

The Secret of Growing

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon emphasizes the importance of growing in love and grace through a deep relationship with Christ and the challenges of life.

Duration: 51:39

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Topics: "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of showing love and compassion towards others, especially those in need. He shares a story about a young man who was moved by a film about the work of Daniel Abraham in India and decided to donate his savings of \$1000 towards his cause. The preacher also mentions the power of music and singing in uplifting the soul and creating a sense of unity among believers. He encourages Christians to have a heart for world missions and suggests a book on the topic that provides information about the spiritual condition and prayer needs of different countries.

Transcript

I want to read from 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 12, and we're going to read down into chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 12, the Apostle Paul, And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you. To the end, he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. Then drop down to chapter 4, verse 9, But as touching brotherly love, you need not that I write unto you.

For you yourselves are taught of God to love one another, and indeed you do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia. But we beseech you, brethren, that you increase more and more. The word increase is found in both these portions of Scripture, increasing in love, abounding.

The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, the purpose being that God might establish our hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. Dear Lord, guide us now in our thinking, clear the cobwebs away, Lord, and engage our attention, we pray, by the power of your Spirit and witness to our hearts. Thank you that you are and have and will.

We praise you, that we can trust you. In Christ's name, amen. It's written of Jesus that the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

And then again we read, Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man, and so should we. Now we can't always increase in stature, but we can in wisdom, and we can in the grace of God. And if I were to take a text for this morning, I would take 1 Peter 3.18 that says, But grow in grace, and he's talking in the context about the wickedness of the world of the age.

Beware lest you also, he says in that chapter, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I said in one of the meetings that finding Christ as our Savior may be the end of something, but it's also the beginning of something else.

It's the end of our quest for truth and our search for God, but it's the beginning of a lifelong walk with God. And it should be, the normal Christian life should be a walk where we are increasing in certain graces, in certain ways, in certain things, and we want to talk about that this morning. Now before we can grow, we have to be rightly rooted.

It says of Judah in Isaiah 37 that the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. And you can't bear fruit upward if you are not properly rooted downward. So that takes us to Colossians chapter 2 where it says, rooted and built up in him.

It's not a question of doctrine so much. Doctrine is important and we would never negate that, but rooted and built up in him. It's a relationship with Jesus Christ.

And I feel a tremendous burden in this area because I know in my own life at one time was a matter of learning doctrine, of learning things, of learning prophecy, and all this, but I was not increasing in my relationship with Christ. I was not really rooted and built up in him, which is essential if we're going to be successful in the Christian life and bring glory to God. So rooted and built up in him and established in the faith as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Suppose I asked you right now to get to your feet and give me three reasons for thanking God. Would you be able to do it? Abounding therein. Do you abound with thanksgiving? Every day? In spite of the aches and the pains? In spite of the bad things that happen? He daily loads us with benefits, the Bible says, daily.

The Lord is good to all, the Bible says. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Sometimes we don't have eyes to see that.

The Bible says about some that they have more than heart could wish, and often when we have that we want more. Remember there are seven things that the believer was not to covet in Old Testament days, actually eight I think. You're not to covet your neighbor's house, nor his wife, nor his lands, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, and then it adds this, nor anything that your neighbor had.

So abounding therein with thanksgiving, instead of asking for a thousand things, thanking God for ten thousand blessings, He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings and heavenly things in Christ. Rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Then let's take a step beyond that, in Ephesians chapter 3, Paul said, For this cause I bow my knees unto

the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may abide in your hearts by faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, and the word has a double meaning really here, it means to understand, and then a hold out, because sometimes we understand things in the Bible that we don't lay hold of or make part of our life at all, that you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and I struggled with that until I came across some verses in Job chapter 11, where he asked the question, he said, Can you by searching find out God? Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven.

What can you do? Deeper than hell. What can you know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. God is infinite.

And we will always be learning, ten million years from today, we will still be learning and learning and learning, because God is an infinite God, and we will never be able to completely understand or know God. Remember some years ago before my dear mother went on to be with the Lord, and us kids got our heads together, we were wondering what to get Mother for Christmas. She had everything.

