

Growing Up

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While on this earth, no person will ever attain a maturity beyond which he needs no further growth. Maturity among humankind is, therefore, always a relative thing. The process of maturing directly applies to the Christian life. It is common to call one who has just been “born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5) a “babe in Christ.” However, it is possible for some to remain “babes in Christ” long after their new birth, as Paul described some in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 3:1). If one matures as God wills, upon arising from the spiritual burial in baptism, one begins a process that will cause one to “be no longer children...but...grow up in all things unto...Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). Certain elements figure very prominently in the maturing process, and we will do well to be conscious of them.

1. **Learning God’s Word.** Spiritual immaturity is a symptom of a failure to study and learn the Word (Heb. 5:12-13). It is not possible to grow up spiritually without continual study and learning of the Word of God, the food for our souls. Brother or sister, when you quit studying, you quit growing in spiritual matters.
2. **Making choices.** One’s spiritual birth depended upon choosing Christ over Satan, Truth over error, and the church over the world. That very step was a signal of a level of spiritual maturing that only a “few” ever “find” (Mat 7:14). However, one’s continued spiritual growth depends upon continuing to make the right choices. Each day, we face many cross-roads, obstacles, and problems that require a choice and discernment. We should never invite difficulties, but when they come and we “discern good and evil” (Heb. 5:14) and choose “good,” we grow spiritually.
3. **Giving self to others.** The perfectly mature Christ “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phi. 2:7). Those who ever remain in their own little shell, thinking only of and pitying themselves have sentenced themselves to spiritual immaturity. Physical babies think of themselves. When one becomes mired in self-pity, there is no better no better tonic than to visit someone and get one’s mind on someone else’s problems and needs. Serving others produces spiritual growth.
4. **Saying, “I will try.”** Corn quits growing and dies when it gets all dried up. So do people. A person who turns away from opportunity with an ever ready, “I can’t,” is never going to grow much. Even when you think you can’t do the job, if you try you will grow, regardless of how well you do. If you’ve never done it before, give it a try if you want to grow. There must be in us that response to challenges that says, “Yes,” or at least, “I will try,” if we are to grow.

The alternative to spiritual growth is spiritual rot.

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