

Bible Study Topic: A Heart for Growth

Scripture: 2 Peter 3.18

Big Idea: The church's ministry is elevated when believers grow.

A Heart for Growth

What does **Ministry** mean? From the Biblical perspective, this term means to work; to service and has been used to describe the word or message. In Hebrew, we see the word *abodah*, which is translated to mean work, enforced labor (1 Chr. 25.1, 25.6). In Greek, we see words like *diakonia* (service; ministry), *logos* [word, message (Acts 8.21)], *diakoneo* [serve, minister to (2 Cor. 3.3)], *leitourgia* [service; ministry (Heb. 8.6)], *latreia* [service; worship (Heb. 9.6)].

When we speak of elevating our ministry, we strive to improve the work, service, message, and labor we give to God and mankind. One way we can accomplish this is by possessing a heart for growth.

Big Idea: The church's ministry is elevated when believers grow.

GROWING PEOPLE – SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Spiritual growth (2 Pet. 1.5-8) is when the church focuses on helping people develop a deeper connection with God, greater commitment, and maturation in Christ. Through the church's ministries, the believer's transformation into a better version of

themselves, becoming a disciple of Christ that develops more disciples, is penultimate.

Emotional growth (Gal. 5.22-23) occurs when the church works to ensure that an environment of love permeates its entire functionality, making it warm, loving, and inviting.

GROWING THE PLACE – PHYSICAL, VISUAL, AND CHURCH OPERATIONS

Physical growth (Prov. 31.8) is when the church increases its impact and influence within and outside its walls. The influence of the church expands into every sphere of humanity.

Visual growth (Hag. 1.2-4) occurs when the church enhances the campus's visual aesthetics. The church intentionally strives to be on the cutting edge of overall appearance and ensures that it is not outdated but continuously updated.

Operational growth (Eccl. 10.10) involves improving and evolving the church's overall operations and practices, investing in leadership development, effective resource management, and fostering and nurturing organizational continuity; excellence becomes the only way.

In our text, most scholars who ascribe this letter to Simon Peter address an unspecified audience who have received the faith. In

an effort to counter the claims and the lawless lifestyles of false teachers, Peter lifts the trustworthiness and power of God's promises so that these believers would not lose confidence in the prophetic Word of God.

He reminds them that God has given them everything they need to live a godly life through His divine power (**2 Pet. 1.3**). Peter warns them that these false teachers will secretly and seductively, with blasphemous words, attempt to sway them from the apostolic truth. To combat this threat to their faith, He begins this letter by telling them to grow (**2 Peter 1.2**) and now closes it by telling them to grow (**2 Peter 3.18**).

When the church has a heart for growth, it:

1. **Prioritizes** discipleship-making (**Matt. 28.19**)
2. **Encourages** members to live out their faith (**James 2.17**)
3. Nurtures personal **transformation** (**Rom. 12.2; 2 Cor. 5.17**)
4. Reaches **outside** its walls (**Mark 16.15**)
5. **Welcoming** culture (**Rom. 15.7; Gal. 3.28**)
6. Majors in innovation (**Mark 2.21-22**)
7. **Rooted** in Christ (**Col. 2.6-7**)
8. Operates within the **vision** (**Hab. 2.2**)
9. Promotes **unity** (**1 Cor. 1.10, 12.12-14; 2 Cor. 13.11; Prov. 6.16-19**)
10. Transparency (**Eph. 4.25**)
11. Prayer (**Luke 18.1**)

12. Worship and Bible study are essential components
(Psalm 95.6; 2 Tim. 2.15)

13. Authenticity in relationships (Prov. 12.22)

Peter, specifically in our text, points out to:

Grow in **grace** (Eph. 2.8-9; 2 Cor. 12.9). Grace is that unmerited divine assistance given to humans by God. It is the unearned, unconditional love and favor that God gives to those who belong to Him. Grace is the gift that God freely gives. Ultimately, within the community of believers, grace highlights the love and generosity of God. The church grows in that grace by understanding that they are undeserving recipients of His grace.

Grow in **knowledge** (Col. 1.9-10). The church and believers must grow in their knowledge of Jesus Christ. The church that focuses on growing in knowledge seeks to understand Christ's character and compassion. It strives to learn how Christ loved and lived so that it can love like He loved and live as He lived.

Knowledge growth occurs when:

1. You **pray** (James 1.5; Matt. 7.7)
2. Meditate on His **Word** (Ps. 119.11; Josh. 1.8)
3. Apply the **Word** to your life (2 Tim. 3.16-17)
4. Strengthen your **relationship** with Him (Phil. 3.8, 10)

Self-promotion must be erased

Listen to Peter as he urges this growth culture (**2 Peter 1.5-8, 10-11**)