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Bible Study – September 24-October 15, 2019
Growing the Church God's Way

1. The Lord desires for His Church to grow **spiritually** and **numerically**
 - a. He provides **gifts** to ensure spiritual **growth** and **development**. Ephesians 4:11-16
 - b. He provides **increase** through our **connection** with Him as the Head. Colossians 2:19
2. Yet church grow is not automatic...
 - a. Some churches become **stagnant**
 - b. Other churches enter a **downward spiral** till they cease to exist

There are two important principles of church growth that must be understood and applied:

I. Each Part Must Do Its Share

A. Church growth is enhanced when each member:

1. Does his or her **part** as a member of the **Body**. Ephesians 4:16
 - a. We all have a **function** to fulfill. Romans 12:1-3
 - b. Every member is **important**. 1 Corinthians 12:12-22
2. Is drawing **strength** from the Head. Colossians 2:19
 - a. Directly through God's **indwelling**. Philippians 2:12-13; 4:13; Ephesians 3:16, 20
 - b. Indirectly from **one another**. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

B. Church growth is **endangered** when:

1. Members **do not** do their part.
 - a. The church is **handicapped** by **nonfunctioning** members.
 - b. The church cannot perform to its **full potential**.
2. Other members have to **make up** the difference.
 - a. They often **struggle** under the extra **burden**.
 - b. They sometimes become **disheartened**, even **give up**.

II. The Strong Must Bear with the Weak

A. Church growth is **enhanced** when:

1. Strong members understand the **weakness** in others.
 - a. As the church **evangelizes**:
 - i. There will always be **babes** in Christ.
 - ii. There will always be those who are **weak**.

"Where lives are changed, hurts are healed, hope is restored, and Jesus is Lord!"

- b. As the church grows, such growth can be **messy**. Proverbs 14:4
 - i. Many new members haven't had the benefit of good **role models**
 - ii. Some families may not know their **duties** as parents, spouses, children
 - iii. It will take time for many Christians to learn **principles** of **godly living**

- 2. Strong members **remember** their **duty** toward the weak
 - a. To bear with the **infirmities** of the weak. Romans 15:1-2; Galatians 6:1-2
 - i. Not about **pleasing** ourselves only
 - ii. To **restore** those overtaken in **faults**
 - b. To be **patient** with the weak. 1 Thessalonians 5:14
 - i. It helps promote spiritual **growth**.
 - ii. Sometimes **expectations** of the weak are too **high**.

- B. Church growth is **endangered** when:
 - 1. Strong members become **disheartened**.
 - a. **Weary** in well-doing – Galatians 6:9
 - b. Feel like your **labor** is in **vain** – I Corinthians 15:58
 - c. Wonder if the “**grass is greener**” on the other side
 - 2. Strong members forget their source of **strength**
 - a. **Depend** too **much** on their own strength
 - b. **Depend** too **little** on the **Lord**

- C. Whether considered a **strong** or **weak** member, it's important to remember:
 - a. **Long-suffering** is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23
 - b. **Long-suffering** with **joy** is a gift from God. Colossians 1:10-11
 - c. God's strength is **perfect** and **unlimited**
 - d. The **help** of the **Lord** is available to us.

Credit: Mark A. Copeland, Executable Outlines