

Guides for Growth

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning again and welcome to faith. Glad to be with those of us who are here together this morning. Also, those of you who are watching on Facebook Live or listening to this recording sometime in the future, we're glad that you've chosen to take the time out of your busy schedule to open up God's Word with us this morning.

We are going to be in the book of 1 Peter today as we're continuing this short series on growth in the Christian life. This morning we're going to be looking at guides for growth. We expect growth in the physical realm. We also expect growth in the spiritual realm as well. And maturity is always the goal.

The same true in the spiritual realm. In the Christian life, there is birth. And then we expect there to be growth and ultimately into maturity.

So, how do we get there? How do we get from being a brand new believer in Jesus Christ, a brand new member of the body of Christ, and to grow into maturity?

[1 : 14] How do we see that happen? Well, let's take a look this morning, beginning in 1 Peter 2 and verses 1 and 2.

The Bible says, And also we go to verse 21 of chapter number 2, where Peter says, Let's pray together.

For to this cause you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. Let's pray together.

Father, this morning we ask that you would teach us, that you would open up your Word to us, and through your Holy Spirit, teach us what you want us to understand and learn and to practice today in our lives.

We thank you, Father, for this. For it's in Jesus' name that we pray. So first, what I see here in these verses is, the first guide for growth is, that we must put away childish things.

[2 : 36] Put away those things in our life that are childish, maybe that we were accustomed to when we were a child, when we were a baby or a toddler.

And there comes a time as we grow into maturity that we put away those things, we lay them aside, and they are no longer part of our lives, they are part of our past.

But as we grow into maturity, we put away these things. Verse 1 says, Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking.

And so as Peter is talking to these believers, he's saying, as we grow in Christ, there are certain things that we need to rid ourselves of.

The word there, lay aside, that Peter used, is to take off and to put away. This could be translated literally, Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, and all deceit, hypocrisy, evil, and all evil speaking.

[3 : 43] Now we know there are certain cherished relics of childhood. For a little girl, it might be that favorite doll. For that little boy, it might be that favorite blanket, or that favorite bear, or that wooden sword that they carry with them all day long.

But as we grow older, we put away those things, and we not only no longer need them, but there are certain things that would really be odd if we carried them on into adulthood.

Into adulthood, excuse me? Into adulthood. Where was my mind this morning? Those are the things we need to put away. Put away. You see my red face this morning.

As we grow into adulthood, we put those things away. What if you go into a business meeting, and you see the CEO coming into the business meeting, and as Linus and Peanuts, carrying his security blanket?

That would not be appropriate. We would wonder about that business person. And so there are things that as we grow into adulthood, we will put away.

[4 : 47] But as we see Peter talking here, there are things that are evil. There are things that maybe were part of our life before Christ that are terrible, wrong, wicked, that once we grow as a believer in Christ, we are laying those things aside.

There are certain things, as an immature Christian, that we may expect, that we may say, you know, that we can understand, but as you're growing in Christ, you need to put that away. You need to repent of those things. And there are certain things that we need to put on. So as we have certain cherished relics of childhood that we put away, it's natural for us to put those things away as we grow into adulthood, as we grow into maturity.

So let's take a look at how the Apostle Paul fleshed this out. We see that in 1 Corinthians 13, in verse number 11. Paul said, when I was a child.

Remember, see, we're carrying on this same concept here. But Paul is taking this concept that we saw in 1 Peter, and he's opening it up a little bit.

[6 : 05] He says, when I was a child, I spoke as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child. But when I became a man, he says, I put away childish things.

So according to Paul, some childish things are envy, strife, and divisions. And Peter agrees. Peter understands this.

In this letter, Peter reminded his readers that they had experienced a new birth. We see that in chapter number 1. And verse number 23, Peter says, you are new believers.

You are a new creation. You have experienced a new birth. And this produces an internal change. And consequently, it requires changes in our life that as the believer, we are to produce in our lives. And so repentance is called for. Peter says that we must put away, rid ourselves of, and he gives a list of five things that as growing Christians, we are to be putting away in our life.

[7 : 15] And these list of five sins are sins of attitude and speech, which if harbored, will drive wedges between believers.

So let's take a look back at 1 Peter 2, verse number 1. Therefore, laying aside, and here is where Peter begins this list, laying aside all malice or bitterness.

Literally, the term there means wicked will, meaning we have an evil desire or we are just, we have malice, the term malice aforethought, meaning we do something because we despise someone or because we want to hurt them.

