



STAGES OF GROWTH

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Ordering Information: Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by corporations, associations, and others. For details, contact the publisher at address above or email below.

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Printed in the Republic of South Africa First Edition

Introduction

In the book of Hebrews, the writer says believers were supposed to be teachers, yet they need to be taught.

Further, it says they could not take strong food, but had to be fed the milk of the word.

He also speaks of leaving the first principles, and going on to perfection.

Hebrew 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Hebrew 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Showing there are foundational teachings, and things relating to perfection.

It is very clear then, there are stages of growth related to a believer. It is mandatory for every believer to grow in their faith. The material provided will assist you to grow as a believer.

As in every writing; I do not claim to know everything relating to a particular subject, but I do acknowledge as one of the gifts to the body, my contribution can help believers become like our Master.

This is the journey we have all signed up for, and I'm sure any believer pursuing the Lord will appreciate any writing that can assist their journey.

Content:

Babes

Little Child

Young men/Strong Ones

Fathers

Sons

What we will be?

Babes

Babes desire the sincere milk of the word of God, that they may grow.

1 Peter 2:2 As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

Upon accepting the Lord, it is almost automatic that a person has a desire for the word of God.

With great enthusiasm they begin their journey, and are instructed to read the bible as to get to know this new faith and God.

Many go to Genesis to begin their bible reading, and get stuck at Leviticus with all its customs and laws.

Others instructed to go to the New Testament, and begin their journey by jumping into Matthew; however when they get to all the ***begets*** with their genealogies, they become frustrated.

Others resort to opening the bible randomly, hoping some page will pop out to them, and all will become clear. Many experience much frustration with reading the bible, and eventually are discouraged from reading it altogether.

In the babe stage of a believer, he or she must not go out trying to find food for themselves, there is enough time for that.

Babes are meant to be fed.

One must prepare their milk, and put it into their mouths.

The preferred method is to teach and train babes.

If this is done correctly, they will grow correctly.

If a believer shuns this, they journey on a route against the advice of Peter, and their lives will later come to a dead end.

A believer will have more joy in reading anointed books in their early years, than the bible itself.

The bible is given in pieces, here a little, there a little.

What the book or teacher will have, is an overview of the bible, and should present that. It is with these teachings; a believer can take them, research them in the bible, and thus enjoy the bible as a reference initially.

While this sounds strange, it is in no way meant to take anything away from the bible, and its beauty.

There is no book as grand as the bible; however, a skilled teacher will make the journey much easier, after all, he is a gift sent by Jesus to assist the new babe.

One of the things significant with a new-born babe is they have a desire, as they have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

If a person does not have a desire, it is advised not to give anytime to them, as they will wear you out.

Here are a few things babes must know and experience.

Repentance from dead works

Dead works are things we do that have no benefit for us. These things will never, and can never have any life in them. To repent is to think again, to turning away from these things. Merely telling someone what they doing is a dead work; can irritate a person, and lead to responses such as don't judge me.

In order to turn away from a dead work, one needs to contemplate, and reflect on their activities in this life.

A believer that wishes to grow must come to a place of honesty with themselves, and in sincerity turn from these dead works. In most cases, the pleasure these dead works bring appear to be of greater satisfaction. Upon reflection it's assured, the works that are dead will come to light.

When this happens, know that the grace of God is working, and awaits your response to be freed from these dead works.

Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

John sent people away to think again before being baptised.

He was discerning to know these people were not serious.

And so must it be with us all.

We must first count the cost before committing ourselves to God.

Faith toward God

Believing what God has said with no variations.

The challenge with Faith toward God is, faith is an inward substance and not initially visible to a person's environment.

It can be unseen at times because it has not manifested itself, yet it is evident in a person's actions.

Abraham is known as The Father of faith, yet we see in his life over a period of time that his belief for a son materialised.

He had steps to his faith.

Romans 4:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

There is a progression in believing; so don't expect immediate results.

Faith is a fruit of the spirit as seen in Galatians. Fruit start as seeds, and go through a process of growth till they become fruit. Your faith is the same. It starts as a seed going through phases or stages.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Faith is also a gift from The Spirit of God, and at times can manifest instant results.

1 Corinthians 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

Faith starts by hearing from God

This may come as a voice from God, an inward impression, a prophecy, a dream, a vision.

