

Let the Body of Christ grow with God's growth

Growth is an integral part of all life; from plants, the animal kingdom, to humanity. We expect to see growth in all that lives, so it is in the body of Christ. The apostle Paul explained to the Colossian believers; *"...holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God"* (Colossians 2:19).



As Paul was warning Colossian believers of imposters infiltrating the congregation, he inserts this affirmation of how God works to grow His church. Healthy saints cling to Christ who *"is the head of the church, his body"* (Ephesians 5:23). It's Christ who administers nourishment and knits together every member of the church body. No one is left out or overlooked; however, each member must accept the growth God gives.

God designed growth

God's design for *"the whole body"* is to grow its *"joints and ligaments"* which are the individual Christians that make up the local church congregation. No member is ever qualified to step aside and stop growing in Christ's body. Individual believers grow best when connected and functioning selflessly in the body.

Christ circulates the necessary spiritual nutrients for growth

through church relationships by feeding on God's Word, united worship, fellowship, prayer, and service. This is how individual members grow connections with other members to develop a healthy church body. Sadly, if a limb separates from the body, it quickly withers, losing the nutrition for life because it chose amputation. This is never God's intention or desire.

Christians need each other. **First**, because togetherness maintains connection with the Head (Christ). **Second**, the various gifting's of other believers enable you to receive nutrition from the Head. **Third**, it's only in the church body that you grow *"with a growth that is from God."* Any appearance of growth that's isolated from the body is not from God and is imitation (James 3:13-18).

Growth is interpersonal

This was Paul's point to the Ephesians; *"speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ"* (Ephesians 4:15). If the body development is not Christ centred, with the exaltation of Christ as the source and purpose, it's not of God. Paul explained it to the Corinthians this way; *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth"* (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Believers need each other in order for God to grow them in Christ for His glory alone.

Paul personalised this for the Ephesians by saying; *"the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love"* (Ephesians 4:16). When 'agape' love is deficient in the body or an individual, growth is stunted and the body is deprived of the ability to grow in God's strength.

Here, Paul is speaking to heart intention; your motives make a difference to your church growth. Personal growth, or lack of

it, in part, effects the growth of other members of Christ's body in your local congregation. It's inescapable! If God's love dwells in you (Rom 5:5), you will be compelled by that love (2Co 5:14) to benefit other members in Christ's body by doing everything you can to permit God's strength to be your strength.

Today, intentionally do the things which will enable the body of Christ to grow with God's growth? Share this with another believer to encourage their growth. The Lord will be honoured, they will be blessed, and you will be joyed.

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