

**AUGUST 25, 2021**  
David Renwick  
**Renewing Your Life**  
**in Christ**

- August 11 How Can I Find God?
- August 18 How Can I be Sure that I am Loved and Forgiven?
- **August 25 How Can I Grow as a Christian?**
- September 1 How Can I Serve God Faithfully?

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**Class #1.**

**VARIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD**

1. Is There A God At All? – *In A World of Science*
2. What Is God Like? – *In A World with Evil?*
  - a. *God's inanimate creation is morally neutral*
  - b. *God must have an ultimate solution in mind when he creates "sentient beings."*
3. How Can I Find God? – *When I Feel God's Absence?*
  - a. *God's Passion is To Be Close (not just "out there")*

Leads into

**Class # 2**

**HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT I AM LOVED AND FORGIVEN?**

**Multiple verses about**

**God's passion to connect . .**

- **Matthew 1:23 -- God is Close/Present in Jesus**  
"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," -- which means, *God with us.*
- **Matthew 18:20 -- Jesus is where his people are**  
"Where two or three are gathered in my name, *I am there among them.*"
- **Matthew 28:19-20**  
-- **Jesus is with us when we serve**  
"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And *remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

**AND IN THE END**

- **Revelation 21:3, 22**  
<sup>3</sup>and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, *the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them.*  
<sup>22</sup>But I saw no temple in the city, because *the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

SO GOD WANTS US  
TO HAVE CONFIDENCE  
In His LOVE and CLOSENESS

**Spelled Out . . .**

**1 John 5:13**

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **so that you may know** that you have eternal life.

**Hebrews 10**

<sup>19</sup>since we have **confidence** to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus . . . <sup>22</sup>**let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith.**

**Hebrews 6.11**

We want each one of you to show the same diligence so as to **realize the full assurance of hope** to the very end

**2 Timothy 1.12** (Paul)

**I know the one** in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.

**John 10:27** (Jesus)

<sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. **No one will snatch them out of my hand**

**Matthew 6:25-26**

<sup>25</sup>**"Do not be anxious about your life,** what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?**

**But We're Not In Heaven Yet!!**  
**STRUGGLE IS A PART OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**  
**We need to be prepared, not surprised**

**Jesus struggled** . . . in the desert, at Gethsemane, on the cross  
**and so will we . .**

**The Battle with Evil – Ephesians 6**

<sup>12</sup>**Our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

<sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm

**But What if we sin/fail?**

- What about "severe" words
- from "Coach" Jesus?

### Matthew 7:21-23

<sup>21</sup>“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ <sup>23</sup>Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’

### SO HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THESE SCARY PASSAGES?

What God is looking for: . . .

1. NOT PERFECTION
2. Rather -- DOES OUR SIN BOTHER US?

. . . perfection is NOT possible this side of heaven:

The Issue is

1. Direction not Destination
2. Do we pick ourselves up or keep going in the wrong direction?

### **REMEMBER!!**

#### **1. REMEMBER STORIES OF SINNERS IN SCRIPTURE!!**

**a. The Prodigal Son & his older brother** (Luke 15:11-32)

**b. Simon Peter** – who denied Jesus – and called him to get back on track (John 21:15-17)

**c. King David** – Confession After Adultery  
– Not denying Sin

**Psalm 52 + Psalm 139:23-24 . . .** Search me and know me . . .

#### **1 John 1**

<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

<sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

#### **2. REMEMBER TO FOCUS ON GOD, NOT ON OUR FEELINGS**

1. What God Wants (to live close to us, in relationship with us)
2. What God Has Done For Us (*the lengths to which God will go to bring us close*) . . .

What has God done for us?

### **Galatians 4:4-6; 3:2**

<sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, **God sent his Son**, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

### **John 3:16**

<sup>16</sup>“For **God so loved the world that he gave his only Son**, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

### **Colossians 2:13-14**

<sup>13</sup>And **when you were dead in trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made you alive** together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>erasing **the record that stood against us** with its legal demands. He set this aside, **nailing it to the cross**.

### **Romans 8:1, 14-16, 31-32, 38-39**

<sup>1</sup>There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus

<sup>14</sup>For all who are led by *the Spirit of God* are children of God. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>it is *that very Spirit* bearing witness with our spirit that **we are children of God**,

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things?

