



How The Saints Grow

By

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Teaching Notes are Bible studies we taught before GraceLife Ministries began publishing articles online in 1995. Some were presented as sermons, others as group studies.

Our hope is that these older studies will be a blessing to you in your life and ministry. Please use them in any way God leads you.

These teaching notes are from a series about **Church Growth** taught over a period of several months.

[These notes are from a study from 40 years ago.]

Outline For Growth

- A. Understanding of Growth: Defining Christian Growth
- B. Direction for Growth: Goals of Christian growth
- C. Training for Growth: What Christians Need to Grow
- D. Assembling for Growth: What the Assembly is For
- E. One-Anothering for Growth: How to Build Up Members of the Assembly
- F. Structuring for Growth: How the Assembly Should Be Managed
- G. Ministering for Growth: How the Assembly Should Impact Its Community

Part One: Defining Christian Growth

21 Greek words translated “grow, increase, add, spring, leap, come, arise, strengthen” in the New Testament in the context of natural or spiritual growth.

1. ἀναβαίνω (anabainó) – go up, arise, ascend, grow – Mark 4:7 (example)
2. αὐξάνω (auxanó) – increase, grow, enlarge – Ephesians 4:15; Acts 19:20; Colossians 1:10; 2:19; 1 Peter 2:2 (examples)
3. ὑπεραυξάνω (huperauxanó) – to increase above ordinary degree – 2 Thessalonians 1:3 (example)
4. συναυξάνομαι (sunauxanó) – to grow together – Matthew 13:30 (example)
5. αὕξησις (auxésis) – growth, increase – Ephesians 4:16 (example)
6. γίνομαι (ginomai) – generate, to come into being – Matthew 21:19 (example)

7. μηκύνω (mékunó) – to lengthen, enlarge, grow up – Mark 4:27 (example)
8. ἐνδυναμόω (endunamoó) – to empower, strengthen, increase – Acts 9:22; Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:1 (examples)
9. πλούσιος (plousios) – to become wealthy – Revelation 3:17 (example)
10. πλεονάζω (pleonazó) – increase, make or be more – 1 Thessalonians 3:12 (example)
11. περισσεύω (perisseuó) – to superabound, be in excess – 1 Thessalonians 4:10 (example)
12. προστίθημι (prostithémi) – add, give more, increase – Luke 17:5 (example)
13. προκόπτω (prokoptó) – to drive forward, to advance, to grow – Luke 2:52 (example)
14. φύω (phuó) – germinate, to produce, grow – Luke 8:6 (example)
15. συμφύω (sumphuó) – grow with – Luke 8:7 (example)

16. ἔρχομαι (erchomai) – grow worse (used with the word χείρων) – Mark 5:26 (example)
17. ἀνατέλλω (anatelló) – to arise, spring up – Hebrews 7:14
18. ἐξανατέλλω (exanatelló) – springing out of – Matthew 13:5 (example)
19. βλαστάνω (blastanó) – to sprout, spring up – Mark 4:27 (example)
20. ἄλλομαι (hallomai) – to leap, spring up – John 4:14 (example)
21. ἐπιχορηγέω (epichorégeó) – to furnish besides, to add to – 2 Peter 1:5 (example)

Some of the words used for spiritual growth include these verses:

- “We grow in Christ”
- “the Word grows”
- “We grow in knowledge”
- “the body grows”
- “We grow in salvation”
- “We grow in faith and love”
- “Paul grew more powerful”
- “We grow in love”
- “Our love should grow in superabundance”
- “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature”
- “We need to mature”

Part Two: Goals of Christian Growth

1. Ephesians 1:4 – to be holy and blameless .. ἅγιος (*hagios*), “separated to God, sacred, holy”
2. Ephesians 1:4 – to be holy and blameless .. ἄμωμος (*amomos*), “unblemished, free from fault, blameless”
3. Ephesians 1:11-12 – to be for God’s glory .. ἔπαινος (*epainos*), “praise, laudation, commendation”
4. Ephesians 1:11-12 – to be for God’s glory .. δόξα (*doxa*), “honor, worship, glory, renown”
5. Ephesians 1:17 – to know Christ better .. ἐπίγνωσις (*epignósis*), “full knowledge, perception, discernment”
6. Ephesians 1:18-19 – to experience His hope and power .. ἐλπίς (*elpis*), “confidence, trust, expectation”
7. Ephesians 1:18-19 – to experience His hope and power .. δύναμις (*dunamis*), “force, ability, mighty work”
8. Ephesians 2:10 – to do good works .. ἔργον (*ergon*) .. “deeds, labor, toil, tasks”