What could we get her? We didn't just know. That's a problem that God will never have. You know, Christmas comes, anniversary, birthday, and you wonder what to give your spouse or what to give your child and so on.

What'll I give them? That's a question that God will never ask, because he'd be giving and giving and giving again for all eternity. New vistas of knowledge and beauty and glory and power. Sometimes when I think about it, it just rocks me, when I think of what is coming.

Are you one of those low-living Christians that think you're going to sit on a cloud strumming on a harp forever? Well, you better forget it. I don't doubt we'll play harps sometimes. I like harp music.

I wish I could play one, and one day I will, I guess. But if you think that's the whole story, you'd better think again. It isn't.

The breadth and length and depth and height. And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. It passes knowledge.

That's also something that's infinite, therefore we will never fully understand it. We'll always be learning new things about the grace of God. And Paul says, it's so marvelous that in the ages to come, God will show the riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

It's not just a case of glibly repeating John 3.16 and then rubbing our hands together and walking away. In the ages to come, then God will show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. And I suppose back of that somewhere, we'll be conscious of the flames of hell, where we might have been but for the grace of God.

So he wants us to grow. Are we disappointing him? Is God pleased when he looks at us? What are we supposed to grow in? Well, it says grow in grace. Grow in grace.

Paul spoke about some people in 2 Corinthians. He says, they long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. Oh, you Christians of Corinth, there are some of us, we have a tremendous burden for you,

that you might be filled with the grace of God.

The grace of God, someone said, is an indefinable something that speaks of God, that rests on Christians in differing measures. Someone who hadn't seen Dwight L. Moody for 20 years said, oh, he's grown so much heavenward. That's what I'm talking about.

To grow heavenward. The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

That's what the grace of God should teach us. But grow in grace. And so we read in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always having all sufficiency and all things may abound unto every good work.

God always has a purpose in mind. Growing in grace, rooted and grounded in love in Christ. And then, growing in love.

We noted that in the verses we read here in 1 Thessalonians, the Lord make you to increase and abound in love, one toward another and toward all men, even as we do toward you. Christians, why are we so cold? Why are we so cold, so uninterested in other people and their problems, with so little concern for the lost? Missions is something the church does once a year. I mean, that's how it's looked on, when mission should be the beating of our heart.

It should be something that's before us 365 days a year. In all my meetings, I urge people to buy that book dealing with world missions. It's on our table.

It doesn't sell too well. Every Christian should have a copy in their house. There are over 200 countries and territories and states in the world.

It will give you information concerning every country in the world and needs of prayer. It will tell you about the spiritual condition and what's needed in this country. And most Christians are not interested, because we don't have the love in our hearts.

If we had the love in our hearts, we'd feel totally different. I was standing in a street corner one time and an Indian walked by. I was talking with a friend of mine who'd worked for years among the Indians, but God had called him to work among white people then.

The Indian walked by. And after the Indian walked by, he said to me, oh, Bill, he said, every time I see an Indian, my heart just goes flip-flop. I love them so much.

And I was thinking about that later on. I thought to myself, you know, every time someone goes by, our heart ought to go flip-flop, because there's a person that God made in His image for His glory. And maybe they're not glorifying God, but maybe we can help them to do that.

The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men, even as we do towards you. Then further on in the same chapter, he said, is touching brotherly love. He said, you have no need that I write unto you, for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

And indeed, he said, you do it towards all the brethren in all Macedonia. But we beseech you, brethren, to increase more and more. And then when he wrote the second epistle to the same church, he said, the love of every one of you all toward each other abounds.

Overflowing love. A friend of mine with his wife was in the church at Thessalonica some years ago. He said he bawled the whole time.

He said the singing was just incredible. He cried the whole time. He couldn't sing a word.

Maybe it was partly emotion at being in the church that the Bible talks about. But he said it was more than that. As he talked to the people, he learned some of the persecution they were currently in, problems they were facing.

But he said to hear them sing, it just did something for his soul. The love of every one of you all toward each other abounds. There's so much said about love.

