**Sustaining Grace**

**Ephesians 4:11-16**

1. **God’s plan for us is to grow into Christ’s likeness.**
   * This is the very reason we were created.
   * Messiah Jesus is the perfect representation of God to us and what it means to be made in the image of God.
   * Messiah Jesus also became like us in all ways.
   * This is not something we can do on our own power, strength, and understanding.
   * God gives us resources to live out his will for us in this life.

* The power and presence of the Holy Spirit
* The light of the Word, the Bible
* The fellowship of other believers
  + Our growth as followers of Jesus is dependent upon God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

1. **We are on a life-long journey to become like Jesus**

* We face new challenges and decisions almost every day
* We will answer the questions of life based upon our character and values
* We cooperate with God by agreeing with God’s plan for us
* The simple answer we must give: “Yes.”

1. **Growth in grace is built on saving and sanctifying grace**

* In saving grace: we trust Jesus as our Savior.
* In sanctifying grace: we trust Jesus as our Lord.
* In sustaining grace: we trust Jesus as our Friend.

1. **God’s purpose for us is to grow up in our faith.**

* 1 Peter 2:2
* Hebrews 6:1-2

**Causes of immaturity:**

* **Priorities**
* **Peer pressure**
* **Pull of the world**
* **Pre-occupations**

1. **Ways to grow and mature in our faith**

**Grow deeper in commitment**

* The consecrated life Romans 6:4-6; 12:1-2
* The uncompromising life of holiness
* The focused life of Hebrews 12:1-2

**Grow deeper in fellowship**

* Worship and praise
* Mutual encouragement Hebrews 3:13
* Openness and accountability

**Grow deeper in knowledge**

* Study of the Word Hebrews 4:12
* Growing together Colossians 1:28-29

**Grow deeper in ministry**

* Finding ways to love one’s neighbor Acts 1:8
* Bearing witness to the truth we profess 1 Peter 3:15

Growing in grace requires two essential ingredients:

1. **God’s grace**

**Person**

**Power**

**Presence**

1. **Our willingness**

2 Timothy 2:15

Soren Kierkegaard: “Purity of heart is to will one thing.”