

Growing up and Maturing in Christ

Introduction.

As Christians the bible is our text book, it is our text book on **teaching methods**, and our **instruction for all of life**. 2 Tim 3:16

Three Kinds of Men

A. The natural man 1 Cor. 2: 14

The natural man that Paul is talking about here is the man who is dead in his sin, he is outside of Christ, he is walking according to the lusts of his own fleshly desires. He may be a religious man, he may be a regular church attender, but he has never been born from above, his life has never been changed. He is an unbeliever.

Eph 4: 17 &18

The unbeliever is excluded from the life of God because of the hardness of their heart, he still has a heart of stone. He may be religious, but he cannot be spiritual. He cannot please God (Romans 8:8.) "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God".

He must be born again before he can grow in Christ.

B. The Spiritual Man 1 Cor. 2:15

This man has been born again his life has been changed, he is no longer walking according to the lust of the flesh, he has become a new creation in Christ the old things are passed away, all things are become new 2 Cor. 5:17. The believing man has a resident which is the Holy Spirit indwelling in him, so that he can appraise all things.

This is the abiding life in Christ. The word for appraisers here in v 15 means to examine, to investigate, or to assess. His eyes have been open to the things of God.

He demonstrates a certain amount of spiritual maturity in his lifestyle, and decision-making. As for this man, he is growing in Christ.

Eph 5:18

This man has not only been given the power of the Holy Spirit, but he is filled with the Spirit daily, which means to be controlled by the Spirit. He seeks direction from God in his daily walk.

This is a Christian who habitually lives under the controlling power of the Holy Spirit. This is the abiding life in Christ. He also demonstrates spiritual maturity in his life and decision making.

C. The Man of Flesh 1 Cor. 3: 1

The King James version here calls him the carnal man. This is a saved person, but he is still as an infant in his response to the stresses of life. His diet determines his carnality, and spirituality.

Paul could not speak to these Corinthian believers as spiritual men. As grown up, being mature in Christ.

Then There are Three Stages of Growth 1 Peter 1:23- 2:5

If there is no birth, there's no life, and no desire for food. In some church members this is like a stillbirth instead of a live birth, and there is no real spiritual life that exists. This man is still dead in his trespasses and sin.

B. Infancy 1 Peter 2:1&2

The new birth brings about a new life that will desire food. Peter challenges these newborn people in two ways.

1. Negative way – put away childish things, malice, (the desire to do evil) Cleverness, (evil strategy) hypocrisy, (false face) envy, (feeling of discontentment) slander (Is to make false statements).

Peter challenges new born believers to put these old sinful habits aside.

2. Positively– desire the sincere milk of the word.

A. This should be a normal response - To desire the real milk of the word.

The word desire means— an intense yearning

One of the indications of salvation is a hunger for spiritual things that follows.

Every live baby will be hungry.

B. It's an acquired appetite you must hunger to feed yourself so that you will go beyond the stage of a milk diet.

It Starts first by absorbing the pure milk of the word, That comes from a desire for it.

C. Growth 1 Peter 2; 2b-5

How do we grow?

Nothing is to be a substitute for the bible.

Two distinct characteristics begin to come through when God's people obey this injunction.

1. And intimate knowledge of the Lord himself. V 3

2. There is the functioning of the Christian in spiritual activities v5 .

THE DIET MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Heb. 5:11-14

Well we've seen the three kinds of men, and three stages of grow
Now we see three kinds of diet.

Three kinds of Diet Heb. 5:11-14

Both physical growth and spiritual growth are determined by diet. The Bible uses the metaphor of food to teach us this. There are three kinds of Christians in the matter of diet.

A. The milk fed Christian

1 Peter 2:2 This is a proper diet for babies and new Christians.

We take in the milk before we eat the meat.

1 Cor. 3:1-4—

Christians who stay only on milk are childish in their responses - fleshliness, envy, jealousy, strife, men followers.

Heb. 5:11-14

The writer of Hebrews wanted to fully explain the person, and the work of Christ in his high priestly ministry, but their immaturity kept him from accomplishing that. They had developed a retarded growth pattern because of an unteachable spirit.

So we see the determinant of an immature growth pattern.

a. Saved, but dull of hearing, v12a

b. Secondly they are unprofitable to the Lord, because they were not grounded in elementary truth v 12b

c. That condition led to stunted growth and low productivity v 12 &13

So this is the picture of the milk fed Christian.

B. The solid - food Christian Hebrews 5:14

The believer is encouraged to get off milk and get on solid food.

This word for solid food is meat, and this is used as a metaphor for the great doctrine of Scripture.

Three reasons are given here for us to get off milk and on the solid food.

1. To be instructors to others in the word. verse 12
2. To be skilled technicians in the Scriptures. verse 13
3. To be able to be discerners between good and evil. v 14

Not only of clear Commandments of God, but also of great spiritual principles for life.

Then we have the self fed Christian

D. The self fed Christian Jeremiah 15:16

God's will for us as Christians is to develop so that we can learn from the word and compliment the teaching of the word in the Bible, and from the pulpit.

**Name five things in your life that hinder your spiritual growth.
Then list solutions, to how those hinderances, can be overcome.**