
Words of Truth

Abound More And More

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Back in February, March, April, and May we had a series of lessons on spiritual growth from the context of II Peter 1:3-11. That series of lessons was titled “For If Ye Do These Things Ye Shall Never Fall.” There were twelve lessons in that series of sermons. How much have you grown since then? If you were to go back through and consider faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; could you say that you have grown in such things? Would the Lord say that you have grown in such things?

The bad thing about a good series of lessons is that they can be forgotten. In fact, in the context in which Peter wrote those things he also said: *“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance... This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour”* (II Peter 1:12-13; 3:1-2). Do you remember the lessons we learned in studying through II Peter 1:3-11? Many of you take notes. Look them over again. If you don’t have notes, the outlines are online (<http://www.wordsoftruth.net/lessonsforchristians.html>) as are the recordings of those lessons (<http://www.wordsoftruth.net/audio2018.html>).

Each of us have a certain level of natural ability (Matthew 25:14-30 and I Peter 4:11). The Lord expects us to live up to what we are capable of doing (Luke 12:41-48). When you examine yourself, as you ought to (II Corinthians 13:5), can you HONESTLY say you are growing as much as you are capable of? If you’re not growing as you should, you need to go backwards and pick up where you fell off before you can go forward (Hebrews 5:12-6:2, I Peter 2:1-2, and Revelation 2:1-7). On the other hand, if you look at this past year and see that you have grown spiritually, now is NOT the time to stop. If you are growing you have to keep it up. The finish line is the end of this life, not some ceiling wherein you might think you have grown enough. Growth is about taking where you are and constantly adding to it.

Keep Building

The Lord expects each of us to grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18). We are supposed to increase in proper knowledge (Colossians 1:10). An increase in knowledge must also include

an increase in scriptural application of that knowledge (James 1:21-27; 2:14-26). We have to maintain a desire, a will, to keep growing. The inspired Apostle Paul wrote this to the saints in Thessalonica: *“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, **so ye would abound more and more**. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus... But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, **that ye increase more and more**”* (I Thessalonians 4:1-2; 4:9-10).

The congregation in Thessalonica evidently applied what they were taught in the first epistle Paul wrote to them. For, in his second epistle, he wrote this: *“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that **your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth**”* (II Thessalonians 1:3). We need to be like the congregation in Thessalonica. We need to keep growing like they did. The term translated “exceedingly” means: “to increase above ordinary degree: — grow exceedingly. To increase beyond measure, to grow exceedingly” (Strong’s #5232). Their mentality was obviously to take what was expected and go above that.

Beyond Expectations

Though they had grown and were dependable in certain things, Paul did not tell them that they reached some ceiling of growth. In his second epistle he wrote this to them: *“And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both **do and will do** the things which we command you”* (II Thessalonians 3:4). From this we can learn that exceeding expectations includes that others can have confidence in us that we have and WILL DO what is commanded of the Lord. You can’t excel in something you are not doing to begin with. Secondly, using this congregation as an example, for us to grow beyond expectations is going to mean that we are going to have to allow the word of God to work effectually in us (I Thessalonians 2:13).

For each of us, we have to examine whether or not we are learning enough to grow enough. If you are wise and just you will increase in learning (Proverbs 1:5; 9:9; 16:21-23). Yet, learning doesn’t always equal understanding (II Timothy 3:7) or proper application (Zechariah 7:8-12). If you want to exceed what could be expected you have to start with what is expected. Are you doing that?

Conclusion

We have to understand that the Lord expects continual fruit in our lives (John 15:1-8). We are aware of the church in Smyrna, that was facing persecution, being told to be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:8-11). We need to have an equal awareness of the words “continue” (John 8:31-32 and Colossians 1:23) and “abound” (Philippians 1:9 and II Peter 1:8).