

Intro:

We are working on a series called “Christian Growth”. At the moment we are in 2 Peter 3.

The chapter ends with an admonition to Christians to ‘Grow in Grace’. That is the goal of progressive sanctification. There are four aspects of it highlighted by what we call the ‘beloved be’s’ of 2 Peter 3.

1. Beloved be mindful (1-2)
2. Beloved be not ignorant (8)
3. Beloved be diligent (14)
4. Beloved be ware (17)

Each of these exhortations has something to do with the mind. And each of them has something to do with Christian growth.

In fact, we might refer to these four things as components of Christian growth.

The first component of Christian growth is this: *Beloved be mindful of the Word.*

- Christian growth starts with the Word of God.
- Christian growth is rooted in the Word of God.
- Christian growth is sustained by the Word of God.
- Christian growth is directed by the Word of God.

The second component of Christian growth is this: *Beloved Be Not Ignorant ... of God.*

- We are warned against ignorance (that means knowledge is available)
- We are called to accuracy (that means God can be known)
- We are able to be changed by this knowledge (by repentance)

The third component of Christian growth is this: *Beloved Be Diligent ... of your walk*

- We have a reason: the coming of the day of the Lord
- We have an object: holiness and blamelessness
- We should have an intensity

Today we come to the fourth ‘Beloved be’

*Beloved Beware
Of Your Self*

Read 2 Pt 3.14-18, text 17-18

Proposition: The fourth component of Christian growth involves spiritual self-protection.

I. The potential for spiritual distortion (3.15-16)

- A. The hope of salvation as taught by Paul (15)
 - 1. Patience of our Lord = the Lord's tarrying to return
 - 2. Patience = salvation in that the Lord's longsuffering brings men to salvation
 - 3. The delays are taught by the apostle Paul (note term 'beloved') (*cf.* Rm 2.4)
- B. The danger of distortion of Paul's teaching (and other Scriptures) (16)
 - 1. Paul wrote of 'these things' – end time things Peter had just mentioned
 - 2. Some of Paul's writings are hard to understand (and so with Peter's)
 - 3. Unstable individuals 'wrest' – lit., put on the rack and torture – Paul's teachings
 - 4. This distortion means their destruction

II. The need for constant discernment (3.17)

- A. Beloved you know these things 'before'
 - 1. "prognosis"
 - 2. If you know beforehand, you can change behaviour

"When a medical prognosis is made, a patient is better able to prepare himself for what is ahead and if possible, to correct himself. When a doctor says, "If you continue to eat as much as you do now, you will have serious heart problems in a few years," the patient "knows beforehand" and can therefore change his life in accord with the information he has."¹

- B. Beloved beware
 - 1. Beware of being carried away
 - a. Word indicates the movement of a group
 - b. Majority is not always right

¹ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 2:878 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985).

2. Beware of unprincipled men
3. Beware of falling from steadfastness
 - a. The goal of Christian growth is stability (see Eph 4)
 - b. The believer can be shaken from his steadfastness and make foolish decisions

III. The objective of continuing development (3.18)

- A. Instead of instability, keep on growing into more stability
 1. Grow in grace: come to depend more and more on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit
 2. Grow in knowledge: grow in relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ
- B. Live for His Glory

Conclusion:

We have said

- Beloved, be mindful of God's word
- Beloved, be not ignorant of the character and person of our God
- Beloved, be diligent concerning your personal Christian life
- Beloved, beware, lest anyone shake you

Are you shakeable?