It is essential when this communication is received, as with Joseph and his dream, or Paul and his vision of Jesus, the individual gives it all the attention it deserves.

Genesis 37:5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

In Paul's account after seeing and talking to Jesus, he fasts for 3 days. This shows his attention to the vision he received. He believed it 100% and desperately sought the meaning.

Acts 9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Acts 9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Joseph is persecuted by his brothers for God communicating to him, but he holds fast for 12 plus years with what God showed him.

Faithful toward God.

Joseph, Mary's husband was faithful to the dream he received, to protect the life of Jesus.

Matthew 2:19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

A person must be attentive to what God has said to him/her, and stay faithful.

Baptisms

Baptism means, to be made *fully wet/Washed*

Fully wet/Washed into repentance, a complete turning away from old ways, and following a new way; symbolized by immersing into water.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Fully Wet/Washed in the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Fully Wet/Washed in Christ

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Fully Wet/Washed in The Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 3:11 ... he shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with (in) the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Baptism therefore, is to give yourself fully and entirely with the idea of being washed or soaked in what you have given yourself to.

The end is what you have given yourself to will display itself.

When a person comes out of water; the water is displayed on their body for all to see.

In our lives, Christ must be visible.

FullyWet/Washed in Service

Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

Luke 12:52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

Matthew 20:22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

Matthew 20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

Matthew 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

Matthew 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Jesus explained this baptism. His giving everything of himself for His creation, and his straightened to do it.

Nothing will get in his way, not mother, brother etc.

He tells his disciples it must be the same with them.

They must not look to be Lords over each other, looking to rule each other.

But the chief is the one who serves.

A believer will surely undergo suffering as Christ suffered, but this is the way of life, never to be feared, but rather embraced and fixed.

Matthew 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Laying on of hands

Hands are laid on a person to transfer something.

It may be healing, blessing, casting out devils, receiving the Holy Ghost and gifts.

Mark 10:16 ..and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Mark 16:17-18 ...they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'

Luke 13:13 ..and he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Acts 8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

On the flipside, don't let a backslidden person or backslidden minister lay hands on you.

They will bring greater challenges to your life. They will pass on the troubles they face to you.

Resurrection of the dead

One day all who have died will rise again; the righteous and the unrighteous.

1 Corinthians 15:35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

1 Corinthians 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

1 Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Eternal judgment

All of mankind, Satan, Fallen Angels, Angels will be judged according to their lives they lived, (the living and the dead) and will receive the due rewards; some to beautiful rewards and some to damnation.

Matthew 11:24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

The people of Sodom are dead. God rained fire and brimstone on the city, yet there is a time these dead people will be judged.

2 Peter 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

To leave a new-born baby to discover, or find these truths in the bible would be a long and treacherous road.

It is easier for the teacher to present these subjects, and nurture the babe.

Babes are precious, our Lord Jesus said to hurt one of these; it would be better to place a heavy stone around ones neck, and drop into the ocean.

Matthew 18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

The babe must be attentive to where be the best place to grow, and intuitively they will be led by The Spirit to a place where they will feel most comfortable.

At some point the babe will develop the ability to feed themselves, and will soon feed directly from the bible.

This is most beautiful and ushers in the next stage of growth known as ò

Little Child

John, in 1 John speaks about little children, young men, Fathers, sons and what we will be. (unknown)

1 John 2:12-13 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

We will speak about the others in the next few chapters.

John says, I write to you little children, because your sins are forgiven you.

Because perfection is a process, John knows very well that on the journey there will be failure, believers will fall into sin, and also be reminded of past lifestyle sins.

One would think he would be preaching against sin, and cautioning young children not to sin, yet he is well aware that they will fall short.

In this he says, know that ***your sins are forgiven***, both past and present.

In no way is he encouraging a believer to sin, but it is a guarantee, they will fall short.

Seven times a righteous person falls..

Proverbs 24:16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

Seven is always completion.

There is a completion to falling.

As later he says you sin not.

These are beautiful truths that will help believers to avoid condemning themselves, and will encourage them not to give up on the journey.

Sin must never be a lifestyle for any believer, but as the mind is renewed the believer gets stronger and stronger.

To some it would appear that their life is one of defeat, but as they stay in the Lord they will soon overcome and be victorious.

Young men

John says of young men, they are strong, have the word abiding in them, and have overcome the wicked one.