I sometimes say if something is mentioned more than once in the Bible, it's because it's extremely important. So some things are mentioned twice. Some things are mentioned four times.

And I know of one thing that's mentioned ten times in the Bible. Some of you will know what that is, and some will not. It's the statement, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

And three times in the Old Testament, seven times in the New. I think in the Christian life we struggle a lot of times. We try to pick up so many threads.

We hear so many messages. We read so many books. We get so confused.

We don't know what direction to move in. We don't know where to start. I think if we could push all of this out of our mind and concentrate on this one thing, love, everything else would fall into place.

Increase and abound in love, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has given unto us. God can fill you with more love than you can handle. You know, sometimes there's such an emphasis nowadays on the human love thing.

A preacher once came to see me. He came a long, long distance from Florida to see me. I was holding meetings in Ontario.

And his world had fallen apart. His wife had left him. He loved his wife dearly.

He had no idea that she did not love him. And she was gone. And he was shattered.

And I listened to him for a while. And then I said to him, I wanted to shock him into reality. And I said, My dear brother, did God die? He said, What? I said, Did God die? I said, You act and you talk as if God died.

I said, I didn't read his obituary notice anywhere. Did God die? You talk as if the world is falling apart, as if everything has ended. But he said, My wife left me.

He said, Is your wife more important than God? Did God leave you? No. I said, You're acting like it. And then I pointed something out to him.

I said, Listen, if you have human love, that's just a bonus thrown in. There are many people that don't have human love, but they do have the love of God. If you don't have human love, you do have the love of God.

And I say again, God can give you more love than you can possibly handle. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Well, I should say, he went home rejoicing.

Rejoicing. The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell. I was in a tiny little church in one of our Canadian provinces one time.

It was a small, small church. We were handling it this way. People would come to the pastor and say they had a need, and he would direct them to the room where I was counseling.

I did it one by one. And so different people came. There was a knock at the door, and a lady came and walked in and closed the door.

I would say she was 35 years of age. And she burst into tears and she said, You won't tell anybody, will you? And she meant, of course, I wouldn't tell any of her friends. I said, I won't.

And she told me one of the awfulest stories I've ever heard. Her father was a drunken wretch, and he used to rape his daughter. When she was 12, he began raping her.

And he had seven or eight drunken cronies. And sometimes they'd have a drinking party at the house, and then these eight or nine men would rape her. They would gang rape her, her father and these men, until she was able to escape out of the house when she was 18 and get away.

And she hated her father, and she hated those men. Now, she wanted to have a normal life, so she got married, but she didn't know what love was. And she couldn't respond to her husband.

And her marriage had gotten very shaky, and it brought the whole thing to a crisis. And she came seeking help. I wish you could have seen her.

Walked out of that room. God filled her heart with His love. It took a while.

I explained it to her. And then she had to deal with the bitterness, and that was a struggle. Oh, it was a struggle.

But finally, she was able to say, I love my dad. I forgive him. And some of us can't forgive people for some little thing they did.

Shame on you. Oh, shame on you that you can't forgive. If you don't forgive everyone from your heart, their trespass, your Heavenly Father will not forgive you.

Jesus taught us this plainly. Increasing and abounding in love, one toward another. It doesn't operate in a vacuum.

It's not a nice feeling inside. It's a relationship with people. And every day you live, your love will be challenged.

Make up your mind to that. Your love abounds. What a thought.

What a thought. That's part of it. And then our faith needs to grow.

And Paul was concerned about that. In the second epistle to the church at Thessalonica, he said, your faith grows exceedingly. Well, that's great too, isn't it? Is your faith growing? Is it stronger than it was? Or is it static? If it's static, not growing, then you're slipping back.

Because you can't really remain neutral in this. It must grow. And it grows through three mediums.

At least three. One, the Word of God. So then faith comes by hearing.

And hearing by the Word of God. Listen, can I ask you a question? Are you excited when you pick up the Bible and start to read it? Many of us aren't excited. We yawn our way through a chapter or two, close the book and thank God that's over for another day.

