

**HPC – Reborn To Grow**

**10/03/19**

**Reading Tit 2:11 - 14**

### **Introduction**

A father was talking with his daughter about birthdays. Hers was on March 30 and his was March 27. Our birthdays are three days apart, he said to her. Yes she replied, but you grew much faster than I did.

I decide some time ago that although I'm getting older, I need to continue growing.

To grow – is to increase, to continue increasing, to enlarge. This growth obviously needs to be mental growth, spiritual growth, and physical growth.

I have discovered, as I get older, that to grow physically, means to not keep growing and enlarging!

To grow physically means to stay fit and strong and trim. Which quite sadly, means – exercise.

Now of course, when one choses to exercise physically, this can mean going to the gym – to see faster results. Some time back I decided to try to work with a personal trainer. These guys hate you – they delight in your pain and push you way beyond reasonable limits – I think so that you feel like you've got your money's worth. Well I ended up feeling something else!

I found myself so tired and in so much pain that I was constantly making sure my fingernails were trimmed, and my hair was short, just to make so my tired body had the very least weight to carry around.

At one point I even found myself deleting all the old messages on my cel phone to lighten that up.

Are there any personal trainers out there - bless you and thank you for helping us:).

This growth it seems, comes at a price! But it is so worth feeling stronger and healthier – maybe a more slow and steady and consistent approach is the better plan - in fact I have discovered that a little slower but more consistent effort yields the best results.

The benefit to physical training is that if you are stronger and healthier – this can have a very positive effect on you mentally and spiritually as well.

The more I train mentally, the more positive my frame of mind, which leads to a more positive approach to physical and spiritual growth.

The more I grow spiritually, the better I am physically and mentally. It really is a complete life style of being in training.

But to be honest, I wish I could just maintain. It would be so much easier to maintain than all the effort to continue growing physically, mentally, and spiritually. This growth requires a plan - to exercise, to learn, and spend plenty of time with God - a plan, and then the discipline to do the plan.

And it seems there's no such thing as maintain - as soon as I neglect the growth I immediately start going backwards - growth is a constant effort - but here's the secret - the reward and joy is in the growth, not just in the final result!

Jesus, the Son of God, came to Glorify God - and He did that by being obedient to why God had sent Him - to show the world the way to the Father and to die to pay the price for our sins.

**Tit 2:11** For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

Grace - God's excessive love and favour, lavished on those who do not deserve it - you and me. Grace - God's Joy for you and me that affords us all joy.

A preacher named Dr James Allan Francis once had this to say about Jesus - Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was a traveling preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself..

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a false trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth - His clothes. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Dr Francis concludes - I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

Has He affected your life? (The truth - our only real credentials is the real us - our character!)

It's incredible to think that such a lonely figure who owned only the clothes He wore was the Messiah, our Savior. What's more incredible is that He knew exactly how it was all going to go - but that's exactly why He came. He came for you and me - Grace.

He shed His blood, to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own. Through the blood of Jesus we are made pure, by His blood He bought us and we belong to Him and He has given us Hope to live this life, and prepare for the next.

The Grace of God that brings salvation is our Lord Jesus – this Grace is the reason He came – to show us what the Father is really like. This Grace is the life He lived, serving and loving others. This Grace is the death He died, in my place and yours. This Grace is the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. This Grace is Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for you and me day and night. This Grace, is God on our side.

And this same Grace of God teaches us and never stops teaching us; it teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self controlled, and upright and Godly lives. This Grace of God that teaches us, is the life long process of growing to be all that God wants us to be. And the great news is that this same Grace of God is the power we need to live as God intends and desires. This Grace is God working in us and through us to complete the work He has started – but we have to actively participate.

God gives us the power and understanding to live according to His will and to do what is good. This life changing power, this Grace of God is in us to save us, and to help us grow.

Peter, the Apostle, in his second book, writes to all who have received a faith in Jesus Christ, that's you and me; and this book ends with these words;

**2 Peter 3:18** But GROW in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. To Him be Glory both now and forever! Amen

The Grace of God has appeared to all men and we are to grow in this Grace. To fully appreciate what this means, we need to look to the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter;

**2 Peter 1:2 – 11** Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self control; and to self control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sin. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God. There is no greater growth than to grow in the knowledge of God, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus said if you have seen me you have seen the Father. Jesus came that we might see God, that we might gain an ever increasing knowledge of God.

Christ came that we may participate in the divine nature – the power to grow does not come from within us, but from God in us. God allows us to participate in His Divine Nature in order to keep us from sin and help us to live for Him.

In this passage Peter lists the qualities God wants us to have - faith, goodness, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love. These are the very qualities of God - we are to have these qualities in increasing measure – we are to grow and grow and grow.

A tree is perhaps one of the best symbols of growth, and I'm sure you know that a tree either only grows or dies. A tree never gets to the point where it says, well I've grown all these years now, I'll just maintain for a while, I'm not going to put any more effort into getting any bigger – I'm going to stop pushing for new life. The moment a tree stops growing / increasing, is the day it starts dying / decreasing.

God requires us to be effective and productive, and this will only happen during growth - as we grow in the qualities and knowledge of God, in ever increasing measure. There's never a time to just cruise – Peter says that those who are not growing have forgotten

what God has done for them – and to be like this is like being blind? Surely it is blindness to not see the truth and do something about it, and keep doing something about it. To forget is surely to be lukewarm.

And if you feel today that perhaps you've stopped growing, then simply ask for God's help and determine in your hearts that growth is a gift from God and there's no greater growth than growing in Him – and it is His Joy to work in and with you to be all He created you to be.

In Christ we can grow, without Christ there is only death. Christ came that we might see the Father, to open the way for us to know Him and to receive a most precious of gifts; the gift to be able to grow in our knowledge and understanding of the one and only true God, to grow in Grace.

I need to make the time and have the discipline to grow in Grace – to get to know Jesus more and more. To spend more time with Him and in Him. Growth is a gift – but I need to participate – I need to be in training.

I could have the best personal trainer in the world - would not make any difference if I do not do the exercise - would not make any difference if I only worked out with him once, or only once a month - it takes steady consistent effort.

I could have the greatest teachers - but I have to study and learn and keep on.

No one can train or learn for me!

And the only way I will ever grow in Christ is if I spend more time with Him. No one can have my personal relationship with Jesus for me.

Yes we need good trainers and teachers - and God has promised that He has placed those in His Church for you and me - but we'll only gain the reward and joy through the growth and our participation - the effort we put in. And Jesus is worth the effort don't you think.

And I am so happy to have learned, that you are never too old to grow in Christ. We have the perfect personal trainer in Jesus.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen

