

## What Christian Leaders are saying about *Born to Grow*

“*Born to Grow* by Pierre Eade provides any Christian seeking to personally worship God in spirit and truth with a wonderful, practical guide for spiritual maturing in Christ. This thoughtful book provides profound biblical, historical, and pragmatic instruction for drawing closer to God through spiritual discipline. Journey through its pages and be abundantly blessed.”

- **Robert Sterns, Founder and Executive Director of Eagles’ Wings**

“So many Christian books make Christian growth into a chore—almost a legalistic, prescriptive, nearly impossible task. You must read Pierre Eade’s *Born to Grow*. His delightful humor, stories, insights, and growing tips will encourage, motivate, and empower you in the joyful journey of spiritual growth in Christ. Take the journey. This book will take you somewhere Good with God!”

- **Dr Larry Keefauver, Bestselling Christian Author, International Teacher**

“Take the journey of spiritual growth from one of the Church’s most promising young authors. *Born to Grow* is refreshing, insightful and inspiring! It is one of the most enjoyable books that I have read in a long time. Take it from me, if you want to grow in your walk with God, read this book.”

- **Dr. Scott McDermott, Lead Pastor, New Testament Scholar, International Speaker**

"Pierre Eade has a flare for writing that tickles the mind. Furthermore the sensitive encouragement to grow in faith with humility, courage, and grace are inspiring and hopeful. I highly recommend *Born to Grow* to nurture and spur you on in Christ."

- **Dr. Scott Turansky, Author of *Parenting is Heart Work***

"Through a fun and witty exploration of the Christian life, Pierre Eade presents four ways every Christian must grow to really enjoy intimacy with Abba Father. You'll love the stories and practical teaching Pierre presents as you take the journey to the good place God has for your life."

- **Michael J. Pfau, M.Ed., Professional Life Coach, Speaker and Author**

“With compelling stories, gentle humor, and practical steps, *Born to Grow* is an indispensable companion on your journey closer to God. This book will both inspire and equip you to experience the fullness of who you were designed to be.”

- **Kim Avery, MA, Professional Counselor, Board Certified Life Coach, Author and Speaker**

**Born to Grow**

*You're Growing Somewhere Good!*

**Pierre M. Eade**

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**Born to Grow**

***You're Growing Somewhere Good!***

By Pierre M. Eade

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## Introduction

### **Digging for Hidden Treasure**

As a kid I always enjoyed searching for the toy at the bottom of the cereal box. I would tip the box to one side trying to dig a hole deep enough to discover the hidden treasure. If that didn't work, I'd try sticking my grubby little fingers deep down inside the box to search for the plastic sealed bag. (I apologize to my brothers and sisters who had no idea that my hands had been in their cereal!) And if my hands couldn't reach, I'd call in Mom to the rescue. She would pour the whole bag of cereal into a bowl just so I could get the five cent toy hidden in my Cap'n Crunch®. Why on earth did they bury those toys so deep?

Imagine your life is like a box of cereal. You may be something healthy, like Kashi® or something fruity like Fruit Loops®. You may be an oversized family box or a little mini sample sized box. Whatever your size, shape, box design or level of sweetness, there is a hidden treasure within you. Unlike the five cent toy that I was so desperate to find, this treasure is something so precious and valuable that God has given His all to bring it out.

Shortly after I became a Christian in my early twenties, God showed me four distinct treasures that He was seeking to grow in the lives of His children. The treasures God is developing within you have more to do with what's inside your box than how your box looks on the outside. The treasures have been purchased by God in advance and are now just waiting to be discovered as you search them out.

My goal in this book is three-fold. First, I hope to **inspire you** to dig deep for God's treasure. The marketing department of those cereal companies understood how to tantalize little girls and boys like me to want that toy bad enough to dig deep. My hope is that through the words I've penned you too will be inspired to grow in your relationship with God like never before.