You know, there are some things that we do that hurt people, but we had no intent to hurt them. Maybe it's just an offhanded remark and it hurts someone, but that was not our motive.

But yet, if we have malice aforethought, which is a legal term, meaning we had ill will, we had a wicked will towards someone and we said something and we did something with the intent to hurt them, there is a difference.

[8 : 32] So Paul says, or Peter says, let's put that away. Let's not treat each other with malice or with bitterness. Let's put that away.

Wrong feelings toward one another. He goes on. And the second thing we have, by the way, if you're following along in your notes this morning, we must put away childish things.

First of all is all malice. Secondly, all deceit we see in verse number one. Your translation might use the term guile, but it means deceit or to deceive someone.

And it is deliberate dishonesty. In certain things that we do, we may not tell the complete truth. It may not be that we want to lie to someone.

You know, you've heard the term little white lies. And it may mean that it may be that we withhold part of the truth with an intent to deceive someone so that they do not believe or that they don't see the full intent or the full picture.

[9 : 45] And so we must put that away. We must put deceit or guile away. And that would be an ulterior motive. That would be something that we do. And we do it maybe for selfish purposes.

So put that away. Put guile, put deceit away. Deliberate dishonesty. The third thing that Peter says to put away is hypocrisy.

Putting hypocrisy away. That would be pretended piety or when we pretend to love someone or we pretend to be something or someone that we're not.

And our actions belie our motives or our intent. So we are not real in our actions. Or we say one thing and we do another.

Peter says put away hypocrisy. What we do in private ought to be the same things we do in public. And we should not be afraid of people finding those things out.

[10 : 49] So it's hypocrisy that we put away that pretended piety, pretended love. And then fourthly, envy. He says let's put away, let's lay aside, let's rid ourselves of envy.

And that could be, that could be, that could mean resentful discontent. Resentful discontent. Discontent. We're discontent with what we have.

We wish we had more. And in turn, what it does, it causes us to be resentful toward those who have what we wish we had. And so it's, it's one thing to wish you had something.

It's quite another to resent the person who has that thing and say, I wish you ill will because I wish I had that and I wish you didn't have it either.

And so that is envy. When someone has something we desire and we harbor that ill will toward them or we harbor that resentment toward them.

[11 : 55] And so it could be defined as a resentful discontent, envy. And then fifthly, put away, rid yourselves of all evil speaking.

Now, that could mean a number of things. It could mean this, this vowel language that we use. It could mean a number of different things.

But very often, we don't stop to think that evil speaking can include gossip. Evil speaking can include slander, saying something about someone else.

And we see that. We are in this election cycle right now. And do we not see that on the air, hear that on the airway, see it on TV? And it's all, is this person slinging slander or slinging, as we call it, slinging mud on their opponent?

Sometimes we see that in the Christian realm. We resent someone and we say something about them to change a person's attitude toward them.

[13 : 07] And sometimes, it may be someone that we don't agree with. It might be a TV preacher that we don't agree with. And without really looking to see what they meant by what they said, we slander them and we say bad things about them that may or may not be true to keep people from following them.

And we're going to see in just a moment the problem with following people. And so he says, put away evil speaking, put away all slander, putting away all gossip, backbiting lies, all of these things. He said, you should put away. None of these things should have place or any place in those who are born again. Rather, it's obedience to the Word, obedience to the Word of God.

Believers are to make decisive breaks with the past. These may have been part of your life prior to Christ, prior to your faith in Jesus. And in some who are growing in maturity, we might find ourselves falling back into those old patterns of living.

And that's where Peter says, we are to repent. Here is what you were before. Now you've been born again. You have a new relationship with God. You are a new creature.

[14 : 25] You have a new relationship with Him. He says, you are born again now. So, in chapter 2, he says, because of that, that's why he says, therefore, in verse number 1, therefore, based upon your new life in Christ, let's rid ourselves of these old, these things that were part of our old nature.

Make a decisive break with the past. So, put away our childish things. Put away those things before we came to know Jesus as our Savior. So, that's guide for growth number 1.

Put away our childish things. Number 2, we must feed on the right things. So, how do we put away those childish, or what do we do after we put away those childish things?

They must be replaced. And so, now, we feed on the right things. Verse number 2, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word.

He says, that you may grow thereby, that you may grow in your Christian life. We need to be feeding on the right things for proper growth in our Christian lives.

