cultivating Flowers!
 - But What Makes Those Flowers Grow?
 - There Are Biologists That Can Give You Minute Details On:
 - The Parts Of Each Flower’s Seed / Each Stage Of Development!
 - But What Makes Those Flowers Grow?
 - There Is Something Present In Every Seed: Life!
 - What Makes A Flower Grow? A Mystery Called Life, That Only God Can Give! Still A Mystery!
2. We Have Learned From 1 Thessalonians That Paul Was Very Concerned About The **Growth** Of The Christians In The Church He Recently Founded & Had To Leave Very Suddenly!
 - So He Sent Timothy To Build Them Up In Their Faith & To Bring Back To Paul A Report About Their Growth!
 - And He Did! And The Report Came Back That, In Spite Of Paul’s Absence, They Had Grown In Faith, In Love & In Hope!
 - What Made These Christians Grow?
 - Find Out From 3:9-13!
1. To Another Church, Paul Explained This Same Process Of Growth:
 - 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 - “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; **but God gave the increase.** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; **but God that giveth the increase!**”
 - What Makes A Christian Grow? God! “God Gives The Increase!”
 - Any Growth We Have Can Only Be Brought About By God!
 - Because Of This, How Should You Respond?
 - Seen In Psalm 37:5 - “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass!”
 - When You Trust & Rely Upon God For Your Growth, There Are Some Things You Will **Commit** To Him!
1. **Commit Your Praise Unto The Lord!**
 - The Report Of Their Growth & Faith Gave Paul A Joyful & A Thankful Heart, That Was Directed To The Lord!
 - 3:9 - “For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God!”
 - What Kind Of Joy Do We Have?
 - When We Hear How The Lord Is Working In Someone Else’s Life?
 - Or When We See How The Lord Is Working In Our Own Lives?
 - Any Growth We Hear About Or See Can Only Come Directly From The Lord! So:
 - Your Experience Of Joy Can Never Be Too Great!
 - “All The Joy!”
 - It Ought To Be Something We Never Forget! A Miracle!
 - Your Extent Of Joy Can Never Be Too Great!
 - “Wherewith We Joy For Your Sakes Before God!”
 - The Joy Was Sincere! (“I’ve Got The Joy!”)
 - Deep Down In The Heart, “Before God!”
 - The Joy Was Shown!

- Nothing Could Suppress This Joy!
- Can Others See Your Joy At The Work Of God?
- Your Expression Of Joy Can Never Be Too Great!
 - “For What Thanks Can We Render To God?”
 - The Direction Of Paul’s Praise Was To The Source Of Their Growth – God Alone!
 - Paul Felt Like His Thanksgiving Would Never Be Enough To Repay The Lord For What He Had Done!
- When You Realize That “God Gives The Increase” – You Will Commit Your Praise To Him!
 - He Alone Deserves All The Credit!

2. ***Commit Your Prayer Unto The Lord!***

- 3:10 - “Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?”
 - A Growing Christian Is A Praying Christian!
 - And When You Realize That Your Growth Comes From God, You Will:
- Pray To The Lord From A Sincere Heart!
 - Through Constant Prayer!
 - “Night And Day!” - Again & Again!
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - “Pray Without Ceasing!”
 - Through Fervent Prayer!
 - “Praying Exceedingly!”
 - “Pray” vs. “Pray Hard” vs. “Pray Harder”
 - All Our Prayers Ought To Be “Hard” & Fervent!
 - When You Believe Your Growth Depends Solely On The Lord, You Will Pray This Way!
- Pray To The Lord For A Servants Heart!
 - You Can’t Do Anything For The Lord Apart From Him!
 - John 15:5 - “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing!”
 - But When You Pray, He Will Provide:
 - Opportunities To Encourage & Be Encouraged!
 - “That We Might See Your Face!”
 - Opportunities To Equip & Be Equipped!
 - “Might Perfect That Which Is Lacking In Your Faith!”
- When You Remember That “God Gives The Increase” – You Will Commit Your Prayer To Him!
 - Especially When You See Things That Are “Lacking” In Your Own Faith!

