

## “GROWTH”

**2018 Adventure Camp – Maroon Bells – Snowmass Wilderness, Colorado**

**Date:** Wednesday, August 8, 2018

**Location:** Glenwood Springs Hotel (*Downstairs Meeting Room*)

**Theme of Study:** Growth

**Presented by:** Sheldon Monson

### Introduction:

#### “It’s In Your Hands, Son”

High on a hilltop overlooking the beautiful city of Venice, Italy, there lived a wise old man whom people called a genius. Legend had it that he could answer any question posed him.

Two local boys decided they could fool the old man. Figuring they had a plan that was perfectly foolproof, the boys caught a small bird and headed for the hilltop. As they approached the wise old man, one of the boys held the little bird in his hands.

“Wise old man,” he said, “Could you tell me if this bird in my hands is dead or alive?”

The old man sized up the two boys, and without hesitation, he answered, “Son, if I tell you that the bird is alive, you will close your hands and crush the bird to death. If I say the bird is dead, you will open your hands and he will fly away. You see, son, in your hands you hold the power of life and death.”

The boys looked at one another in total amazement. This old man truly is very wise, they thought. They had not fooled him for one minute. The old man then stroked his long white beard and smiled gently. “This I say to both of you without qualification,” he explained with a sincere, caring voice. “In your hands you hold the seeds of failure – or the potential for success. Your hands are very capable, but they must be used for the right things. They must be used to reap rewards that you are capable of attaining.”

As the boys descended from the wise old man’s hill, a new attitude overtook them, and they eagerly freed their captive bird. As they both watched the bird flap its wings and fly to freedom, the boys realized how very precious the old man’s advice really was.

The Speaker’s Sourcebook, by Glenn Van Ekeren, p. 197.

Today let’s talk about the subject of “growth.” Are you growing physically? Mentally? Emotionally? What about spiritually?

“The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can’t read them.”

*Mark Twain*

**Proverbs 18:15** “The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.”

Growing physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually requires EFFORT! It is hard work! God never said that success would come easily.

God wants us to work like everything depends upon us, and then trust Him to supply what we lack.

**Philippians 4:13** “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

As Christians we should be known for our “work ethic.” Not only should we be able to work hard – but we should learn to do things well. We should strive for quality and excellence!

**Ecclesiastes 9:10** “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”

**For example:** If you are planning to work in the trades for a living – be a “craftsman.” Be good at what you do. Get an education, and stay on the cutting edge of what is new. Stay on-top of your field of study, by constantly sharpening and updating your skills. Be the best at what you do!

The same would apply for any other type of job you may have.

“It’s Your Choice”

The Japanese bonsai tree is a beautiful and perfectly formed plant specimen. Its stature is small and remains that way no matter how old the tree gets. In fact, the bonsai only grows fifteen to eighteen inches tall.

When the bonsai peeks its head above the ground, the young sapling is pulled from the soil. The Japanese then tie off its taproot and some of the feeder roots; thus the growth of the bonsai is deliberately stunted. The result is a miniature tree. It’s beautiful but small.

There is another tree that fascinates me. It grows on the other side of the continent. California possesses a forest of giant sequoias. In fact, one of these giants, the General Sherman, stands 272 feet high and measures 79 feet in circumference. This giant tree is so large that if someone were to cut it down, there would be enough lumber in that one tree to build thirty-five five-room homes. That is phenomenal!

The major difference exists between the growing patterns of the sequoia and the bonsai. The bonsai’s growth is purposely stunted, while the sequoia was started as a small seed in the rich California soil. It was nourished by the minerals, rain, and pleasant sunshine. This little seed became a giant.

Neither the bonsai nor the General Sherman had a choice in determining how large it would become. You and I do.

The Speaker’s Sourcebook, by Glenn Van Ekeren, pp. 203-204.

Man can affect the growth of a tree. But God Created the variety we see in nature. Don’t let anyone limit your growth or stop you from achieving your potential.

**II Thessalonians 3:10-12: V10** “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

**V11** For we hear that there are some who work among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

**V12** Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.”

**Proverbs 6:6** “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise...”  
*(Read verses 7-12 also.)*

Learn to work hard and play hard! Use your life up – especially in serving and helping your family and friends, and of course others God has called, and your neighbors in the world too.

