

## **How can I know if I am growing as a Christian?**

As Christians, we are to grow. Remember when you were a child; how you used to measure yourself on a wall with a pencil mark each time to show how you were getting taller? All of those marks on the wall represented your growth in stature.

Well, in Christianity, you should have a growth chart as well. It should reveal that each year as a Christian you are growing up. As a matter of fact, not only do you grow individually, but the church grows corporately, Acts 5:24.

For example, when God planted trees in the earth, he intended for them to grow (Gen. 2:9). The growth of plants in the earth is a natural process and it requires no work on the part of the plants to grow (Matthew 6: 28). Your own growth as a child began from the moment of your conception. All of your growth from childhood to adulthood resulted from a process of simply keeping yourself alive. You ate, you slept, you rested, you drank, etc. and you grew. You really didn't have to work at it.

### **Now when things grow in the earth, they:**

1. Grow for a purpose, Psalm 104:14;
2. Must grow in the right medium, Job 8: 11;
3. Must grow without competition, Job 31:40.

### **Likewise, when Christians grow, they:**

1. Grow for a purpose, Ephesians 4:11-16 (this concerns your part in the church, the body of Christ);
2. Must grow in the right medium, 1 Peter 2: 2 (the milk of the word);
3. Must grow without competition, 1 John 2:15-16 (competition from the world).

### **Where these three conditions are met, you will grow spiritually. Your growth chart will measure your growth in at least four areas:**

1. Grace, 2 Peter 3:18. God's strength in your weakness. 2 Cor. 12: 9-10, grows with distresses, infirmities, necessities, reproaches and persecutions;
2. Knowledge, 2 Peter 3:18. Personal knowledge of and fellowship with Christ. Philippians 3:10, grows by crucifying the flesh;
3. Faith, 2 Thessalonians 1:3. Evidence of your belief in God's words. 1 Thessalonians 2:13, grows with trials and tests, 1 Peter 1:7;
4. Charity, 2 Thessalonians 1:3. God's supernatural love that makes everything we do worthwhile. 1 Cor. 13: 1-8, grows with rejection and ridicule from the world and from time spent in personal fellowship with Jesus.

These four areas of growth will build and strengthen in the presence of negative things. When these trials come, don't fret; they are what God uses to help you grow (like pruning a tree).

If you are not growing in these four areas, something is wrong. You are either not in the word (milk), not fulfilling your purpose (in fellowship in the body), too involved in the world (too much competition), or you are covering from the hard things that come your way which help your grace, knowledge, faith and charity grow.

