

Going Onto Maturity

- Spiritual growth is a key ingredient to a successful Christian life.
- **Please Read: John 15:1-17**
- Notice that God the Father cuts off dead things in our lives so we can be more fruitful
- We are connected to Jesus through His Word and share in the nourishing sap of the vine
 - o **Please Read: Romans 11:17-21**

Stages of Development

We are not **born again** full grown Christians any more than naturally born babies become full grown adults overnight. It's a process that we all grow through stages naturally and spiritually.

Infants

Consider part of our text for this series in *Hebrews 5:13*, "Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teachings about righteousness."

- Hebrews 5:13 in the AMP, "...not able to talk yet"
- New believers need to learn how to speak life and bridle the tongue- *Eph. 4:29-32; Jas. 3*
- **Please Read: 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 2:1-3**

Children

- What lessons can we continually learn from children that we as adults tend to forget?
- Their innocence, purity and lack of guile- always inquisitive, exploring and discovering
- They are continually learning new things and are not afraid to ask "Why"

Matthew 19:14-15, "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'"

- We are called to be child-like, not childish – chronological age no guarantee mature
- **Please Read: 1 Corinthians 13:11-13**
- One characteristic of children is that they are naïve about life and lack discernment

Isaiah 11:8, "The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest."

1 Corinthians 14:20

Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

- **Please Read: Hebrews 12:4-11 (discipline); 1 Tim. 3:6 (pride)**

Young Men and Women

Here we come to the third level of spiritual development- young adults/college and career age

- Acts 2:17- sons and daughter (Acts 21:9) will prophesy and see visions
- Titus 2:6-8 encouraged the young men to be self-controlled
- 1 Peter 5:5 encourage the young men to be submissive and clothed with humility
- **Please Read: 1 John 2:12-17**

1 John 2:14 AMP

I write to you, young men, because you are strong and vigorous, and the Word of God is [always] abiding in you (in your hearts), and you have been victorious over the wicked one.

Older Men and Women

Finally we come to our elders in the faith, those who are spiritually mature and seasoned in the things of God. We're not talking about chronological age; rather spiritual maturity.

1 Cor. 4:15-17

Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

- **Please Read: 2 Cor. 12:14-18; 1 Th. 2:6-7, 11-12**
 - o Spiritual parents look after spiritual children- to provide, protect and nurture
- Submit to your spiritual leaders in the Lord- *Hebrews 13:17; 1 Th. 5:12-13*
- Titus 1:4, *"To Titus, my true son in our common faith"*

Phil. 2:22, "But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel."

What makes us Grow

- Babies are cute and adorable, but if one stays that way indefinitely- loses its appeal
- The three main ingredients to any kind of growth is: Diet, Exercise and Training
- Have you heard that saying, "You are what you eat!"- John 6:35 – Jesus the bread of life
 - o As natural food is to our physical bodies, the Word of God is to our spirit
 - o We also need to be aware of tainted food- *Mt. 16:6-12; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1*
- Knowing the appropriate diet for the relevant age – milk vs meat- Heb. 5:11-14

Diet

Matthew 4:4, "Jesus answered, 'It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Jer. 15:16, “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight”

- **Please Read:** Joshua 1:7-8; Ps. 1:1-3; 119:97, 148
 - o Bible meditation- mutter/speak word is how we feed our spirit -
- John 6:63, “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”

Exercise

- **Please Read:** Luke 6:46-49; 8:19-21; James 1:22-25
 - As in the natural, muscle is not built by doing nothing
 - The religious leaders of Jesus’ day- did not practice what they preach- Mt. 23:1-3
- James 1:22**, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

Php. 4:9, “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

Training

- **Please Read:** 1 Tim. 4:7-8 *Trained to distinguish good from evil- Heb. 5:14*
- Training is about being equipped: precept, example and impartation (Ro. 1:11-12)
- **Please Read:** 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

Walking in Love

- Spiritual maturity is measured by our love walk. God is love, more love, more like God
- The greatest fruit of our recreated spirit is Love- *Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Th. 1:3*
- In a critical world, being patient, merciful, kind and gentle is honorable and rare
- We can pray for ourselves and others that God’s love would grow- *Php. 1:9-11*

1 Th. 3:12, “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.”

- Speaking the truth in love, we all grow up to be more like Jesus- *Eph. 4:14-15*
- The essence of sin is selfishness and the essence of righteousness is love
- Under the Old Covenant the best they could do is love others as themselves
- But the law of the New Covenant is to love as Jesus loved us- John 13:34-35
- The greatest in God’s Kingdom is servant of all; that’s what love looks like- Mk. 9:35
- Phil 2:21, “For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.”

Gal 6:1-2, “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”