

Would You PLEASE Grow Up?

James 1.4

I. Introduction

A. The ten stage of growth and development are: prenatal, neonatal, infancy, toddler hood, preschool, school age, adolescence, young adulthood, middle adulthood, and older adulthood.

B. When God came to earth, he came as a babe: Luke 2:7

1. "And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

C. But that child grew: physically and spiritually: Luke 2.40, 52

1. 40: "The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."
2. 52: "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

II. In Christ, we all begin as babes

A. Born Again: John 3:5-8

1. "Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.""

B. Newness of life in baptism: Romans 6.4; Colossians 3.10; Ephesians 4.24

1. Romans 6:4 "4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

2. Colossians 3:10 "10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--"
3. Ephesians 4:24 "24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

C. Growth is Essential: 1 Corinthians 13.11; Hebrews 5:12

1. "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things."
2. "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food."

III. Indicators of Immaturity

A. Behaviors are not changing churches are not growing. Hebrews 5:12

1. "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food."

B. Unfamiliar to God's Word: Hebrews 5.13; Ephesians 4.14-16

1. Hebrews 5:13 "13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant."
2. Ephesians 4:14-16 "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

C. Continuing to live for physical desires: 1 Corinthians 3.1-3; 1 Peter 2.1-3

1. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 "1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?"
2. 1 Peter 2:1-3 "1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."
3. We are living as if belief in Jesus changed nothing. Baptism had no affect on our hearts and minds.

D. Confusing growth in Christ with outward acts of service

1. While these outward acts are vital, they are not a true measure of growth
2. Number of assemblies attended; Number of times we've read the Bible; How often we pray, fast; how much we give.

IV. Indicators of Maturity

A. Submission to God, not self: 1 Corinthians 3:7

1. "So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth."

B. Growth in grace and knowledge: 2 Peter 3:18

1. "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."
2. What does it mean to grow in grace?
 - a. Saved by Grace: Ephesians 2:8
 - 1) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;"
 - b. Strengthened in grace

1) enduring suffering 2 Timothy 2:1-4

a) "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

2) giving: 2 Corinthians 8:1

a) "Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,"

3) singing: Colossians 3:16

a) "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

c. Grace defines who we are: 1 Corinthians 15:10

1) "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

3. What does it mean to grow in knowledge? 1 Corinthians 14.20; Hebrews 5.14

a. It does not just say, "grow in knowledge of the Bible"

1) Rather knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

2) It is very easy to know the Bible, yet know nothing of Jesus

3) The better we know the Bible, however, the better we can know Jesus

b. Knowledge is more than just 'book learning' it is the wisdom to live right.

1) Corinthians 14:20 "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature."

2) Hebrews 5:14 "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

3) Apply faith to life: knowledge and application.

C. Spiritual growth that is unwavering and continuous without retirement:

1. "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;" **Philippians 3:14, 15**

2. Our Growth is not measured in years

3. Some feel that once they have reached a certain age, or time, in their life; there is no growth

4. NO CHRISTIAN RETIREMENT PLAN.

5. They know what they know, they are satisfied with their understanding; they are unwilling to extend any effort to grow more.

6. Just because we grow old does not mean we grow up.

7. They fail to understand the standard of our growth

8. Those who are truly mature continue to press on

D. Spiritual growth that can be measured against Jesus: Ephesians 4:13; James 1.4

1. "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

2. James 1:4 "And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

a. Perfect: Colossians 1.28; James 3.2

1) Thayer: 5046 teleiov teleios tel'-i-os; from 5056; TDNT - 8:67,1161; adj

a) brought to its end, finished

b) wanting nothing necessary to completeness

c) perfect

d) that which is perfect

1. Consummate human integrity and virtue
2. of men; full grown, adult, of full age, mature

2) TDNT: "The sense "whole" or "complete"

3) Trench:

a) In a natural sense the teleioi are adults who have attained their full stature, strength, and mental powers;

b) Such perfection refers to spiritual and moral maturity and is to be contrasted with the moral and spiritual condition of those who are babes in Christ.

4) Colossians 1:28 "28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ."

5) James 3:2 "2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well."

b. Complete

1) Thayer: 3648 holokleros: from 3650 and 2819; TDNT - 3:766,442; adj

a) Complete in all its parts, in no part wanting or unsound, complete, entire, whole

2) TDNT: denotes "complete" in extent or compass

3) Trench: primarily refers to that which retains all that was initially allotted to it; it implies completeness and wholeness in all of its parts.

V. Conclusion

A. The book of James is written to help us grow to maturity

1. Notice some of the subject James deals with; each of them is characteristic of childish attitudes

a. Impatience in difficulties: 1.1-4

b. Talking the truth, but not living the truth: 2.14ff

c. No control of the tongue: 3

d. Fighting and coveting: 4

e. Collecting material toys: 5

2. By studying James, we can better understand how to live maturely; to live as Jesus

B. Read James this week, especially alert to areas of immaturity in your life.

Dave Stewart

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Las Cruces, NM 01 Would You PLEASE Grow Up? " 1 of 4 "

Let all that you do be done in love.