9. Ephesians 3:14-19 – to make a comfortable home for Christ and be filled with His love .. κατοικέω (*katoikeó*), “to dwell, to house permanently”
10. Ephesians 3:14-19 – to make a comfortable home for Christ and be filled with His love .. καταλαμβάνω (*katalambanó*), “to lay hold of, to take eagerly, to seize, possess as one’s own”
11. Ephesians 4:17-32 – to act according to your changed life .. ἀποτίθημι (*apotithémi*), “to put away, cast off, to put off, lay aside”
12. Ephesians 4:17-32 – to act according to your changed life .. παλαιός ἄνθρωπος (*palaios anthrópos*), “old human, worn out human being” .. ἐνδύω τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ Θεὸν (*enduō ton kainon anthrōpon kata Theon*), “sink into, clothe, put on the new, fresh human being according to God” ..
13. Ephesians 5:1-2 – to live a life of love .. μιμηταὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ (*mimētai tou Theou*), imitators, followers of God .. περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*peripatetic en agapē*), live, conduct my life, in the sphere of “divine” love ..

14. Ephesians 5:8-10 – to please God .. “For ye were sometimes darkness,” σκότος (*skotos*), darkness, obscurity .. “but now are ye light in the Lord,” φῶς (*phōs*), light, source of light, radiance .. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord,” εὐάρεστον (*euareston*), well-pleasing, fully agreeable
15. Ephesians 5:15-16 – to make the most of every opportunity .. “See then that ye walk circumspectly,” ἀκριβῶς (*akribōs*), carefully, perfectly, exactly, diligently” .. “Redeeming the time,”
16. Ephesians 5:15-16 – to make the most of every opportunity .. “See then that ye walk circumspectly,” ἀκριβῶς (*akribōs*), carefully, perfectly, exactly, diligently” .. “Redeeming the time,” ἐξαγοραζόμενοι (*exagorazomenoi*), buy up, rescue from loss, ransom .. καιρόν (*kairon*), opportunity, occasion, season, time
17. Ephesians 5:18-21 – to be controlled by God .. “be filled with the Spirit,” πληροῦσθε (*plērousthe*), to cause to abound, to fill up, fill to individual capacity, to furnish or supply liberally, be controlled by, diffuse throughout, to complete

18. Ephesians 6:10-18 – to stand against Satan .. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,” πανοπλίαν (*panoplian*), all the weapons, full armor, complete armor, panoply of weapons .. στῆναι (*histémi*), stand one’s ground, to make a stand, stand firm, be established .. μεθοδείας (*methodeias*), methods, tricks, wiles, schemes, deceit, craftiness

Part Three: What Christians Need To Grow

What Children Need To Grow

Write suggestions on human growth needs on a poster board so everyone can see. Get as many ideas as possible from the group. Discuss how each suggestion affects the growth of the child. What would happen if items were taken away from the child? Or given in only a small measure to the child?

What Christians Need To Grow

Have the group break into smaller groups of 3 or 4 people. Have each small group make a list of 7 things Christians need to grow into mature believers. Have them support each point with Scriptures.

After 15 minutes have the group come back together to share. Ask each group to give a point and the Scripture to support it.

Spend a couple of moments on each point, then go to another.

Part Four: What the Assembly is For

There are nine Greek words in the New Testament translated church, assembly, congregation, multitude, company, synagogue, and gathering together – in the context of people assembling for a purpose.

1. ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) – called out assembly .. used more than 100 times in the New Testament (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 1:1)
2. ἱεροσύλους (*hierosulous*) – a temple-despoiler .. used in Acts 19:37
3. πανηγύρει (*panēgurei*) – a general assembly, assemblies of all kinds .. used in Hebrews 12:23
4. πλῆθος (*plēthos*) – a multitude .. used in Acts 23:7
5. ὄχλος (*ochlos*) – a throng of .. used in Acts 6:7
6. συναγωγάς (*sunagōgas*) – assembly, synagogue, a bringing together .. used in Acts 9:2; James 2:2

7. ἐπισυναγωγήν (*episunagōgēn*) – assembling together, gathering together .. used in Hebrews 10:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:1
8. συναλιζόμενος (*sunalizomenos*) – to convene, assemble together .. used in Acts 1:4
9. συνέρχομαι (*sunerchomai*) – to assemble, to come together .. used in 1 Corinthians 11:17, 18, 20; 14:23, 26