We can't GROW unless we are DOING SOMETHING! Be a “doer.”

We grow stronger physically by increasing the amount of weight we lift, or by increasing the speed or intensity of the workout, or by increasing the duration of training.

A hiking trip like this – makes you stronger mentally and physically. In life – we must learn to PRESS FORWARD ALWAYS! Take a positive faith-filled approach to facing difficult things! If you are in a river with a current and you are going upstream – you will go backwards unless you are going forward. In the world in which we live, Christians must go against the current!

How do we grow stronger spiritually? We grow stronger spiritually in much the same way we do physically.

Notice – **Romans 5:3-5: V3** “...but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

**V4** And perseverance, character; and character, hope.

**V5** Now hope does not disappoint...”

James in his epistle to the 12 tribes which were scattered abroad, wrote about profiting from and growing from trials. Note:

**James 1:2-4: V2** “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

**V3** Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience,

**V4** But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

Continuing...

**James 1:12** “Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

**Ephesians 4:14-15: V14** “...We should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.

**V15** But, speaking the truth in love, **may grow up in all things** into Him who is the head – Christ.”

**II Peter 3:18** “**But grow in grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

“How High Can You Jump?”

Flea trainers have observed a predictable and strange habit of fleas while training them. Fleas are trained by putting them in a cardboard box with a top on it. The fleas will jump and hit the top of the cardboard box over and over again. As you watch them jump and hit the lid, something very interesting becomes obvious. The fleas continue to jump, but they are no longer jumping high enough to hit the top. Apparently, Excedrin headache 1738 forces them to limit the height of their jump.

When you take off the lid, the fleas continue to jump, but they will not jump out of the box. They won't jump out because they can't jump out. Why? The reason is simple. They have conditioned themselves to jump just so high. Once they have conditioned themselves to jump just so high, that's all they can do!

*Many times, people do the same thing. They restrict themselves and never reach their potential. Just like the fleas, they fail to jump higher, thinking they are doing all they can do.*

The Speaker's Sourcebook, by Glenn Van Ekeren, p. 199.

Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.

Sometimes we will experience difficulties in life. Although you may be tempted to stop or coast – don't do it. Work through discomforts, adversity, and temptations. You will become stronger.

### **You can help others grow too**

You can help others reach their goals. And when it comes to your brothers and sisters in Christ – the ultimate goal is to become a member of the Family of God in the Kingdom of God! The Apostle Paul inspired and motivated Christians to endure difficulties and press forward toward the kingdom of God. Paul did this through His words and His example. Notice one such example:

**Acts 14:19-22: V19** “Then Jews for Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* outside the city, supposing him to be dead.

**V20** However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

**V21** And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.

**V22 Strengthening the souls of the disciples**, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’”

In **Ezekiel 34:1-10** – We see that God holds the shepherds of His people responsible for NOT strengthening the weak, and for not caring for their flocks!!! David, on the other hand, when he was just a teenager killed a lion and a bear in order to defend the sheep – **I Samuel 17:34-37**. We must be like David!

The **Proverbs 31** woman is a woman of strong character. **Proverbs 31:25** notes: “Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come.”

Esther was this kind of woman. And God used her powerfully to strengthen a NATION! Ladies – you can be like this too!

**Esther 4:13-17: V13** “Then Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: ‘Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews.

**V14** If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. **Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such a time as this?***

**V15** Then Esther told *them* to return *this answer* to Mordecai:

**V16** ‘Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast from me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And *so* I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; and if I perish, I perish!’

**V17** Then Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.”

Young people – ladies and men – who knows what God has in store for you. You could find yourself in a situation where you too can have a BIG IMPACT on others.

**Conclusion:** It may be all right to be content with what you have; but never be content with what you are. Always seek to grow, to be better, and to make those around you better people too.

God will strengthen your character if you yield to His lead. Never stop growing spiritually. God is preparing you for some REALLY BIG THINGS that lie ahead – between now and the return of Jesus Christ – and in the kingdom to come!

How much you grow is up to you!