**If God is for us, who is against us?**

#### **3. REMEMBER TO ASK FOR GOD TO WORK IN YOUR CONSCIENCE AND HEART BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **Rom 15:13**

<sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may **abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit**.

#### **Rom. 5:5**

<sup>5</sup>hope does not disappoint us, because **God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit** that has been given to us

#### **THAT SAME HOLY SPIRIT**

**Wants to Empower Us in our Faith/Relationships**

- **Not Just to be Confident**
- **BUT TO GROW & BE EFFECTIVE for Christ**

#### **TODAY – “GROWING” AS A CHRISTIAN**

**WHY? & HOW?**

## GOD'S PASSION & EXPECTATION FOR GROWTH

### 1. THE HUMAN ANALOGY

#### 1 Peter 2:2

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may **grow** up into salvation—

#### 1 Samuel 2:26 (the Prophet Samuel)

And the boy Samuel continued to **grow** in *stature* and in favor with the LORD and with people.

#### Luke 2:52 (Jesus)

<sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased in *wisdom and in years*, and in favor with God and people.

#### Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, **abounding in THANKSGIVING**.

### 2. Repeated Imagery of CREATION -- PLANTS & FRUIT

#### Psalms 92:12-14 (growth as the promise of God)

<sup>12</sup>The righteous (“rightly-related”) will **flourish** like a palm tree, they will **grow** like a cedar of Lebanon; <sup>13</sup>**planted** in the house of the LORD, they will **flourish** in the courts of our God. <sup>14</sup>They will still **bear fruit** in old age, they will stay **fresh** and **green**

#### 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 (growth as the work of God)

<sup>6</sup>I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, **but God** has been making it **grow**. <sup>7</sup>So neither the one who *plants* nor the one who *waters* is anything, **but only God**, who makes things **grow**.

#### Luke 8:15 (Jesus' Parable of the Sower & Seed – fruit as slow growing)

<sup>15</sup>But as for the seed that falls in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and **bear fruit** with patient endurance.

John 15:16 (fruit: not just a good idea, but a command or calling)

You did not choose me but I chose you.

And **I appointed you** to go and bear **fruit, fruit** that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

John 15:8 (fruit: because it brings glory – joy and honor – to God and is evidence of discipleship)

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much **fruit** and so become my disciples.

Galatians 5 (fruit – produced by God's Presence)

<sup>22</sup>**The fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

## SPECIFIC AREAS OF GROWTH

### 1. Relational Growth – Vertical & Horizontal

#### 1 Samuel 2:26 (the Prophet Samuel)

And the boy Samuel continued to **grow**

- in *stature*
- and in **FAVOR WITH THE LORD**
- **AND WITH PEOPLE**.

#### Luke 2:52 (Jesus)

- <sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased
- in **WISDOM** and in years,
  - and in **FAVOR WITH GOD**
  - **AND PEOPLE**.

### SPECIFIC AREAS OF GROWTH

### 2. Growth: Not Just Personal but Communal

#### The Growth of the Christian Community

– As A Plant, Building, Body, Child

#### Ephesians 4:11-16

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

<sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that **the body of Christ may be built up**

- <sup>13</sup>until we all reach **UNITY IN THE FAITH**

- and in the **KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD**
- and become **MATURE**,
- attaining to the whole measure of the **FULLNESS OF CHRIST**.

<sup>14</sup> Then we will **NO LONGER BE INFANTS**,

- tossed back and forth by the waves,
- and blown here and there by every wind of teaching
- and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

<sup>15</sup> Instead, **SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE**,

- we will **grow to become** in every respect the **MATURE BODY OF HIM WHO IS THE HEAD**, that is, Christ.

<sup>16</sup> FROM HIM the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, **grows and builds itself up** in **LOVE**, as **EACH PART DOES ITS WORK**.

## **But . . . There Is A STRUGGLE TO GROW**

### **1. Two Warnings**

#### **Isaiah 5**

<sup>1</sup>Let me sing for my beloved (= God) my love-song concerning **his vineyard**:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

<sup>2</sup>He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;

he built a watchtower in the midst of it,

and hewed out a wine vat in it;

- *he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.*

#### **John 15:1-2**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.

<sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.”

