

Signs of a Growing Soul

by John Hames

Growing in grace means to grow in meekness, tenderness, gentleness, patience, goodness, and long-suffering, and to experience a deep settled peace within.

Scripture: Romans 8:28, Ephesians 4:32, Philippians 4:7, Colossians 2:7, Hebrews 12:28, 2 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Sanctification"

Description

John Hames preaches about the three things God desires of His children: growth in grace, the planting of Christ's graces in our hearts, and happiness and success through God's provisions. He also discusses the three stages in the Christian experience: regeneration, sanctification, and the maturing of heavenly graces. Hames emphasizes the signs of a growing and maturing soul, such as evenness of temper, a sweet spirit, queenly forgiveness, a sacred feeling, a sense of rest, deep settled peace, trust in God's providence, and refusal to take offense.

Transcript

There are at least three things that God desires of His children. First, God wants us to have a growth in grace in order that we shall be well rounded in our Christian experience. Second, God wants every grace and fruit which flourished and grew in the bosom of Christ Jesus to be planted within our hearts. Third, God wants us to be happy and successful. He has provided all that humanity needs.

There are three stages in the Christian experience. First, when new life is imparted to the soul in regeneration. Second, in the work of sanctification where all the roots of bitterness are destroyed, and this puts the soul in a healthy state. Therefore, the fruit and graces which were planted in regeneration shall grow without being choked by the weeds of carnality. Third, the maturing and ripening of these heavenly graces. To grow in grace means to grow in meekness, tenderness, gentleness, patience, goodness, and long-suffering. Says Dr. S. A. Keen: "O, how little meek we are; how arrogant in our right opinions; how severe in our requirements; how harsh in our godly judgments. We not only judge (which we are forbidden to do at all) but we judge savagely and openly. We insist on our must for others, as to what we believe, we think, and do. This Christly meekness makes sweet allowance, and accepts their good intentions and well-meanings. O, how lacking we are in patience and impotence! How we want to jerk those who do not see and act quickly up to the light we have. O, for the spirit of Jesus."

In the natural world when grain begins to ripen it takes on a golden color. There are certain marks in the spiritual kingdom that the soul is growing and maturing.

Let us notice a few: First, is an evenness of temper. Christian perfection has to do with the tempers and dispositions of the soul and whenever a person reaches a state to where there is a mildness in the voice, to where all loudness, roughness, harshness, has been burned out, and the soul faculties behave as the sea of Galilee after Jesus rebuked the wind and waves and said, "Peace be still," you can take it as a sign of a growing soul.

Second, a sweet spirit. We are commanded to "Let our sweetness be known unto all men." Phil. 4:5. The Holy Ghost is the very sweetness and essence of God's nature and character, and He pours the warm love of God into our heart, sweetening our affections, emotions, tempers, and dissolving our whole being in a sea of Divine tenderness, refinement, and heavenly-mindedness.

Third, a spirit of queenly forgiveness. One sure mark of growth in grace is a disposition to readily forgive people. Whenever you hold a grudge or brood over a wrong done you, the soul eats poison. When ever you are tempted to feel unkind, just cherish the spirit of forgiveness and a honey-like feeling will settle all over your spirit, which is far better than the feeling of revenge. Unless we cultivate the spirit of forgiveness, there is a danger of a crusty-like feeling forming over our hearts. It is a sign of a big, magnanimous soul to forgive. Little souls hold grudges an the spirit of unforgiveness.

In the fourth place, a sign of a growing soul is a sacred feeling possessing all the faculties. Alfred Cookman says, "The awfulness of the presence of the Spirit to one who was filled would certainly result in a subdued and hallowed state of soul, a sort of silent awe that dares not move. We should feel like stepping softly and moving guardedly." Some one has well said that the ruin of Christianity among some people is the noisy, fussy doings of religion ahead of a Divine Being like Jesus. Do you recall that when the High Priest on the great day of atonement put on his linen robes and went behind the second veil that no one was allowed to follow him. There was an awful hush, and a sense of God's presence. The greatest thing which could happen to some religious professors would be to have a hush come over them. There will be times in your experience when a divine stillness will settle over your whole being, and you want to be alone with God.

Fifth, a sense of rest. "When all the powers are harmonized, each with the other, and all with God, what should prevent our having rest? The storms which swept through our consciousness have all been subdued. There is a difference between peace and rest. Our country has peace, but it does not have rest. O, surely the soul that finds itself enclosed within infinity will realize this experience of rest. O, how rich and satisfying it is to be filled with the spirit and soul rest."

Sixth, a deep settled peace within. This is not merely peace with God, but it is the very peace of God, which means the Dove of peace is nestling within. Whenever this takes place, the little nagging things of time fail to disturb the Sabbath of rest and calm with in. A growing saint should be as a growing boy, out-stripping his old clothes. We should be getting new revelations from the skies, fresh anointings, and undergirdings.

Seventh, "Another indication that the soul is growing is to reach a state in God to where you feel and know that everything is working together for your good, here and hereafter. There is a place. in divine grace to where God can take everything in the past, present, and future and work it out for our good and God's glory. Some one may ask how can slander, mud-flinging work out for our good? Strange as it may seem, the Divine Being can intervene and take the hatred of men and devils and work it out for good. There are some things we cannot understand nor explain. I cannot understand how the deadly poison of prussic acid

that travels up the trunk of a healthy tree is later converted into sweet juices. The sun bathes it, kisses it, and changes it into sweet juices. Just so God can take persecution, opposition, and all that hell may vomit out on us and breathe His Divine breath on them and turn them into soul food and make them work for the believer's good.

Eight, one more sign of a growing saint is to reach the place where the soul refuses to take offense. No matter what is done to it, this big, manly soul simply refuses to be turned from the royal road. Such a one can be pushed forward or backward, put on the official board or left off, but he will not be offended. He is running a race, and he has not the time to turn aside to answer the hiss of a serpent's tongue in the form of an unkind letter. You may throw mud or flowers at him, but he does not turn aside from the royal path. Such a person is not pained if others are pushed forward, and they are left in the background. The man of Calvary, with His thorn-crowned brow, has been so deeply burned into his soul that he does not crave right or left-hand seats. Beloved, are we growing or merely "marking time?" Whenever a child ceases to grow, there is one of three things which may cause it -- an accident, a disease, or the lack of proper nourishment. The great hindering cause of the lack of growth in the Christian life is the remaining carnality, which the Divine gardener uproots all these foreign plants and throws out the stony Adamic nature, it is then the soul really grows. "How many tame, dry, formal preachers just barely creep along with dull sermons, little dry prayer meetings, and no revivals under their ministry. Some of them have to have some elocutionist teach them how to talk for God. Has God made a mistake in calling these men to preach? No, all these preachers possess vast, latent, undreamed of capabilities of victory, power, and zeal if they were fully sanctified and baptized with fire."

Finally, to really grow in grace means a steady advancement on all lines. We should have a stronger faith, a deeper love. We should be taking new territory as Israel of old when they finally entered into Canaan. This is typical of our spiritual inheritance. They won one sweeping victory after another. "The walls of Jericho fell to the ground at the sound of their trumpet and shouts. The sun stood still over Gibeon, and they went forward conquering their foes." These are only illustrations of the speediness of the Church's triumph if she would only find her way to the upper room and tarry till Pentecost really comes. She would sweep from victory to victory. Salvation would roll like a river; devils would flee; hell would put on mourning; angels would rejoice over the multitudes being saved. It is not enough to be merely saved and sanctified. God wants to beautify us and plant all the graces of Christ Jesus within us. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

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