Do we? The Bible is God's love book to his children. There was a time when I read it looking for sermons. There was a time when I read it so I could be more skillful in arguing certain doctrinal points with other people.

That was a waste of time. I read it now to hear God speak. Hearing his voice in every line.

We sing in one of our songs, making each faithful saying, mine. Just the other day I was reading in the Psalms and man, I got so blessed. I almost flew out of my skin.

I got so blessed. Just one great truth after another. I said to myself, hey Lord, there's so much, so much God is speaking, God is saying.

Take heed, Jesus said, how you hear. Faith comes by hearing. And hearing by the Word of God.

Familiarize yourself with those 7,500 less 13 promises in the Word of God. And your faith will grow. Then faith works by love.

And I don't think it's really possible to have a strong faith without having strong love. The two belong together. I've said before, but not here, that there are 33 places in the New Testament where faith and love are joined together.

Your love grows exceedingly in the faith of every one of you all towards each other abounds. Your faith grows exceedingly in your love abounds. I put it the other way around.

What's wrong? And Paul said in running to church at Ephesus, he said, since I, he said, I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of the love which you have to all the saints. Faith in Christ, love to the saints. He said the same thing in Colossians chapter 1. Since I heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have to all the saints.

Faith in Christ, love to the saints. You can't divorce the one from the other. So faith works by love because love believes all things.

When my heart is filled with the love of God, my faith grows. Because I finally can trust this God that loves me so much, whom I love and return because he first loved me. And then faith grows by trials.

Someone said if you want great faith, then ask God for great trials. Have you ever done that? I did it and wished I hadn't. And then thank God I had.

And then sometimes wished I hadn't. You know I was a very young Christian. I prayed some dangerous prayers.

I prayed this prayer first of all. I said, Lord I want to be the kind of Christian you want me to be. I want to be a God made Christian, not a man made Christian.

And the second part of it was more dangerous. I said, Lord I know this will mean I'll have to go through a lot of trials probably. And I said, now Lord I want to make a little compact with you that no matter how loudly I complain when I'm going through the trials that you'll never listen to me.

And oh there were times when I was saying, oh God, oh this trial. And the Lord said, I can't hear a word. I can't hear a word you say.

And it was just beautiful because I made the contact and cut the ropes. I couldn't take that back out of God's hand and I never have. Don't listen, God, when I complain.

David said, I know that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn your statutes.

Whom the Lord loves, he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives. We had earthly fathers, it says in Hebrews 12, that chastened us as they saw fit, but God did it for our benefit that we might become partakers of his holiness. Great trials.

The trial of your faith be much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. I don't know if you've ever thought about this, but the minute you use the word faith or think of faith, you have to think about trials because faith has to do with the unknown. Faith is something bridging a gap between man and God.

And you can't think of faith without thinking of trials. Whom having not seen, you love, in whom though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I think of some of those early missionaries that went as long as 13 years before they ever saw a convert, and all around them were people, drunken people, killing and eating people.

They frequently had to try and get away from the stench of burning human flesh as these cannibals were cooking and eating people. And they kept on preaching for 13 years and never saw a convert. I'll tell you, brother, that's faith.

And some of us can't trust God for a day or a week. Oh, I say to myself, what kind of Christians are we? And some of those missionaries, by the way, went as long as 22 years without seeing one convert, and they kept on believing their God. And then when the harvest came, they almost died from overwork.

Thousands of people swept into the kingdom of God. And the Bible says, as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

In due season, which may be a long time or a short time, but there's a waiting period. Faith, through the word of God, through a love experience with the Lord Jesus Christ, rooted and grounded in love and established in the faith, and so on. And then, Paul prayed in Colossians 1, verse 9. He says, since the day we heard, heard what? Heard of what had happened at Colossae.

About these people and their faith and their love. He says, since the day we heard, we do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Increasing in the knowledge of God.

And that should go on all through life. And as we intimated earlier, it'll go on all through eternity. Increasing in the knowledge of God.