### **2. The Imagery of an Infant, Child**

#### **1 Corinthians 3:2-5**

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

- <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly.
- For since there is **jealousy and quarreling** among you, are you not worldly?
- Are you not acting like mere humans?

- <sup>4</sup> For when one says, **“I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,”** are you not mere human beings?

<sup>5</sup> What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul?

Only servants, through whom you came to believe as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

#### **Hebrews 5:12, 14**

In fact, though by this time **you ought to be teachers**,

- **you need someone to teach you THE ELEMENTARY TRUTHS OF GOD’S WORD** all over again.
- **You need milk, not solid food!**

<sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature,

who by constant use have trained themselves to **DISTINGUISH GOOD FROM EVIL**.

## **SPECIFIC MEANS & AREAS OF GROWTH**

### **1. How to Grow: → Empowered by God’s Spirit → Jesus IN US NOW**

#### **Galatians 5**

<sup>22</sup>**The fruit of the Spirit** is

- **LOVE, JOY, PEACE,**
- **PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GENEROSITY,**
- **FAITHFULNESS, <sup>23</sup>GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL.**

There is no law against such things. <sup>24</sup>And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>25</sup>If we have found eternal life *by the Spirit*,

let us also be guided by *the Spirit*.

#### **John 15:5:**

I am the vine, you are the branches.

Those who abide in me and I in them bear much **fruit**, because *apart from me you can do nothing*.

### **BUT . . . Final Growth/Change Awaits us in Heaven**

## Revelation 7:9, 13-14

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and there (in heaven) was a **great multitude** that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, **robed in white**, with palm branches in their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,

**“Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?”**

<sup>14</sup> I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, **“These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

## 2. How to Grow: → By Prayer

### Luke 17:5

The apostles **said to the Lord**, (i.e., *prayed!*) “Increase (“make grow”) our **FAITH!**”

### Colossians 1:9-10

Since the day we heard about you, **we have not stopped praying for you** we continually **ask God**

- To fill you with  
**THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL**
- through all the  
**WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING**  
that the Spirit gives,

<sup>10</sup>so that you may

- live a **LIFE WORTHY OF THE LORD**  
and **PLEASE HIM IN EVERY WAY**;
- **bearing fruit** in every **GOOD WORK**,
- **growing** in the **KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

### Philippians 1:9

It is **my prayer**

- that **YOUR LOVE** may abound more and more,
- with **KNOWLEDGE AND ALL DISCERNMENT**,

## 3. How to Grow: → By Reading/ Listening/ Seeking

### Proverbs 1:1-5

#### The Proverbs of Solomon

son of David, king of Israel:

- <sup>2</sup>for **gaining WISDOM** and *instruction*;
- *For UNDERSTANDING WORDS OF INSIGHT*
- <sup>3</sup>for receiving instruction in  
**PRUDENT BEHAVIOR,**  
**DOING WHAT IS RIGHT**  
**AND JUST AND FAIR;**
- <sup>4</sup>**FOR GIVING PRUDENCE** to those who are simple,
- **KNOWLEDGE AND DISCRETION** to the young—

5 let the wise **listen** and add to their learning,  
and let the discerning get guidance—

## 4. How to Grow: By Experience/Suffering/Hard Knocks

### John 12:24-25

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; **but if it dies, it bears much fruit.**

### Romans 5:3-5

**suffering produces** endurance,

4 and **ENDURANCE** produces character,

and **CHARACTER** produces hope,

5 and **HOPE** does not put us to shame,

because **GOD’S LOVE** has been poured into our hearts

*through the Holy Spirit* who has been given to us.

### James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you **meet trials of various kinds**,

3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces

**STEADFASTNESS.**

4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

## 5. How to Grow: By Remembering *what God wants*

- By Following GOD'S COMMAND!

### Colossians 2:6-7

<sup>6</sup>As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord,  
**CONTINUE to** live your lives in him,  
<sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him  
and established in **THE FAITH**,  
just as you were taught, **ABOUNDING IN THANKSGIVING**.

### 2 Peter 3:18

**GROW** in the **GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE**  
*of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*  
To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

### Ephesians 4:15, 22-24

<sup>15</sup>we are to **grow up *in every way*** into him who is the head, into Christ . . .  
<sup>22</sup>**You were taught**, with regard to your former way of life,  
○ *to put off your old self*,  
    which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;  
○ <sup>23</sup>to be *made new*  
    in the attitude of your minds;  
○ <sup>24</sup>and *to put on the new self*,  
    created to be like God in *true righteousness and holiness*.