At this stage reference is made to overcoming the wicked one, which certainly shows in the previous two stages they had not yet had the opportunity to overcome him, or rather subdue him.

John mentions two specific things:

1. You are strong

Strong here refers to the strength received via the prayer life of a believer.

2. The word abiding in you

In this stage a believer should have developed a prayer life, and a life in the word.

Relating to a successful life:

In Joshua and Psalms, we see where success comes from.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psalms 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Joshua was instructed to meditate day and night, and then he will be a success. Therefore meditation is vital for success.

To meditate is to:

Speak about

Ponder about

Utter

Mutter

Confess

Think

Contemplate

All these relate to the word meditate.

Time spent in the word must never be rushed.

It is to be done reflectively.

Gaze about God and what He says.

Question and ponder.

Get into a habit of saying the word out loud (audibly).

This is food to the spirit, and is what strengthens a believer's spirit.

The richest words in the bible are those of Jesus.

Spend loads of time doing the above with these words.

Say them, pray them.

In no time you will overcome/subdue the wicked one and progress.

If a believer never engages in meditation they will be stuck in the babe and little child phase.

Ever learning, but never coming to the truth.

When I did these, in no time my spirit began to travel the realms of the spirit.

The enemy was subdued, and experientially I began to enjoy the Lord.

Be encouraged to continue in meditation and subdue the wicked one.

This is the stage of growth where Satan is practically subdued by the believer.

Fathers

John says, ***I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who was from the beginning.***

1 John 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

He is referring to The Word.

The Word is from the beginning

John 1:1 & 3 In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with God, and The Word was God

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made

He could have said Jesus, but he does not. As a father the believer gets to experience all of creation, all things made by The Word.

This is not limited to earth, but all of creation.

Fathers have the ability to teach others, and produce children.

He enters the stage of accountability with Gods precious children.

In the life of Moses we see this.

He had begun to know God from creation.

He saw God create in the book of Genesis.

A very strong caution to those who are fathers is taken from the life of Moses.

Moses is said to have been faithful in all Gods house, yet we see one wrong action in **Numbers 20:8-12**.

He calls Gods people rebels, and loses belief. The Lord deals very strongly with him and takes his life.

Numbers 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

Numbers 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

Numbers 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

It is important for Fathers to always remember. The people you are leading are Gods people, and no matter their shortcomings it does not give any person the right to call them names. This is something that must be learned; more so now, as many ministers are of the impression they can do as they please with Gods people.

These ministers have lost their fear and belief of God.

The Lord will deal with them!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

In His mercy He gives time to repent.

His mercy is never to be misinterpreted.

I urge you to repent before its too late if you in this category.

Sons

Of sons it is said, that the earth awaits their manifestation.

Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Creation waits for them.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole of creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

For millenniums creation has been waiting to respond to sons.

Sons are those who have the ability to restore creation.

It is the final stage of growth on earth.

To walk as a son is to walk in the FULNESS of Jesus.

It is impossible for any sort of lack to accompany sons.

In the book of Revelations we see Jesus returning with these to the earth.

When they land on earth, the desert flourishes.

The earth has complete restoration.

Isaiah 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Such is the calibre of sons.

Can you imagine life at that level?

What we will be

John says after we are sons, there, it is not known what we will be.

1 John 3:2 Beloved now we are sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when we shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

At the time of John's writings he knew about a stage after sons, but has no words to describe what it is, he says; ***there it is not known what we will be.***

This shows the progression of the human race, how endless and infinite our development is.

In Revelations Jesus speaks about us sitting on his throne.

To sit on his throne is to experience what he experiences.

Words are at a lack for such an experience, and my trying to explain such will be as a drop of water in the expanse of the ocean.

No matter what is said, it will never do justice.

What we can see is the awesomeness of our Father, and His intentions.

My perception is that we will have planets, and universes that express Gods handiwork in our lives, as this earth and universe express who Jesus is.

Surely he has Plans to prosper you, to give you a hope and an expected end.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

The life of a believer is a progressive journey through the ages.

It is far from boredom.

If your life as a believer has become tiresome and not progressive, it is advised to break down everything, and start building on the sure foundation.

This life is a great opportunity and adventure a believer gets to experience.

It is our Fathers great pleasure to give His children good things.

Matthew 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

He is the greatest gift, and the life He gives to become like Jesus is matchless.

Therefore make every endeavour to pursue Him.

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