**Growth in Christ: Part II**

 In one sense growth in Christ can be summarized in terms of fear of the Lord. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10). It is the dominating awareness of Who God is, who you are, and how all of life is vertically and horizontally related. It focuses on Who God is as Creator, Sustainer, Controller, and Deliverer of His world and His people. It emphasizes God's power (totally and completely sovereign), wisdom and knowledge (infinite in His wisdom), and goodness and love (perfect in His love).

 Growth in Christlikeness requires knowledge that is properly applied with the right motivation for thinking, wanting, and doing (Matt. 7:24-27; Titus 1:1). The whole person is involved in regeneration and in sanctification. We grow in understanding God and self and in the application of this truth as we live and breathe and have our existence in the Triune God (Acts 17:24-31).

 Several non-negotiable truths all essential for Godly living. These truths/principles form a set of beliefs (presuppositions) and a worldview. First, God is God and you are not. Simple and yet profound. Think with me as you consider the impact of that truth. At some time you will be faced with a reality of who God is. Second, God is the ever-present, all powerful Creator and Controller of His world. Third, in His BIGNESS, God is good, powerful, and purposeful.  Fourth, believers were designed in eternity past to be *in Christ* (union with Him) for the purpose of being like Christ in anticipation of dwelling in God's presence eternally (see Eph.1:4).

 Our God has revealed these truths for His glory and the good of His people which is another non-negotiable truth. God’s power and purpose are supremely manifested as He brings His people and creation into another sphere of reality and existence. The believer is regenerated by the supernatural and radical work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s heart. The Spirit indwells the individual believer and the church. In a real sense, the believer and the church are the most changed persons on earth – another non-negotiable truth. Consequently, the believer and the church is expected to become more like Christ – another non-negotiable truth (Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:9; Eph. 4:11-14). Growth is Christlikeness is a duty, privilege, and blessing. It is a remarkable adventure initiated, developed, and continued by God the Spirit.

 Growth in Christlikeness begins with a right knowledge of the origin, destiny, identity, and purpose of the God-man Jesus and one's self. Throughout the gospel of John, John records Jesus' emphasis on Jesus' correct knowledge of His of origin and His destiny. This was in contradistinction to the Jews (John 6:41-43, 52; 7:27, 35, 41-42; 8:19, 22, 52-53). These people had ears but did not hear and eyes but did not see. They had no fear of God. Believers are to grow in fear of the Lord.

**Application**:

1. Define fear of the Lord.

2. Knowledge of God and self are linked. How does that truth help you apply Matthew 22:37-40 daily?

3. How would you describe the character of Christ? See Ps. 40:6-8.