Paul knew Christ. He'd known him for years. And Paul had unique experiences with Jesus Christ, because remember, Jesus appeared to him not just once, but many times.

Because in Acts chapter 22, Jesus spoke about the things in which I will appear unto you. There was the appearance on the road to Damascus, and the many later appearances, Paul called them revelations. And Christ came to Paul many times and taught him many things.

That's where he got his doctrine, and that's why he said, the gospel, I did not receive it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. So he knew Christ in a very unique and personal and powerful way. And yet we find him in Philippians chapter three.

Oh, he cried, that I might know him. Oh, that I might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. What a heart cry.

Does it ring a bell in your soul? That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection? We'd go for that. And the fellowship of his sufferings? We wouldn't go for that. But we're going to have to.

If we want to know the power of God, we'll have to know something of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ in our own life. When Paul had that thorn in the flesh, and besought God three times to remove it, and God came and said, my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness, what did Paul say? Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. He would pay any price just to make sure that the power of Christ was resting on him, the power of his resurrection.

But it's connected with the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. And so he said, I take pleasure, do you? In infirmities, the normal New Testament word for sickness. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, and reproaches, and necessities, and distresses, and persecutions for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. Do you know that? That you're strong when you're weak, and you're weak when you're strong. The lame take to pray, did the well and the strong, but the lame.

Jacob was lame after wrestling with the angel of God all night. He was lame for the rest of his life. But now he had power with God, and power with men, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Lord, take it all away if you want to take it all away. So if you're praying for power, Peter said, if you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you, for the spirit of glory and of God is resting on you. Listen, Peter is saying exactly what Paul said.

In different words, but exactly the same. When we're reproached for Christ's sake, then we have power. I remember preaching in a street meeting one time, and somebody threw a stone at me.

Brethren, could I ever preach after that? I don't know why a stone, it didn't hit me by the way, his aim was poor but it bounced off the hood of a car right in front of me. I felt sorry for the fellow that owned the car, it was a big stone. But oh, how I could preach after that.

It just did something for me. I think that if it got thrown 50 stones and hit me 49 times, as long as I was on my feet, I could have kept on preaching. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses, in persecutions, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong. Are you like Paul? We should be, he said, be followers of me, as I am of Christ.

And we should be following Paul. Oh, he's praying that we might be filled with the knowledge of the will of God. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That's a good prayer to pray, because it's in the Bible, but it's quite a safe prayer to pray too, because I'm praying for the will of God to be done. I need to make it more personal that the will of God might be done in my life. That's what Paul was praying for those Christians of the Colossae.

Night and day, praying exceedingly. That's how he spoke once when he wrote to the church at Thessalonica, praying for them. In that case, he was praying that he might be able to see their faces, might help to perfect their faith.

But I'm sure he felt exactly the same about them knowing the will of God, so they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. You know, as Protestants, we often act like Catholics do. They don't go to confession maybe once a week.

I guess a good Catholic would go once a week. Sometimes we good Protestants, we do the same things. We sin, and we plan on sinning again, so we'll stack up enough sins to make it worthwhile, you know, so as not to waste God's time, and then we'll confess 15 sins, and we got that out of the way for another week or two, and then we'll plan on doing it again.

I don't really see any difference between that and the Catholic confessional. I think it's exactly the same. It must be very distressing to God, dishonoring to Jesus Christ, grieving to the Holy Spirit, and certainly unsatisfying to me as a Christian believer that Christians should never plan on sinning.

He knows he may, but he should never plan on it. Do you pray that prayer? It's in Psalm 119, and it goes like this, Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. And I pray that prayer every morning.

God, order my steps today in your word, and don't allow any sin to have dominion over me. Nothing distresses me so much as sin. Oh, how I've cried to God for victory over sin, and how God has granted it, and taken the power out of sin.

I had to want it, for God to do that. He will keep the feet of his saints, for by strength shall no man prevail. He won't prevail by human strength, by human ingenuity, or even by experience.

It'll be always and only by the marvelous grace of God. Paul said it's a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with means which have not profited them that have been exercised therein. Oh, he said let's have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.