### Hebrews 6:1

Therefore let us **LEAVE the elementary doctrine of Christ**  
**and go on to MATURITY**,  
not laying again a foundation  
○ of repentance from dead works  
○ and of faith toward God  
○

- By Our Decision & Prioritizing

### 2 Peter 1:5-8

<sup>5</sup>**You must make every effort to**  
• support your **FAITH** with **GOODNESS**,  
• and goodness with **KNOWLEDGE**,  
• <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with **SELF-CONTROL**,

- and self-control with **ENDURANCE**,
- and endurance with **GODLINESS**,
- <sup>7</sup>and godliness with **MUTUAL AFFECTION**,
- and mutual affection with **LOVE**.

<sup>8</sup>For if these things are yours and are increasing among you,  
they *keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful*  
in the *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

### Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect,  
but **I PRESS ON** to make it my own,  
because Christ Jesus has made me his own.  
<sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.  
But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **STRAINING**  
**FORWARD** to what lies ahead,  
<sup>14</sup>**I PRESS ON** toward the goal for the prize  
of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

### Matthew 6:33

- **SEEK FIRST** *the kingdom of God and his righteousness*,
- and all these things will be added to you.

### 1 Timothy 4:12-15

<sup>12</sup> Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young,  
• but **SET AN EXAMPLE** for the believers  
• *in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity*.  
<sup>13</sup> Until I come,  
• **DEVOTE YOURSELF** to the public reading of Scripture,  
• to preaching and to teaching.  
<sup>14</sup> **DO NOT NEGLECT** your gift, which was given you through  
prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.  
• <sup>15</sup> **BE DILIGENT** in these matters;  
• give yourself wholly to them,  
so that **EVERYONE MAY SEE YOUR PROGRESS**.

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## **GROWTH -- A FRUITFUL LIFE**

STICK WITH IT!!

### **Galatians 6:9**

And let us **NOT GROW WEARY** of doing good,  
for in due season **WE WILL REAP**, if we do not give up.

### **THE SUMMARY**

*Press On, Straining Forward*

*Seek First The Kingdom Of God And His Righteousness,  
And All These Things Will Be Added To You.*

*Set An Example so That Everyone May See Your Progress*

- In Speech, -- Speaking The Truth In Love,
  - In Conduct
  - In Love
  - In Faith
  - And In Purity.

### **LET ME COUNT THE WAYS . .**

1. Favor With The Lord
  - a. *True Holiness*
  - b. *Life Worthy Of The Lord*
  - c. *Pleasing God in Every Way:*
2. Favor with People.
  - a. *True righteousness (right-relatedness)*
  - b. *To build up the Body Of Christ*
  - c. *To play our part in the Body.*
  - d. *Unity In the Faith*
3. Our Attitude Of Mind
4. Love xx -- Mutual Affection
5. Joy
6. Peace
7. Patience
8. Kindness
9. Generosity
10. Faith, Faithfulness, xx
11. Gentleness
12. Self-Control.

13. Endurance, steadfastness xx
14. Character
15. Hope
16. Assurance of God's Love
17. Goodness
18. Self-Control
19. Godliness
20. Grace
21. Abounding In Thanksgiving.

22. Wisdom & Instruction xx & understanding

### **23. Knowledge of God**

#### **24. Knowledge of God's Will**

- a. *Distinguish Good From Evil.*
- b. *Knowledge And All Discernment*
- c. *Knowledge And Discretion*
- d. *Understanding Words Of Insight*
- e. *Pursuing Good Work*
- f. *Prudent Behavior*
- g. *Doing What Is Right And Just And Fair*

#### **25. Knowledge of The Son Of God**

- a. *Knowledge Of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ.*
- b. *Whole Measure of The Fullness Of Christ.*
- c. *Mature*

#### **26. No Longer Infants**

- a. *Not Tossed Back And Forth By The Waves,*
- b. *Not Blown Here And There By Every Wind Of Teaching*
- c. *& By The Cunning And Craftiness Of People In Their Deceitful Scheming.*
- d. *Not Ineffective And Unfruitful*