[15 : 46] So, after we cast out the wrong desires and motives we saw in verse number 1, we then need to feed on wholesome spiritual food that produces growth.

Putting away those childish things, putting away malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, gossip, slander, backbiting, all of those things, we need to feed on that which produces growth.

So, the question is, what are we feeding on? What are we feeding? Our mind. What are we feeding our heart? What are we feeding our soul?

Because we are affected by what we take in. We are affected by what we feed on, and sometimes we feed on media, sometimes we feed on the latest news, propaganda that we see in the news.

You know, not all news is news. sometimes, sometimes, most of the time, I don't care who it is, there is going to be some type of spin placed upon the news based upon the worldview of the

person who wrote that article, or the editor, or even the company that is selling the news.

[17:09] So, we have to be careful. And as Nathan said earlier, we are to be like those Christians in Berea. We take whatever we hear, whatever we take in, we need to study the scriptures, study God's word, and see, does it line up with the word of God?

Is this true? Is this not true? Is it false? Is it partly true? We need to line everything up with the word of God.

But it's God's word that develops spiritual growth. As we see in verse 2, he says, as newborn babes, we are to desire the pure, unadulterated word of God.

That word pure here is deliberately contrasted by Peter with verse number 1. So he said in verse number 1 of chapter 2, he says, we lay aside all these things, all these wicked attitudes and practices and motivations, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking.

And then in verse number 2, he is contrasting that with that which is pure, with that which is unadulterated by evil motive. He says, we are to feed on the pure milk of the word.

[18:35] God's word does not deceive, neither should God's children. So we are to feed upon the word of God and we should approach the word of God with clean hearts and clean minds.

When we study God's word, how often do we before we begin to say, God, search me, try me, see if there be any wicked way in me as the psalmist prayed.

God, is there anything in my life that's evil? Is there anything in my life, is there any sin that I need to repent, or of which I need to repent? God, show me, so that we can come to his word with clean hearts and pure minds.

So when God's word says that we are to confess our sins because he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, that's what we do.

That's what happens when we ask God to show us and then when we repent and when we confess our sin, our hearts and our minds are purified by God through the washing of his word.

[19:42] So we approach the pure, unadulterated milk of the word of God, that's our sustenance, and we do it, or we should do it with clean hearts, clean minds, and as in verse 1, or in contrast with verse 1, it's with eager anticipation.

What's the analogy that Peter gives us in verse 2? How should we approach the word of God? So what's the analogy he uses?

That of a baby. A tiny baby, the moment that they're born, wants what?

They want to eat. We don't have to train them that you have to eat when you're hungry. No, they want to eat. And they will cry if they don't get their milk.

They'll cry if they don't get their stomachs full because they have a pain in their stomach. They cry. They want that pain filled. And the writer of 1 Peter says the same thing.

[20:53] He says, just like newborn babes, he says, we need to desire the word of God because there is a pain within our life that needs to be filled, and it's to be filled by God's word.

And you may be saying, well, what if I don't have that attitude towards God's word? What if I don't have that desire for God's word like a newborn baby desires milk? Well, it's something that can be produced in our life.

It's something that as we ask God to produce in our lives, he will, by his Holy Spirit, he will produce that hunger in our life. The more time we spend in God's word, the more he will produce that hunger within us.

It is just like acquiring a taste for a new food or acquiring a taste for a new hobby. There are certain things that maybe a person has never done before, and they say, well, I don't know.

Well, go ahead and try it. They try it, and they fall in love with it, and then they can't get enough of it. It consumes their time. It's a similar thing with God's word.

[22:09] We may think, well, you know what, I just don't know if I can study the Bible. It might be boring or hard work, or I just don't know that I can get anything out of it.

Well, try it. Do it. And pray that God would produce that hunger and desire within you. And before long, you will say, well, you know what, I didn't spend time in God's word yet today. I need this. I'm hungering for the word of God. He can produce it in our life. So let's cultivate a hunger for the Bible as a baby hungers for milk.

And also, do you remember last week where the believers were bickering and week before last, the believers were bickering over who they were going to follow or who they were following.

I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. Some said, well, I'm of Jesus. Well, the thing is, we shouldn't be following a person so much as we are to follow the right one.

[23 : 14] And we see that as our third guide for growth this morning. So we put away our childish things. We must in turn feed on the right things.

And then thirdly, we must follow the right one. We see that in verse 21 of chapter number two. He says, for to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us.

