



**Things that Hinder:**

- Ineffective Preaching
- Ineffective Leadership
- A Lack of Love Among the Members
- A Contentious Spirit
- Uncontrolled Tongues
- A Lack of Commitment




**Three Basic Facts:**

- Growth is Essential to the Continuity of the Church.
- The Lord's Church in the first Century Grew.
- The Lord's Church in the first Century Grew Rapidly.




**Growth Essential to Continuity**

- Spiritual Growth, 2 Peter 3:18; Galatians 5:22-23.
- Numerical Growth.
- The fact is – all of us will die, Hebrews 9:27.
- If there are no conversions, sooner or later the church in a given community will cease to exist!




**The Lord's Church In the First Century Grew.**

- Acts 2:41 – 3,000 souls.
- Colossians 1:23 – in 30 years the gospel had been preached throughout the known world.
- Daniel 2:34-35,44-45 – The stone that was cut out without hands (the Lord's kingdom) became a great mountain and filled the whole earth!



**The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church Grew Rapidly!**

- Acts 1:8; 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7 – the growth of the church in Jerusalem.
- Acts 6:8-9:31 – the growth of the church in Palestine and Samaria.
- Acts 9:32-12:24 – the growth of the church in Gentile lands.



**Grew Rapidly – Con't**

- Acts 12-25-16:5 – growth through efforts of Paul and co-workers. Westward to Cyprus, Perga, Antioch, Lystra, Derbe.
- Acts 16:6-19:26 – in urban centers, from eastern to western world – Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus.
- Acts 19:21-28:31 – in Roman Empire.

## In Making such Growth Obstacles were overcome

A National Religion. Deuteronomy 5:2;  
Matthew 10:5-6; Mark 16:15.  
Racial Prejudice. John 4:9; Acts 11:1-3;  
22:21-22.  
Geography. Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47  
Political Resistance. Acts 5:18; 7:58; 12:1-2;  
16:19-23.

## Obstacles

Internal Strife, Acts 6:1; 15:1-2; I  
Corinthians 1:10-13.  
Indifference, Acts 17:32  
Religious Error, Acts 15:1-2; 17:16;  
Galatians 1:6-8; I Corinthians 15:12.  
Worldliness, I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-11.

## Things a Local Church Must do if it Grows:

Stay sound in the faith. Acts 2:42; I John  
4:6; I Timothy 1:3; Titus 2:1; 2 John 9.  
When error creeps in, the numbers often  
diminish, Acts 20:29-30; I John 2:19  
Desire Growth. Daniel 2:34,44-45; Romans  
1:14-15; I Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9

## Must Deal with Problems when they Arise.


God dealt with Ananias, Acts 5:1-11.  
Consider Corinth, I Corinthians 1:10-13.  
Consider problem of worldliness, I Corinthians  
5:1,2,4-5.  
Problem of Unfaithfulness, 2 Thessalonians 3:6.  
Problem of Religious Error, I John 4:1; Revelation  
2:2; Romans 16:17-18.  
Problem of Contentiousness, Titus 3:10.

## To Grow, a Local church must:

Develop Courage, Joshua 1:6-7,9; Acts  
4:13,29; 9:29; 13:45; Proverbs 28:1  
Discover and develop the talents of the  
members, Matthew 25:14-30; Hebrews  
5:12-14.  
Have Stated Goals. Ephesians 3:11; Genesis  
3:15; Galatians 4:4; Genesis 12:3;  
Galatians 3:16

## To Grow, the members must Work!

Must be Laborers, I Corinthians 3:9.  
We are His workmanship, Ephesians 2:10.  
We are God's Soldiers, 2 Timothy 2:3.  
Illus. Lee Bickman, Pres. Of National Biscuit  
Co. – "No one ever became a great leader  
or a great success on an eight hour day"




### To Grow, we must Pray!

Acts 2:42; 4:31; 12:5; 13:3; 16:25; 20:36-37; 27:35; 28:15.

Other Scriptures: I Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1; James 5:16.

When we pray we are seeking God's help as we endeavor to do His work – work we can not succeed in *without* His help!



### Why Do we want the church to Grow?

The church constitutes the saved, Acts 2:47.

The church is the body of the reconciled, Ephesians 2:16.

We want the church to grow because the Lord wants the church to grow, because *we* want to be saved, and we want *others* to be saved!



### What Must I do to be Saved?

Hear the word of God, Romans 10:17

Believe the Gospel, Mark 16:15-16

Repent, Acts 2:38; 17:30

Confess faith, Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized ... “for the remission of sins,” Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27

Be Faithful, Revelation 2:10