

The 16th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, September 8, 2024

“The 12 Keys to Spiritual Maturity ~ Key #1: Desire”

2 Peter 3:1-18

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18)

Peter’s dying wish was to see Christians _____!

Peter had first hand experience of the _____ of spiritual immaturity. And so, almost 40 years later, as a spiritually mature apostle, Peter was eager to see that others be spared the pain—not to mention, the guilt and shame—that spiritual _____ had brought him.

“Crave spiritual milk so that you might grow into the fullness of your salvation.” (1 Peter 2:2)

“... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

“Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:4)

“Let us...become mature.” (Hebrews 6:1)

In some places in the NT, Christian maturity is presented as a _____; in others, as a _____ to be achieved. There’s a sense in which we’ve already achieved something very significant in terms of maturity in our _____ union with Jesus Christ. We’re not what we once were! However, there’s also a _____ between what we are “now” and what we have yet to “become.”

In 2 Peter, the call to maturity is an _____—a command that assumes we haven’t yet attained the _____ of what we ought, and what one day we will be.

We’re not meant to be _____ in our faith, but rather we’re called over and over again to grow, mature, and bear fruit. Christian maturity is important because growth is evidence of _____.

Lack of growth is a serious condition that robs Christians of the _____

and privileges of the Christian life, and can ultimately lead to _____, false profession, and apostasy.

The primary goal of spiritual growth and maturity is to be transformed into nothing less than the _____ of Jesus, Himself.

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.” (Romans 8:29)

“And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Spiritual maturity is anything but _____. In fact, it can be quite _____ because we’re complex.

2 MEASUREMENTS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

• _____.
Grace is the _____ word of the NT which basically refers to God’s _____ favour. It’s God showing us favour when we deserve disfavour or _____.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...” (Ephesians 2:8)

We need to _____ here: with the grace that brings salvation to our sin-ruined souls. It’s grace that brings new _____ and spiritual _____.

“...born again, not of corruptible things such as silver and gold...but by the precious blood of Christ.” (1 Peter 1:18)

This is the grace of _____—what we experience when we repent and are made _____ with God.

However, there’s another kind of grace—a _____ grace—the grace of sanctification that _____ with us day by day, through our many failures and setbacks.

“Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?” (2 Peter 3:11)

Since we have experienced grace, and grace is ultimately going to bring us home, we should live our lives _____.

Peter's concern in his final words for Christians to grow is without _____. No matter what our _____, it's imperative that we grow.

Peter can say this—that ugly—because he had a firm understanding of our _____ as God's "chosen people." And he wants us to see that all of human history is the outworking of God's _____ plan and purpose; and that running through the course of our lives is God's amazing _____.

• _____.

We can't divide head knowledge and heart knowledge in such a way that one is deemed more _____ than the other. We need both and the two go together. As one truly leads to the other. We can't grow in love with someone until we come to _____ that person.

What Peter is urging us to do here is to get to know Christ more by _____ His person and work.

Grace always comes _____ knowledge, and apart from grace, any knowledge we have of Christ will become _____.

Are you growing in your experience of God's sustaining grace?

Are you growing in your knowledge of Christ?

Do you see yourself becoming more and more like Him everyday?

4 CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

#1. Spiritual maturity is best measured under _____.

Unlike height or weight, spiritual growth is best measured in _____ response to various _____ and difficulties.

Sanctification isn't an _____ process, nor is it for the faint of heart.

#2. Growth in spiritual maturity isn't necessarily _____.

Like Peter, our progress in spiritual growth is often not a _____ line, but a _____. And sometimes even one step _____ and two steps back.

#3. Spiritual maturity isn't _____.

We often approach issues of sanctification with _____. We tend to think of it as something to be achieved "by _____ alone" without any

doing on our part. However, that is to _____ the nature of sanctification.

Of course, there's an element of sanctification that renders us holy, to which we contribute _____. However, there's also an aspect of sanctification that requires _____ on our part. We're not passive _____ or spectators when it comes to our spiritual growth and maturity, nor does sanctification come by _____.

"Be diligent..." (2 Peter 3:14) "Be on your guard..." (2 Peter 3:17)

In other words, we're to make every effort to ensure that sanctification—spiritual growth—is a _____, and that we're willing to submit to, an _____ with the Holy Spirit in this great work within us.

Just because we're engaged in some kind of Christian ministry—as an ordained or lay person—doesn't mean that we're _____ growing in grace. It's often in the fires of testing that our maturity, or lack of it, will be _____.

#4. Spiritual maturity isn't an entirely _____ issue.

Discipleship in the New Testament is a _____ thing, and the imperative 'grow,' that Peter uses here is _____.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God." (Colossians 3:16)

Spiritual disciplines that lead to growth and maturity take place corporately. We need each other to be held _____ and to grow.

Are you growing?" is a good way to start a _____ with a fellow believer. No one, who is at all concerned about spiritual things, should consider that question an _____, but rather a lead-in to a fruitful time of inner reflection and _____.

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Is desire a key that you have on your spiritual key chain?

Do you desire to grow in your faith, to mature, and to be more like Jesus?

If so, what are you willing to do about it?