Dividing The Differences

- The Wandering Church – Acts 7:38
- The Psalmist’s Church – Hebrews 2:12 (*ekklesia* is a translation of the Hebrew *kahal* – congregation)
- The Secular Church – Acts 19:32, 39, 41
- The Kingdom Church (Revealed in Prophecy) – Matthew 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:27; 5:11; 8:1, 3; Galatians 1:13, 22; James 5:14
- The Mystery Church (Hidden in God) – μυστήριον, *mustérion* (secret, mystery) οἰκονόμος, *oikonomos* (administration of a household) .. Acts 11:19-26; 13:1; Galatians 2:6-9; Ephesians 3:1-12; Colossians 1:25-29; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2; Colossians 1:25
- The Mystery Church is the Body of Christ – σῶμά, *sōma* (body) .. Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:29, 30; Colossians 1:18

Part Five: How to Build Up Members of the Assembly

Members of every Christian assembly have a responsibility to “one another.” The Greek word for “one another” is ἀλλήλων (*allélón*), and is used 76 times in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul leads the usage with 40 times.

We are MEMBERS of one another: μέλος, *melos*, “a limb, part of the body” .. Romans 12:5

We need each other (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

No individual Christian can function effectively by him or herself.

No member of Christ’s Body should think he/she is more or less important than any other member of Christ’s Body.

Christians should work hard at creating unity in the Body of Christ.

We are to be DEVOTED to one another: φιλόστοργος, *philostorgos*, “cherishing one’s kindred, devoted to family members (Romans 12:10)

Brotherly love (φιλαδελφία, *philadelphia*) is the love of brothers and sisters in the same family – 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10; Hebrews 13:1-3; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-7; John 13:34-35

We are to HONOR one another: τιμή, *timé*, “esteem, value highly” (Romans 12:10)

Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords, but He honored others above Himself – John 13:12-15; Matthew 23:5-12; Philippians 2:1-11

We are to be of the SAME MIND with one another: φρονέω τὸ αὐτό, *phroneó to auto*, “to think the same thing, direct the mind to judge or think the same thing”

Romans 12:16; 14:19; 15:5-6; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 1:27

We are to ACCEPT one another: προσλαμβάνω, *proslambanó*, “to take to oneself, receive, welcome, accept”

Romans 12:16; 14:1-5; 15:7

We are to ADMONISH one another: νουθετέω, *noutheteó*, “to put in mind, warn, caution, reprove by instruction, counsel, exhort

Romans 15:14; Acts 20:31; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Colossians 1:28-29; 3:16

We are to SERVE one another: δουλεύω, *douleuó*, “to serve as a bond slave, be devoted to another, subject to another”

Galatians 5:13-15

We are to BEAR BURDENS one another: βαστάζω βάρος, *bastazó baros*, “to lift, to remove, sustain, carry away, take up another’s weight, burden

Galatians 6:1-3; Romans 15:1-2

We are to BEAR WITH one another: ἀνέχομαι, *anechó*, “to hold oneself up against, put up with, endure, forbear”

Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12-14

We are to BUILD UP one another: οἰκοδομή, *oikodomé*, “to build a house, build up, the act of building, construct”

Ephesians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 14:26

Part Six: How the Assembly Should be Managed

Once an assembly of Christians understand the meaning of spiritual growth, the goals of spiritual growth, what Christians need to grow, the purpose of the assembly, and the importance of building up each member of the assembly (one-anothering), it's important that the assembly receive the proper management.

God has not left Christians wondering how to “manage” an assembly of the saints. His will concerning that is spelled out clearly in the New Testament. God is OVER ALL. He has total OVERSIGHT of the Church. Jesus Christ said He would build His Church and that's what He has been doing for two-thousand years. What is His method? It is organized and orderly –

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of

the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:11-16

Jesus Christ gave spiritually-gifted people to His “Church” to equip the saints for “their ministry.” The apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers have a specific task of “equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.”

Here are some of the Greek words the Apostle Paul used to describe those spiritually-gifted people's work in assemblies of saints across the world during the past two-thousand years:

- ἐπίσκοπος, *episkopos* – “an overseer, one who watches over, has care for .. Acts 20:20; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7
- ἐπισκοπή, *episkopé* – “office of an overseer” .. 1 Timothy 1:3
- πρεσβύτερος, *presbuteros* – “elder, older, senior” .. Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Timothy 1:5; 5:17; Titus 1:5
- πρεσβυτέριον, *presbuterion* – “the order of elders, body of elders, assembly of elders, officers of the church assembly” .. 1 Timothy 4:14

“Elder” is who they are .. “Overseeing” is what they do.

