

## Growing Up in Christ

Almost everyone enjoys watching children grow up. When they are in their tender, younger years they seem to change so quickly in so many ways. As children most of us probably took pleasure in indications of growth such as reaching a level with Daddy's belt, a steadily rising series of marks on the door post, outgrown clothes and shoes. A sense of accomplishment and fulfillment filled the breast with pride! I cannot think of a three year old that I have ever met who did not want to be four; a twelve year old, thirteen; or a nineteen year old, twenty. At some point though, in adulthood, aging becomes less of a thing to be anticipated and the carefree days of youth a thing to be longed for, but that is not the natural order of things.

Putting physical growth aside, we all have room to grow spiritually and must do so if we are to be pleasing to the Lord and useful in His service. We are commanded, "*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious (1 Pet. 2:1-3).*" What might be some of the indications of spiritual growth? Perhaps some of the following will help, though no doubt you can think of more.

The mark of *compassion*, when we finally come to esteem others better than ourselves (Phil 2:3). The mark of *obedience*, when the premier question becomes, "How can I get it done?" Rather than, "Someone else will take care of it." (James 1:22-25). The mark of *service*, when the greatest happiness is derived from giving rather than receiving (Acts 20:35). The mark of *faithfulness*, when doing the will of God is without exception the first priority (Mat. 6:33). The mark of *empathy*, when we, like Jesus, begin to look upon the world of the lost with lamentation (Lk. 13:34-35). The mark of *commitment*, when we truly give diligence to be workmen approved of God (2 Tim. 2:15; Jn. 8:31). The mark of *fellowship*, when cannot stand to miss an assembly of the Saints and arrange our affairs based upon our Christianity, rather than trying to find time for Christ amidst the affairs of life (Heb. 10:23-27; Mat. 10:37-39).

These are but a few things to think of and aspire to achieve as we "grow up in Christ" (Eph. 4:11-16). As we reach these marks of spiritual growth the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment to be felt as a mature Christian will be greater than any other that we have ever known.

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