He says, he leaves for us a what? Come on, speak to me this morning. He leaves for us an example. So Jesus Christ is our example.

He is the one that we follow, that you should follow his steps. Here's the thing. Heroes are part of every childhood. Isn't that right?

Superman, Spider-Man, Batman, Batman, you know what? I mean, we have superheroes in childhood and, you know, the kids want the costumes and they want to go around the yard and acting like they're superhero.

[24 : 24] Well, most of childhood, most of our childhood superheroes are not real. Did that come as a surprise and a shock to you? No, they're not real.

And some of our childhood heroes or superheroes may be real, but the reality is they will always let us down in some way or another.

Why? Because they're human. And as human beings, we will always fall short of expectations and whether we mean to or not, there's always a possibility of letting someone down.

So, as children, we have superheroes, we idolize others. Just like the believers were idolizing in Corinth, were idolizing, some were idolizing Paul because Paul led them to Christ.

Others, maybe Apollos who came in later and was teaching them and they idolized Apollos and they said, I'm following Apollos and whatever Apollos says has to be gospel and, you know, Paul, you just left us and so, you know, we're following Apollos because he came up here and he taught us.

[25 : 44] Well, the reality is we need to be careful who we follow. A young Christian may idolize the person that led them to the Lord. They may idolize a certain musician or an evangelist.

So, our question is, whom do you follow? follow? We are called to follow whom? We're called to follow Christ, exactly.

Just as Peter tells us in verse number two, for to this you were called. Why? Because Christ also suffered for us and he left us an example.

So, therefore, we are to follow his steps. We are to follow Christ. He is to be our example. So, he is the one that we follow.

It's an interesting word that is used here that Peter uses for the word example. It's the Greek word hypogrammon and it's a combination of words.

[26 : 50] Hypo would mean under and grammon is a word that is where we write. Grammar, we take the word grammar from it. And so it's writing.

So, it's underwriting. That is the literal meaning of the word. Hypo is the opposite of hyper. Hyper is a lot. Hypo is not enough or under.

So, it's interesting the word that Peter chooses to use. For example, in kindergarten the teacher will write a letter.

Let's take the letter A for example. So, the teacher writes the letter A, or for you, backwards, the letter A, and then they said, okay, now, under that letter, I want you to write the letter A.

So, what does the child do? In effect, they copy the teacher's what? Example. And so, they, as best they can, try to copy the teacher's example.

[28 : 04] And the more they try, the more they learn, the better they are at being able to copy the example of the teacher. That's the word that Peter used.

Hypogrammon, underwriting. And so, Jesus gives us the master. Jesus is the master, and he gives us the master that we are to follow. And so, we take Jesus' life, we take his steps, and we come along and we imitate, or we attempt to imitate and copy his steps, the way he lived, his attitude. We're told to follow the attitude of Christ. The attitude of Christ was submission. He chose not to stay up in heaven and take in all the glory that was his, but rather he chose to empty himself and come to the earth, take upon himself human flesh.

And so, we're told to follow that example and to humble ourselves just as Jesus did. Have the mind of Christ, have the attitude of Christ.

So, he gives us the example, and we follow that example right under him just as a learner, copies that example of their teacher on the board.

[29 : 20] So, that's the concept we see here. We copy what we see our teacher do. So, in closing, as we write out the details of our life, let's use Jesus as the master.

So, our copy will be as close to the original as possible. How do we do that? We keep our eyes on Jesus. We keep our eyes on the master and we copy as we're following the master.

So, three questions. Are the relics of your spiritual infancy still hanging on? Ask ourselves those questions. Do I still have deceit?

Do I still treat others with deceit? Am I envious? Do I gossip? Do I slander? Are these things still hanging on in my life?

Or have I laid them aside? Have I rid myself of these things? Question two is, how is your devotional life? What are you feeding on? Are you feeding on the pure, unadulterated, milk of the word of God, desiring it as newborn babes, hunger for milk?

[30 : 36] And number three, let's get growing. Let's allow the word of God to grow us as we follow the master, as we copy our master, as we live our lives.

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for this morning. We thank you for your word that you have revealed to us through the Bible. We ask, Lord God, that you would help us to follow these guides for growth, that we lay aside these immature things in our lives, and as we do so, that we would replace them by feeding on the right things, and then choosing to follow the right one, our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We thank you for this day. We thank you for what you're going to do in our lives, and help us to make a difference in the life of someone this week. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.