

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

**2Peter 3:18**

## Store In My Heart

### Philemon 13-14

I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.

Written about the same time as the letter to the Colossian brethren, Paul sends this letter with a slave that he had converted during his first imprisonment. Onesimus probably carried this letter and the one to the Colossians from Rome at Paul's request.

This verse reminds us that no matter what we might wish, we cannot force others to submit to God's principles. It must be a free will choice for each individual. All we can do is teach, encourage, and pray. Obedience is something one can only do for himself.



# What Characteristics Are Evidence Of Christian Growth?

**James Dunigan**

The evidence of Christian growth can be broken down into three main areas: hunger for God's Word, confidence, and obedience. These three characteristics are based on love. The work of the Holy Spirit and God's grace within us, help us to grow and start to display evidence of Christian growth.

**Hebrews 5:11-14** says that a growing Christian hungers for God's Word. It explains that just as an infant wants milk at first, the infant cannot stay on milk. At some point, the infant will need solid food in order to mature. The same is true in knowing God. The process of growth involves being taught and even corrected by God as we read His Word (**Hebrews 12:4-13**). Many people continue to grow by learning and being mentored by others who are well instructed in God's Word.

Confidence is another evidence of Christian growth. Confidence is knowing who God is, and desiring His will and plan for our lives. Confidence is understanding that God will be with us - He will never leave us or forsake us. He is there to help us (**Hebrews 13:5-6**). Confidence is knowing that God will fulfill His promises of giving believers eternal life (**2Peter 3:9**). Our hope lies in what Christ has done, and not in our own works (**Ephesians 2:8-10**).

## Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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### For Our Information

Joyce Venable is improving a little bit.

John Venable, Bill's brother, is having to undergo treatments on his jaw.

Paula Laubach got a good report on her blood work.

The Keislars are cruising the ocean near Australia for most of this week.

Dan's Mom, Dottie Henderson, continues to improve and has even driven some last week.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

Confidence also involves knowledge about God and His powerful ways of working in us! We know that when we blow it, we have a mediator and when we confess our wrongs, we will be forgiven (**Hebrews 4:14-16; 1John 1:8-10**). God gives us confidence to trust Him to get us through the circumstances and challenges of life.

Obedience is another evidence of Christian growth. We obey God, not out of restraint, but out of willingness. He loves us and in return we love Him (**1John 4:10,19**). This love shows itself in obedience. **1John 5:3** says, *"This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome."* Out of love, God gave His Son Jesus to die for the world (**John 3:16**), and Jesus died in willingly obedience. This is our example of love!

Other evidence of Christian growth are:

- Sharing the good news of Jesus' death on the cross (**Romans 10:8-14**)
- Continuing in fellowship with God and others (**2John 1-4**).
- Maintaining peace, knowing that God is in control (**Romans 8:28**). He has our best interests at heart and will take care of us (**1Peter 5:6-11**).
- Spending time in God's Word, getting to know Him and following His ways (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).

Evidences of Christian growth are part of what defines the Christian and his or her conduct throughout life. God's design is for believers to mature. **Hebrews 6:1** says, *"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity..."* We are told to deepen our walk and pursue Him! We are to forsake the things that hinder the believer from God and run the course laid out for us.

Christian growth takes time. Do you show evidence of Christian growth? This is not about works or trying to gain something, however it is about serving, loving, and being in fellowship with the Lord.

(While growth may be slow, we should be able to see some progress from year to year, if we are putting forth the effort needed to be pleasing unto God. DLH)

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