But dear people, to be filled with the knowledge of God's will, that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience on long suffering with joyfulness. Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints and light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Oh, people, I could stand and think for a thousand years and not say a word.

The grace of God toward you, toward me. Why? Why? God so loved the world. Why? All we've made for God is trouble.

For thousands of years now. Oh, the patience of God. The patience of God.

Then I'm sure he wants us to increase in prayer. To increase, you know what it says, speaking the truth in love may grow up into him. You share the word of God, you'll grow as you share.

Do you know what I've discovered in sharing Christ with people? I always seem to learn as I'm sharing Christ with people. Sometimes I'm sharing with a person and God shoots something into my mind that I never thought of before. Speaking the truth in love may grow up into him.

I'll grow as I share. And that's why many of us are stunted as Christians because we never share the word of God. When for the time you want to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God.

And it becomes such as have need of milk and not of solid food. That's in Hebrews chapter five. Then surely God wants us to increase in giving.

By the way, that's what that verse in 2 Corinthians chapter eight had to do with giving. This I say, he who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly. He who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according to the purpose of his heart, so let him give. Not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. And then he says, and God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work.

If I don't have glue in my fingers, God will give me money to share with other people. When you get your hands on some extra money, what's the first thing you do? Think of buying a new vacuum cleaner or a new set of golf clubs. What do I think of? R.G. Luternal once stood with a check for \$64 million in his hands.

It was his. He'd sold a couple of factories. He stood there looking at the check.

He closed his eyes and he prayed, Lord, what do you want me to do with this? And God showed him. R.G. Luternal lived in a very small home. You could put two of them inside of many homes I see in this town, a very tiny home, quite adequate for he and his wife, and the rest of the money went to missions and to the

work of God around the world.

But if I've got glue in my fingers, then what? You get as you give, and we try to hold on to it, so then we lose it all, because you know something, dear friend of mine, when you die, he'll leave it all behind, every dollar you have. You can't take even a dollar with you, and if they put a dollar in your coffin, it won't go with you, because you won't be in the coffin, just your body will be in the coffin. Everything you have, you'll leave behind.

Invest it now for Christ's sake. In Ephesians 4, Paul said, let him that stole steal no more. Ah, now we all feel comfortable because we don't steal.

Is that how you feel? Are you tithing? If you're not, you're stealing. I mean, it says so in Malachi 3.10. Ah, then people retreat to have the answer for the preacher. Oh yes, but then that's Old Testament.

Okay, that's Old Testament, but this isn't Old Testament, this is New Testament. Matthew 23, 23, Christ said, you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, but you've omitted the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith. These ought you to have done.

Tithing is right, Christ said. Tithing is right, you did right in tithing, but you shouldn't have left these other things undone. So now what am I going to do with that? If I don't give God at least one tenth of my income, I'm robbing God.

I'm a crook. I heard a man in one of our crusades, he sang the first meeting we had, and he sang the song, here's my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord, and boy, could he sing. Shut your eyes, Bevshei.

It wasn't Bevshei, but it sounded like him. While he was singing, the Lord said to me, he's living in sin, pray for him. My song leader got the same message.

We compared notes afterwards, God told him the same thing. So the two of us were praying for him as it felt that the Lord would get him, and the Lord got him in that meeting. He got up before the people, he wept, he said, you're looking at a cheap crook.

You don't know that. He'd sung in all the churches in the area, everybody knew him. He said, you're looking at a cheap crook.

What did he mean? That he wasn't tithing? No. It was perhaps worse than that, maybe not worse than that, but every company he'd worked for, he'd stolen material where he could, he'd stolen money. He owed the Canadian government so much money in back income taxes, he had to sell his house to make it right, to pay it up.

He never sang again in the crusade, which went for several weeks until the very last meeting, and in the meantime, he'd taken care of all this garbage and got it all straightened up. Oh, if that was a big thing he did, a daring thing. But then after all he'd been stealing.

Well, are you stealing? What did Paul say? Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to put in the bank at ten percent. I'm sure you read that in some revised version somewhere. But you didn't, did you? What did he really say? Ephesians 4, he said, that he may have, let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.

