

Hindrances to Growth

An abundant life is a mature life but outward appearances are deceiving. Growing up to maturity applies to single, married, young or old, growing up to manhood, growing up to womanhood.

1 Peter 3 v 18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

1 Corinthians 13 v 11

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

There are Four Stages to Growth as a Christian - baby, little child, youth and father (which of course includes mother).

1 The Baby Stage.

1 Corinthians 3 v 1-4

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. 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, for you are still fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?

What are the characteristics of a baby?

- A baby thinks only of itself.
- If it is denied the things that it desires, it will raise a rumpus.
- It is easily hurt and upset.
- It lives to be served, it never serves.
- It drinks only milk and cannot take solids
- It mostly cries and doesn't sing.

These characteristics are evident in some adults. Are you a babe? This is a form of carnality.

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2 The Little Child Stage.

1 John 2 v 12

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

What are the characteristics of a little child?

- Children can be often untruthful
- Children can be often envious
- Children can be often jealous
- Children can be often cruel
- Children can act often like martyrs
- Children are often subject to tantrums
- Children often tell tales (as adults we call it gossip)
- Children love playing with toys
- Children do not know how to be a full stop
- Children can be proud and puffed-up
- Children love to be praised, from any source

Some Christians grow to be children spiritually but then stop there. Are you a spiritual child?

3 The Youth Stage.

1 John 2 v 13

I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the father.

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What are the characteristics of a young man (or woman)?

He knows enough to be an adult.

He is strong and virile.

He overcomes the enemy.

He has a vision for the future.

He has faith, courage and strength to tackle life.

He is preparing /training for the years to come.

He realises how much he has and how much more that there is.

He has done away with childish things and become a young man of responsibility.

He has grown up in a measure to be a good servant to his master.

Many fail to reach this stage.

4 The Father Stage.

Malachi 4 v 6

...and He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.

1 John 2 v 13

I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.

This stage is attainable but not too many acquire spiritual fatherhood.

What are the characteristics of a father?

The spiritual father has peace with God (at all times).

Romans 5 v 1

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He not only knows peace with God but he shares and emits it to others.

Philippians 4 v 7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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He rejoices over his wife and children and lays his life down for them.

1 Thessalonians 2 v 19

For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

1 Timothy 1 v 2

To Timothy my true child in the faith: grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

He has learned how to be content in all circumstances.

Philippians 4 v 11

Not that I speak from want; for I have learnt to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

He knows the source of all wisdom and strength.

Philippians 4 v 13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

He does not brood over the past, but looks forward to the future, expectantly.

Philippians 3 v 13 -14

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do; forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 43 v 18 -19

Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.

He knows that all things work together for good and lives an abundant and enjoyable life. He speaks words of faith and lives above the poverty spirit.

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How to Grow Up

There are five ingredients:

- Seed - God's word: life (read and hear and heed)
- Soil - open minds and hearts
- Water - faith waters the seed
- Warmth - Knowing the love of God
- Weeding - the removal of all hindrances

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- Sin of any kind. Weeds (sin) choke out the life, unbelief, rebellion, apathy
- Failure to take our commission seriously
- Failure to take satan seriously
- Holding on to fixed views, ideals and traditions, no longer being a pupil
- Failing to discern the body of Christ
- Over emphasis on one aspect of truth
- Over indulgence in other activities, lacking God given priorities
- Under emphasis of important issues, home, work and Church. Hoping they will "sort themselves out" or go away
- Broken relationships, having an unforgiving heart, holding grudges and resentments
- Refusing to be corrected, knowing what's best - pride