1. The Apostle Paul ordained (χειροτονέω, cheirotoneó, “selected, appointed, chose) elders (plural) in every assembly. He taught that ordained men should ordain other men. This was to continue the line of authority directly from Christ through Paul. (Acts 9:15; 14:23; 1 Timothy 2:7; Titus 1:5).
2. Paul told the elders of the Ephesian assembly that God had made them overseers to feed (ποιμαίνω, *poimainó*, “act as a shepherd, tend as a shepherd, guard and guide as a shepherd,” keeping in mind that Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd, and thus the greatest example for under-shepherds to follow. Paul warned elder-overseers that doctrinal wolves in sheep’s clothing would try to devour God’s flock (saints) and that fellow-elders would even try to steal away disciples to follow after them (Acts 20:17, 28-30).
3. Paul taught that elder-overseers have a special place of authority in the local assembly. They are responsible to God for taking care of each member of the church. If a

man wants to be an overseer, he desires a good ministry (1 Timothy 3:1,5).

4. Paul made it clear that overseers must be men, Christians for several years, able to teach, in control of their own bodies and minds, married to only one woman, good managers of their own household, not quarrelsome, hospitable, not heavy drinkers, not greedy for money, and having a good reputation with non-Christians in the community (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).
5. Paul wrote that the elder-overseers who ruled well were deserving of respect and high esteem. Those elders who functioned as preachers and teachers of God's Word were valuable enough to the assembly to be financially supported in their ministry (1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 9:14).
6. Paul taught that no accusations should be made against an elder-overseer unless it could be backed up by the Word of God and supported by two or three credible witnesses. If an elder was found to have sinned, he was to be rebuked publicly before the whole

assembly so others would be warned (1 Timothy 5:19-20).

7. Paul warned each assembly to be slow in ordaining elder-overseers. It was not something to be done quickly or lightly (1 Timothy 5:22).

Part Seven: How the Assembly Should Impact Its Community

Everything is ready. The local assembly, members and overseers, have followed every direction given them by Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul. The time has come for the people of to impact their community for the Gospel of Christ!

SERVICE .. the people of God serve the community where they live. They preach and teach the Gospel of Christ, the saving message of Christ, as they “serve” their neighbors and friends. Here are some key words for us to understand that calling:

- δῆκονος, *diakonos* – “one who serves others” ..
Romans 13:4 15:8, 16:1; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2
Corinthians 3:6; 6:4; 11:15, 23; Galatians 2:17;
Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:7, 23, 25; 4:7; 1
Thessalonians 3:2; 1 Timothy 3:8, 12; 4:6

- διακονέω, *diakoneó* – “to serve others, minister, kicking up dust because of activity” .. 1 Timothy 3:10, 13; 2 Timothy 1:18; Philemon 13
 - διακονία, *diakonia* – “service to others, ministry, ministration, waiting at table, serving with a willing attitude” .. Acts 20:24; Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 16:15; Ephesians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 3:7-9; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; 8:4; 9:1, 13; Colossians 4:17; 1 Timothy 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:5, 11
1. Paul taught that all ministry is a service. He told the early Christians that service was a special gift (*charisma*: grace gift) from God to believers for the building up of the whole assembly. (Romans 12:7; Ephesians 4:12-16)
 2. Paul commended men and women in the assembly who had ministries of service. (Romans 16:1-16)
 3. Paul wrote that our service is to lead to the reconciliation of men and women to God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:18)

4. Paul taught that there is a second group of men and women in the assembly whose primary function is to meet the special needs of the church as needs arise. They are called deacons. The elder-overseers appoint them to such tasks as are necessary for the good of the assembly and the furtherance of the Gospel message. (Acts 6:1-7; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8)
5. Paul wrote that men deacons should be worthy of respect, sincere, not heavy drinkers, not greedy for money, holding the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience, married to only one woman, managing well their household. Women (*gune*: women ... not wives) who serve the church are also to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, temperate, and trustworthy in everything. (Romans 16:1 is an example of a woman being called a deacon and being pointed out for respect.) Paul also told the assembly that persons being considered for positions of service should first be proved (*dokimazo*: to test, examine, try, approved). (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

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