My dear friend, if you have, you have to give to him that needs. Funny thing, I never heard an amen in the whole place. Do we believe it? That's part of growing in grace too.

God will ask me perhaps to give more than I've given. He may even ask me to do some unusual things. I was with Life Action down in Michigan one time and God was speaking.

They didn't take offerings in those meetings. They just said there's an offering box in the prayer room. If God speaks to your heart, you go there.

And I said, Lord, what shall I do? And the Lord told me what to give. It was almost everything I had in my wallet. And then the Lord said, don't forget the Canadian exchange.

Then I had to give him everything I had in my wallet. Anyway, there was a young man and he gave his car. God told him to give his car, so he gave his car to Life Action.

Other people gave rings. Oh, a lot of things happened. It was just a kind of a beautiful time.

I remember a kid got up and he gave a testimony and he said, I don't have a dad and mom. I don't know who my dad and mom are. They may be living.

I don't know where they are. I don't know anything about them. And he said, you know, I'm a Christian now and I've been bumped around from foster home to foster home, but I'm a Christian now.

And he said, I don't feel badly that I don't have a dad and mom. I wish I had, but I don't have one, so I'm thankful to God that he's my father. And so Del Faisenthal got up and said, young man, go and stand by the exit sign down by the door.

So he looked at Del and he walked down and stood there. And then Del just took over and he said, now, see, there's a lot of, there was people there that were not connected with the Life Action Ministries. There were visitors there and so on.

He said, now some of you men need to adopt a certain young man as your son. And I'll tell you, there was just a flock of men went roaring down to the exit sign and grabbed that kid. Oh, pointed something in my heart.

And then one night, Del said, how many of you kids, like they had about maybe 60 kids there that were part of their teams. He said, how many of you kids are flat, stony, broke? You don't have a dollar. Raise your hands.

I bet there was 14, 16 hands went up. Now he said, hold them up high. Now the rest of you, look these people over, see who they are and understand your responsibility.

Now you minister to them with what God has given you, that he may have to give to him that needs. I showed a film on India one time. And afterwards, the man said, I wish you hadn't shown the film.

And I said, why not? He said, I didn't sleep last night. Oh, I said, maybe that's good. Maybe that's what's good, you didn't sleep last night.

But a young man saw the same film. And you know what happened to him? He had a thousand dollars in the bank towards university education. And the Lord said, I want you to give that thousand dollars to

Daniel Abraham in India.

There was a man called Daniel Abraham whose picture was on the film. And I'd said a little bit about him and the great work he was doing up in Ludhiana in Northern India. And so God said, this young man, I want you to give your thousand dollars.

And he said, well, Lord, that's for university. I said, okay, I know that. I want you to give it to Daniel Abraham.

So he contacted me and told me about it. And so we made arrangements about this. And the money was sent to Rijn and they sent it to Daniel Abraham in Ludhiana.

Well, now the kid didn't know what he was going to do. He needed money. He needed a, he needed to rent a room and all this kind of stuff.

He was, his folks moved out to the coast is what happened. And you know what happened? How the Lord took care of that problem. It was just beautiful.

I must share it with you before I close. I mentioned a professor a while ago who was a teacher of psychology, who read the two books and went through his life and got turned inside out for God. Great man of faith and prayer.

This professor came to this kid a day or two after he gave his thousand dollars away. Now nobody knew this had happened except me. I was the only one he told.

And the professor came to him and said, son, my wife and I have been praying for a project for the next 12 months and you're it. We're going to take you into our house. We're going to pay all your bills for the next 12 months, including your university costs.

I'll tell you, you should have seen that kid when he told me what happened. He was just shouting. And you know what? We'd see more of this kind of working of God in our own lives if we would give this way and deny ourselves for God's sake.

Oh, people, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And there's a thousand things left unsaid. Maybe what we've said by the grace of God will stay with us and it'll help us to grow as a Christian, as our Savior increased in wisdom and stature in favor with God and man.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18469.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/the-secret-of-growing/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net