

## God's answer to why the Bible is SO important ↓

- † <sup>NIV</sup> **2 Timothy 3:15** "...the holy Scriptures, ...are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."
- † <sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 1:23** "...you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God..."
- † <sup>NAS</sup> **John 8:31-32** [Jesus said:] "If you abide in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; <sup>32</sup> and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
- † <sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 20:32** "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."
- † <sup>NAS</sup> **Matthew 4:4** [Jesus said:] "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

**NOW, knowing the vital importance of God's Word for everyone who wants to go to heaven, I †invite, †urge, and †challenge you to follow this simple Bible reading program! YOU WILL BE BLESSED!**

- **Get a Bible** – *your own or ask us for one!*
- **Skim over a few questions** – *so you can read with purpose!*
- **Read ONE chapter each day** – *Bible chapters are short!*
- **See today's insert or [www.blc7500.com](http://www.blc7500.com)** – *for the Week 1 Schedule and Questions!*
- **Get a new ½ page every other week** – *beginning on January 10, either at Bethlehem on our church website!*
- **Complete the Bible** – *in 4 ½ years (read 1 chapter/day, M-F).*

**Conclusion:** Growth is normal – *physically, mentally, spiritually* – for Jesus and for us! **Please join me in reading through the Bible!** If you are willing, say: *Amen!*

This and other sermons are available on Bethlehem's website: [www.blc7500.com](http://www.blc7500.com)  
Please share them with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers!  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Rd., Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230

# "GROWTH is NORMAL!"

## So how are YOU growing – in the Word?

Based on Luke 2:40-52 NIV



2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas – 2010  
Sunday, January 3 → 8:15 & 10:45

**Introduction:** Happy New Year! May the Triune God grant *one and all* a most blessed 2010! **And how should we measure the blessedness of this New Year?** By remembering that the *BEST blessings* are *ETERNAL blessings!*

*Dear friends in Christ,* here are some good reasons to be optimistic as we begin 2010:

- *"...with God all things are possible."* (Matt. 19:26 NIV)
- Jesus' work is *finished for us and for all!* (John 19:30)
- In Christ *we are God's very children!* (1 John 3:1)
- *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Rom. 8:31 NIV)

Now, *knowing of God's great power, work, and love,* we have this wonderful, ongoing invitation: *"Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken."* (Psalm 55:22 NAS)

Since the Triune God is so wonderful, **it is normal that we should desire to grow** in ✦ knowing Him, ✦ knowing His will for our lives, and ✦ doing whatever He says!

In today's sermon, we will consider the various ways in which Jesus grew (based on Luke 2:40-52); then consider how we can grow in the Word (a new BLC program called KNOW and GROW).

### 1. **Jesus' Growth to the Age of 12:**

- a. It began with Mary's conception – *By the Holy Spirit!*
- b. It continued in her womb – *For approximately nine months!*
- c. It continued after – ✦ His birth, ✦ His visit by the shepherds, ✦ His naming, ✦ His presentation at the temple, ✦ His visit from the Magi, ✦ His escape to Egypt, and ✦ His return to Nazareth. The Bible sums up Jesus' growth with these words: <sup>40</sup> **“And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.”**
  - i. Jesus' body – it did not remain in His mother's womb or the size of an infant; instead, *it grew in a normal way and became strong!*
  - ii. Jesus' pattern of behavior – it was wise, *something all people should strongly desire* – because **“wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.”** (Proverbs 8:11 NIV) **Do you lack wisdom, but desire it?** The Bible says: **“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”** (James 1:5 NAS)

### 2. **An Example of Jesus' Growth When He Was 12:**

- a. Each year Jesus and his parents made the trip of approximately 75 miles (65 on a straight line) from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. They traveled with various relatives and friends.
- b. Possibly similar to the village of Tingandogo (in Burkina Faso), the community (or traveling companions) – *rather than individual parents* – supervised the children. That is probably how Jesus – *when He was twelve-years-old* – was accidentally left behind in Jerusalem.
- c. Finally, <sup>46</sup> **“After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.”** Jesus was ✦ at the church, ✦ sitting down (not running around), ✦ listening (to hear and comprehend), and ✦ responding with questions (for further clarification). *A good pattern for all children, youth, and adults!*
- d. <sup>47</sup> **“Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.”** Jesus is God – *amazing!* But He also learned and grew according to His human nature. Jesus ✦ wanted to learn, ✦ made it a priority, and ✦ followed through! *How are you doing in similar ways?* ♥ Do you have a hunger for the Word (Matthew 5:6)? ♥ Is Bible-time a high priority in your life (Matthew 4:4)? ♥ Are you determined to follow through (John 8:31-32)?

### 3. **Bethlehem's New KNOW and GROW Program:**

Whatever YOU are; whoever YOU are; wherever YOU live; whatever YOU do; whatever YOU have; whatever YOU need; **YOU will benefit from the Bible!**