3. ***Commit Your Path Unto The Lord!***

- Beginning In Verse 11, We Find The Content Of Paul’s Constant & Fervent Prayer For The Thessalonians:
- 3:11 - “Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you!”
 - Paul Knew That His Desire & Will Must Always Submit To & Be Aligned With God’s Desire & Will – Because Only God Could “Direct” His Path! (Like An Eclipse)
 - This Verse Also Teaches The Equality Of God The Father & The Lord Jesus Christ – Both Have The Authority & Power To Direct Our Path!
 - So He Committed His Path To Them! Are You?
- Are You Submitting Yourself To God As Your Guide?
 - “God Himself And Our Father”
 - There Is A Special Relationship Between A Christian & God – He Is Your Heavenly Father!
 - His Care & Concern For You Is Greater Than Your Own!
 - When Jesus Taught About Anxiety & Worry, About Clothes / Food / Housing, He Said: “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things!” (Matthew 6:32)
 - He Will Guide You! Seek It! Submit To It!
- Are You Submitting To God As Your Governor?
 - “Our Lord Jesus Christ”
 - There Is A Supreme Ruler In A Christian’s Life – Jesus Christ Is Our ***Lord!***

- He Has The Right To Send You Wherever & Whenever He Wants!
- He Will Govern You! Seek It! Submit To It!
- And When You Commit Your Path To Him, God Will Give The Increase!
- Proverbs 3:5-6 - "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths!"

4. *Commit Your Progress Unto The Lord!*

- Paul Continued To Pray For Them & Knew That Only "God Gives The Increase" In Their Spiritual Growth!
- 3:12 - "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you!"
- Philippians 2:13 Says It Another Way: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure!"
- Only Through The Lord, Can You:
- Grow To The Greatest Extent Possible!
 - "Increase And Abound" - To Fill Up & Then To Overflow!
 - Is This The Kind Of Growth You Desire!
 - Commit It To The Lord!
- Grow In The Greatest Expression Possible!
 - 1 Corinthians 13:13 - "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity!"
 - "In Love One Toward Another, And Toward All Men!"
 - That Will Affect Your Church! Your Witness!
- Grow For The Greatest Example Possible!
 - "Even As We Do Toward You!"
 - Paul Saw God "Increasing" His Own Growth Also, To The Point He Became An Example For Others!
 - God Can Make You Into An Example For Others!
- Since It Is God That Gives The Increase, You Must Commit Your Progress Unto Him!
- And Then You Can Be The Example God Wants You To Be!

5. *Commit Your Purpose Unto The Lord!*

- God Also Has A Purpose For Your Growth!
 - Like The Purpose For Growing A Flower: Beauty / Fragrance / Show Love!
 - But God's Purpose May Be Different Than Your Own Purpose!
- 3:13 - "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints!"
 - This Is God's Purpose For You!
 - If The Purpose Of Your Life Is Different, Then You Need To Commit Your Purpose Unto The Lord!
 - God's Purpose Is A High Standard!
- A Standard Of Firmness!
 - To "Stablish Your Hearts!"
 - His Purpose Is For You To Have A Firm Faith In Him, Able To Weather Any Storm!
- A Standard Of Faultlessness!
 - "Unblameable!"
 - His Purpose Is For You To Have A Clear Conscience Before God & Men! To Be Separated From The World!
- A Standard Of Faithfulness!
 - "In Holiness!"
 - His Purpose Is For You To Become Holy, Even As He Is Holy! To Be Set Apart For The Lord!
 - Does Your Purpose Even Compare?
 - God's Purpose Is So That When The Lord Jesus Christ Comes, You Will Be As Much Like Him As Possible! Is This Taking Place?
- Since It Is God That Gives The Increase, Commit The Purpose Of Your Life Unto The Lord!

Conclusion:

1. In A Parable Found In Mark 4:25-29, Christ Teaches That The Way The Kingdom Of God Grows Is Much Like The Way A Flower Grows!
 - “And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come!”
 - We May Not Know How A Flower Grows! It Remains A Mystery!
 - But We Do Know How A Christian Grows! Doesn't Have To Be A Mystery!
 - You Can Only Grow As A Christian Through The Lord And What He Has Provided!
2. So: “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass!” (Psalm 37:5)
 - God Will Give The Increase!

* On Christ The Solid Rock I Stand!

***Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.com***