Secondly, my goal is to **teach you**. Getting the treasure out of a cereal box takes a certain amount of knowledge as much as it does skill. First, you need to know the treasure exists. Then you need to know the approximate location of the treasure. Lastly, you need to learn the tips and tricks of finding the treasure and digging it out. In the pages ahead you will learn new facts and be reminded of great truths that will help you on your spiritual treasure quest.

Finally, my goal is to **lead and empower you**. From one treasure seeker to another, I am going to speak to you from my own heart and experience in order to help you follow not in my own footsteps, but in the greater footsteps of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I am on this journey with you and while I have the privilege of leading the trip, my hope is that you will also take off from my lead and discover new paths of your own. If my words lead you to run faster or ahead of me, I've done my job.

So what is this wonderful treasure we are seeking to find? It is the treasure of God's life being nurtured within you so that you may grow into the type of person He has destined you to be. "For God [wants you] to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you...too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory" (Colossians 1:27, NLT).

May the words you are about to read inspire, teach, lead and empower you to grow into the person God has designed you to become even before the day you were born. You were born to grow!

## Chapter 1

### A Life of Continual Growth

“Tony’s pitching.” The two most dreaded words every little leaguer feared hearing. It would make my stomach turn like the words “Pop Quiz.” “Tony’s pitching.” “Tony’s pitching.” “Tony’s pitching.” In 1985, Tony Capito was the fastest pitcher in all Little League back in our small hometown of Olean, New York. As the ball flew from Tony’s hand it would make a sound similar to the candy whistles we would buy at the concession stand after the game. The leather ball would strike the catcher’s leather glove and make a thunderous clap like a whip against a horse’s hide.

No batter in his right mind liked facing Tony Capito on the mound. When you heard the news, “Tony’s pitching” before the start of the game, you began to wonder if it was too late to call in sick. Facing Tony as a batter was not only intimidating, it was downright scary. One wild pitch could mean decapitation. If I were to be ever so lucky to make contact with the ball (an unlikely event), my hands would sting for a good couple minutes. Fear. Pain. Intimidation. I should have been a wrestler.

What made Tony so intimidating was not just his fastball. It was his size. Tony had already outgrown his Dad and coach in height—which did not take much since his Dad was all of five foot six inches at best. Tony’s appearance added to the intimidation. By the time the game was over, Tony had a five o’clock shadow. Tony was big, hairy, and most of all tough. Maybe a more accurate word was mean!

Tony’s intimidation factor diminished over the years. (I still could not hit his fastball, but that had more to do with my lame swing than anything else.) His intimidation diminished because he stopped growing. The beastly looking Tony Capito at age nine was the same size Tony at age nineteen. He never grew another inch! Well, actually, that is not true. I think he did grow a bit tougher over time. He was still quite an after school brawler for his size. I am sure his facial hair development continued to blossom with age. As for height, however, Tony was done growing. The growth spurt he had in elementary school never carried over into junior high or high school. He went from being off the charts to hardly on them.

We can relate to Tony, but not because we were the tallest kids in our fifth grade class or had full facial hair before we were old enough to drive. We can relate to Tony because all of us at some point in our life stopped growing. Your growth spurts may have ended in elementary school or you may have been one of those late bloomers who did not start growing until you were out of high school. In any case, at some point or another, you stopped getting taller.

God has a tremendous plan for each of our lives. His plan is for us to **grow** continually. Not the type of growth that will get you drafted into the NBA or allow you to pick bananas without needing to learn how to climb trees. The type of growth that God has in mind for you is beyond your genetic predisposition. God has a plan for you to grow in four distinct ways.

#### ***Grow Up, Grow Out, Grow Deeper, and Grow Together***

God’s plan for you to “Grow Up” means He wants you to become more mature in your thinking, attitude, and behavior. He has a plan for you to “Grow Out” which is how He wants to use your life to positively impact other people in this world. He has a plan for you to “Grow Deeper” in relationship with Him. He has a plan for you to “Grow Together” with other people who are likeminded and on this same pathway to growth. Grow Up. Grow Out. Grow Deeper. Grow Together. That is God’s plan for you.

