



HOMESWORD

August 1999

...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15b

Growing

God's design is that things that have life will grow, all they need is proper nourishment and care and they will grow and produce fruit. In order for man to grow he also needs nourishment. One type of nourishment that man requires in order to grow is food and water. Another type of nourishment that man requires in order to grow is God's Word.

Mark 4:14-20

The sower soweth the word.

And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

The good ground (in contrast to the way side, the stony ground, or among thorns) is where the Word is being heard and received to the point of bringing forth fruit. It is God's Word that gives nourishment to man, thereby causing growth and producing fruit. The sower's role is to sow the Word but it is the Word that gives the nourishment.

The reason people don't grow or stop growing is because somehow they have stopped receiving the nourishment of God's Word. Either the Word did not take root or other things choked it, but something stopped the flow of God's Word. We need the constant nourishment of God's Word if we are to continue to grow.

God tells us in His Word to consider plants and how they grow.

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Matthew 6:28

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

How do plants grow? They are designed to take in nourishment and grow. If nourishment is given to them they don't refuse it; they just take it in. And their growth is not a result of hard work and labor, they just grow. They were designed to take in nourishment and they were designed to grow.

Man is also designed to take in nourishment and grow. But man has the choice of whether or not to take in nourishment. God gave man freedom of will to choose. So man's growth is dependent upon him choosing to be nourished. If man does not eat or drink he will not be nourished and his growth will be impaired. If man does not hear and receive God's Word he will not be nourished and his growth will be impaired.

I Peter 2:2

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Anyone who has been around a newborn baby knows how it desires milk or nourishment. It has not yet learned to refuse nourishment. It's whole life revolves around getting nourishment. That is how we should be

towards God's Word. We need to be at the place in our lives that we just have got to have God's Word; that we do not refuse the nourishment of God's Word but that we desire the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow thereby.

One way the devil tricks us and gets us away from the nourishment of God's Word is that he gets us to desire the sower rather than what is being sown. There are many vehicles whereby we hear and receive God's Word but it is not the vehicle that gives us nourishment but rather it is God's Word that gives us nourishment.

I Corinthians 3:6-7

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.

In the King James Bible where it says "gave the increase" or "giveth the increase", it is the Greek word, *auxano*, which can be translated as, "cause to grow". It is God that causes us to grow when we receive the nourishment of His Word.

When it comes to growing, he that plants and he that waters are not anything. Anyone who has ever taken care of a

plant or has had a garden knows that they do not make the plants grow. A sower plants the plants and makes sure the plants have the nourishment they need but the sower has nothing to do with the actual growth of the plants.

In Mark we read that the sower sows the Word in the hearts of men. And when the heart of a man hears and receives that Word it produces fruit. The sower does not cause the growth in man; it is the Word of God that causes the growth in man. It does not matter who teaches the Word as long as the Word gets taught. It is the Word of God that is the nourishment we need so that we may grow thereby.

Ido not grow because of what person I follow, or what class I take, or what tape I listen to. But I do grow if that person is teaching God's Word and I hear it and receive it. I do grow if a class is teaching God's Word and I hear it and receive it. I do grow if a tape is teaching God's Word and I hear it and receive it.

Ido not grow even if I just hear the Word taught; I must also receive the Word. If I listen to a person, class or tape that is teaching God's Word and I do not receive the Word that is taught, I do not get the nourishment of God's Word. I may feel good because I did the activity but the activity is not the nourishment I need to grow, it is only

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the means to get the nourishment. God's Word being taught does not cause us to grow. Hearing and receiving God's Word is what causes us to grow.

Acts 6:7a

And the word of God increased (*auxano*);

Acts 12:24

But the word of God grew (*auxano*) and multiplied.

Acts 19:20

So mightily grew (*auxano*) the word of God and prevailed.

of will to make up his own mind if he is going to get that nourishment. When we go someplace where God's Word is being taught we need to go with the desire to hear and receive that Word. When we sit through a class where God's Word is being taught we need to sit through it with the desire to hear and receive God's Word. When we listen to a teaching tape we need to listen to it with the desire to hear and receive God's Word. Then that Word will be sown on good ground where it will bring forth fruit.

The Word of God grew. It was the Word of God that caused growth in the first century and it is the Word of God that will cause growth today – not man's opinions and ideas, not man's advice – but the Word of God.

It is the Word of God that we need for nourishment so that we may grow thereby. Bible meetings are great and sitting through Bible classes is important and having a great Bible tape library is wonderful, but let's be sure we are hearing and receiving God's Word. That is going to take some thinking about what we are hearing. That is going to take the Word of God getting rooted in our hearts and lives.

If we want to grow we need the nourishment of God's Word. And man has the freedom

In God's Love,
Ray
