

GROWING AND GROWING

Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

—*Luke 2:52*

INTRODUCTION

Do you have a growth chart on your wall at home so you can measure how tall you're getting over time? That's fun, and it's a great way to keep track of your physical growth in terms of height. It's possible to use different kinds of charts to keep track of other ways you're growing. For instance, your doctor probably has a chart that shows how your weight has increased over the years. And have you ever gone with your mom or dad to a parent-teacher conference at school and seen a chart that shows how much you're learning compared with other kids your age? That's a way to measure how much your mind is growing! There are other types of growth that can't be easily measured on a graph. For example, how are you growing in your relationship with God? How about your relationships with other people?

Today's devotion is a reminder that there's a whole lot more to growing up than just growing taller. It's based on Luke 2:52, which says, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." The devotion is called "Growing and Growing."

DEVOTION

The ride attendant stopped Macey when she was getting on the Superman: Ultimate Flight ride at Six Flags amusement park. As he held up a measuring stick, Macey waited patiently.

"You can go," he said, and she and her brother climbed aboard.

"I'm glad you can ride this now," said Tyson.

Strapped in next to him, Macey grinned. "Me too."

Their seats swung back, putting them in "flying" position. Then they started climbing the hill. "Up, up, and away!" Tyson said. The next three minutes were a blur of high-speed dives, twists, spirals, and loops.

Getting out of her seat, Macey said, "That was incredible!"

Tyson grinned. "Wanna go on Batman: The Ride?"

"Yeah," she said. "Now that I'm fifty-four inches tall, I'm going on every ride in the park!"

Are you growing in height only? Or are you also growing in the other ways Jesus did? Like him, are you growing in wisdom, in your relationship with God, and in your relationships with others? You eat right, exercise, and get plenty of sleep so your body will grow up big and strong. Do everything you can to foster your spiritual growth as well.

PEOPLE IN BIBLE TIMES

Jesus grew in wisdom by learning the Scriptures. Jesus grew in favor with God by obeying him. He grew in favor with others by showing them compassion and serving them.

QUESTIONS

1. King Saul was a tall man, yet he displeased God by not obeying him. Zacchaeus was a short man, yet he pleased Jesus by repenting of his greedy ways and becoming a generous man of faith. Do you think physical growth is the kind of growth that matters most to God? Does it matter to God at all? Why or why not?

Note that physical growth is important so we can be healthy and strong to serve God, but otherwise it doesn't really matter how tall or short we are.

2. There's a difference between growing smarter (learning a lot of things) and growing wiser (learning what to do with what you know). Hebrews 5:14 says that people who are mature have learned how to tell the difference between good and evil. Do you think it's enough just to *know* what's right and what's wrong? What would be even more important than that?

The answer, of course, is: to *do* what's right and *not do* what's wrong!

3. There are ways that you might keep track of how much you're growing in your relationship with God. For example, you could count how many Bible verses you've memorized or make a chart of how many times you've gone to church. These things are important, but are they the main things God is concerned about? What are some other things that might be more important to him?

Some answers are: how much your love for him has grown, how obedient you are to him, how much you are willing to serve him, how much faith you put in him, etc.

4. You could use charts to keep track of how much you're growing in your relationships with others. For instance, you could count how many friends you have or make a chart of how many birthday parties you are invited to. But are those the most important things to God? What might he consider to be more important?

Some answers are: how loyal you are to your friends, how you consider their needs as well as your own, how willing you are to help them when they need you, how willing you are to be friends with kids who aren't very popular, etc.

5. First Corinthians 3:6 says that you can plant a seed and water it, but God makes it grow. What does this tell you about spiritual growth?

The answer is: Both you and God have a part to play in your spiritual growth. You need God's help to grow spiritually! So do your part by reading the Bible and doing your best to obey what it says, and pray that God will help you grow up in all the ways he wants you to.