Imagine with me for a moment if Tony Capito never stopped growing. I mean never. Today, Tony would be about 23 feet tall (trust me I did the math), and weigh somewhere around 527 pounds. Let us not even talk about the hair! Giraffes would look up to him. Lions would crown him king. Every

professional sports team would look to draft him. He would be a modern day giant. Goliath would need his own slingshot to take this guy down!

Now I know what you are thinking, “Real funny, but let’s get real. No human can grow to that size.” Immediately, we start to limit the idea by our preconceived understanding of human growth patterns and personal experience. Truthfully many of us have greater spiritual growth potential than we could ever imagine. Yet we stop short of God’s plan because we do not consider it possible. We consider what it would take to get there and we drop the idea like a New Year’s Resolution in February.

Yet, God’s ultimate goal for you to is to **grow!** Do you want to know specifically what God’s growth goal is for you? It is actually the same goal He has for every man, woman, and child on the planet. How God does it is unique, but the end goal is the same. God’s growth plan for you can be summarized in one sentence found in the Bible.

*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. (Romans 8:29 NIV)*

I want to break the meaning of this verse down for you, but not without first taking a commercial break from our sponsors. “Wheaties® is the breakfast of champions!”<sup>1</sup> End of break. Now back to the show. Seriously, have you ever considered the people you meet on a Wheaties® box? No average athlete makes it to the front cover of the “breakfast of champions.” You have to be one of the best. Just think through the names for a moment: Lou Gehrig, Mary Lou Retton, Walter Payton, Arnold Palmer, Dale Earnhardt, Muhammed Ali, Michael Jordan, and the infamous Little Leaguer pitcher, Tony Capito. Okay, Tony never made the cover of a Wheaties® box, but he is still a champion in my book.

Now imagine with me for a moment that God came down in a cloud and said, “I want to make you the next Michael Jordan.”

After I got done laughing, I would go back to eating my Wheaties.® Then perhaps the conversation might go something like this:

“I want to make you the next Michael Jordan!”

“Sounds like a plan God, but I would be happy with just being able to hit a Tony Capito fastball if you would not mind.”

“No! I have planned before the foundation of the earth that you will be just like Michael Jordan.”

Okay, three times is enough. God is serious on this one.

“I will be the next Michael Jordan. I will be the next Michael Jordan. I will be the next Michael Jordan.”

Now as outrageous and good as being the next Michael Jordan sounds (especially to a guy like me who loves basketball), it is nowhere close to reaching God’s intentions and plan for my life or yours. Not even close! Becoming the next Michael Jordan would fall desperately short of God’s plan for your life because God’s plan for you is to become a perfect representation of His Son, Jesus Christ. He wants you to live like Him, to think like Him, to behave like Him, and to be so aligned with the personality and character of Jesus that when people meet you they feel like they have encountered and met Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> Wheaties® has in no way sponsored this book. And they also have not yet figured out that I would look amazingly cool on the front of their cereal boxes. If you are on the Wheaties® marketing team, you can reach me via my website: [www.christiangrowthnetwork.com](http://www.christiangrowthnetwork.com) to start discussing a contract. I look forward to hearing from you.

That is what Romans 8:29 means when it says that before time God planned for us to be “conformed to the image of his Son.” He planned before the foundation of the world that you and I would become more like Jesus. To become like Jesus Christ is more beautiful and larger than the neck of a giraffe, more amazing than a high flying dunk of Jordan, and at the same time more daunting than the fastball of Tony Capito.

### ***This Is Why We All Need to Grow!***

We need to “Grow Up” in Christ by developing greater spiritual maturity. Jesus never displayed an ounce of immaturity in all His time on earth. I know for some of you that sounds a bit boring, but boring and mature are not synonymous. Watching golf on TV and boring are synonymous, but mature and boring are not. Jesus was the life of every party He went to; and trust me, He went to His fair share. He was the talk of the town, and the most intriguing human of all ages. Still to this day, over 2000 years since His birth, He has more followers on earth than you have on both Twitter and Facebook combined times one-hundred. Yet Jesus was never immature. That is God’s plan for you as well, to grow into a fully mature representation of the person of Jesus Christ.

We need to “Grow Out” in order to become more like Jesus Christ. Jesus was not afraid to mix with people of different races, social backgrounds, financial portfolios, religions, ages, and gender. In fact, this got Him in quite a bit of trouble with His onlookers and religious critics. “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners’” (Luke 7:34). Jesus, the incarnation of life itself, brought true life to every party He attended.

Many who claim to be followers of Christ today would never dare set foot in a party scene similar to where Jesus went in His day. It would be too unholy for us. Yet Jesus, the fully mature one (which translated can also be said as the Completely Holy One) was not afraid to mix with crowds of people who were not like the religious people of His day. God is calling you to do the same. God is calling you to “Grow Out” in your ability to reach people who are the outsiders, the down and outers, and the up and comers. The people who may have some interest in Jesus, but never frequent a church except for major holidays, weddings, and funerals are also on your target list. You cannot do that at church, you must “Grow Out.”

All this growing up and out will require you to “Grow Deeper.” You find a peculiar pattern in Jesus’ life. One minute He is the center of attention with crowds of people hovering over Him, and the next minute He is by Himself in nature, that is until the crowds found out where He went! Jesus was one moment like a rock star on stage and the next moment like a monk in hiding.

Where did He go? He went to find a quiet place where He could spend time with God whom He called, “Daddy.” Jesus had the most unique, intimate, and real relationship with God. Speaking of himself Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (John 5:19b). Jesus was fully in synch with God.

**God’s desire for your life is that you would “Grow Deeper” in your relationship with Him so you can be in synch, connected, and plugged into what He has for your life—a deep loving relationship.**

Last and certainly not least, God wants you to “Grow Together” with other people. You would think that a man like Jesus would operate along the same lines as other superheroes we admire. He would be a man of isolation with a sense of mystery around Him because no one gets to know the “real Jesus” too well. He would be a lone ranger of sorts. The fact of the matter is that Jesus was anything but a soloist. He deliberately chose a dozen guys to do life with Him. He was not only intentional about hand selecting His own posse; He was intentional about spending time with them doing everything from the



mundane to the supernatural. Jesus was building more than just an organization, He made those around Him feel like family sometimes to the exclusion of His own blood relatives (Matthew 12:46-50).

If we are going to be like Jesus as God wants us to be, we will need to take off some of our masks and open ourselves to the emotionally vulnerable world of real heart to heart relationships. Yes, we will need to “Grow Together.”

Friend, the plan God has for your life is bigger, better, deeper, wider, taller, and more wonderful than you can ever think or even dream. His plan is to mold and model you into a person who actually lives like Jesus! As you can imagine, that is going to take a lot of growth!

God has also provided everything necessary for you to get from where you are to where He wants you to grow in life. I am not saying it will be easy. In fact, at times you will get those same butterflies in your stomach that I had when I heard, “Tony is pitching.” But do not be discouraged and do not fake sick. I can promise you this—no wait, God can promise you this, it will be good for you in every way.

Are you ready? Let’s grow!

### **Remember These Truths & Take Action**

- God’s plan is for you to **grow** continually.
- God’s ultimate goal is for you to become like Jesus Christ.
- God plans for you to grow in four distinct ways:
  - Grow up (Maturity)
  - Grow out (Outreach)
  - Grow deeper (Loving God)
  - Grow together (Loving Others)

### **Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions**

- What attitude or mindset would you need to have in order to grow continually?
- God’s plan is for you to be “*conformed to the image of his Son*” (Romans 8:29 NIV). What does being conformed to the image of Jesus look like?
- Which of the four areas of growth (up, out, deeper, together) do you feel you currently need the most work on?

### **Meditation**

God wants me to grow continually.

### **Prayer**

*God, help me to never stop growing up, growing out, growing deeper or growing together.*

### **Bible References**

- Romans 8:29
- Luke 7:34
- John 5:19
- Matthew 12:46-50