

Childhood to Sonship: *Let Us Go On!*

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If you don't use it you'll lose it is a law of life. Unused knowledge is forgotten. Unused musical talents become rusty. Unused muscles lose their strength. Many of our relatives immigrated to America from other nations and after years of nonuse lost most of their native tongue. The same is true of our spiritual lives. Spiritual gifts are given to every believer, but if they are not exercised they will lose them.

Christianity is a growth process. Like good literature it has a beginning (justification), and a middle (sanctification), and an ending (glorification). The beginning is the new birth, the middle is daily growth, and the end is conformation to the full stature and image of Christ Jesus.

“But speaking the truth in love, may **grow** up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ.” (Eph 4:15).

“But **grow** in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

Lack of growth is a vacuum in the Church. Christians are reluctant to accept God as He is and let Him change their lives accordingly. Consequently, some rethink Him to fit their denominational image. But growth comes by accepting God as He is and loving Him for what He is and allowing Him to conform us into the image of Christ. God primary interest isn't just saving us from hell and taking us to heaven; He wants to

conform us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). When the Lord Jesus returns, “we shall be like Him “(1 Jn. 3:2). In the meantime becoming like Him begins here and now!

Why don't believers grow?

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection (Grk. maturity), not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits” (Heb. 6:1-3).

Is it any wonder believers are spiritual dwarfs? Most are fed a continuous diet of baby food. These basic truths must be preached, but babies need more than milk to develop. Simple sermons on repentance, faith, baptisms, gifts and judgments are biblical and evangelistic, but they do not produce maturity. The Word says: **“Let us go on!”**

If you feel like you're not making spiritual progress, wonderful! That is God's Spirit calling you to a closer realm of intimacy in Him. If you say, “Yes” to the Lord you'll probably walk alone because most believers are contented just knowing they're saved and going to heaven.

1 John 3:9 says “Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin: for His seed (Greek *sperma*) remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” This verse challenges commentators who modify it to fit their experience. What they usually explain is: ***“It means we do not habitually sin.”***

That is not what the Apostle wrote: He said, “We cannot sin.” They do consider ***the fullness of God*** working within them, or the promise of the purity of His nature becoming our nature.

I'm certain John was inspired and said only what the Spirit inspired him to say. According to this scripture the believer who is fully born from above cannot sin. The more we are changed into the image of Christ the less we want to sin. That's why we strive to be continually filled with His fullness. However, it can't happen if the believer doesn't believe it can happen and many preachers say it can't happen.

The growth process begins when we make the Jesus our Lord and Savior, when His righteousness is imputed to us since we don't have any righteousness of our own. We are "justified," just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned; however, that doesn't mean the believer has experienced righteousness yet; it is only reckoned to our account. Romans 1:17 says the righteousness of God is "revealed from faith to faith." As we live and walk in faith His reckoned righteousness is worked out experimentally in our daily lives. 1 John 2:29 adds: "You know every one who does righteousness is born of Him." The proof we're born from above is more than our confession; it is Christ living and manifesting Himself through us.

Our Lord Jesus, Yehshua for our Messianic family, demonstrated this intimate oneness during the days of His fleshly sojourn. He entered man's time-space world as the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15) to destroy the works of the devil and redeem fallen creation. From His conception His whole being was completely controlled by God's Word. He only said what He heard the Father say and only did what He saw the Father do. Even though He was tempted the same way we are, God's Word was alive to Him and kept Him from sinning. Grace conceived us and Christ in us grows and develops until we are fully conformed to His likeness.

“For the grace of God that brings salvation...teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.” The same grace, which saved us, teaches us to produce the fruit of righteous living. Jesus said: **“If you love Me keep My commandments (My Torah).”** If you’re saved by the grace of God you **will** live a holy life.

How long does this growth continue?

Until He comes.

“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13). It continues until Christ comes and reaps the fruit of the Seed He sowed.

There are several Greek words translated as child, or son and each has a different shade of meaning giving us an insight into our development from birth to a mature son of God. My desire is that His Spirit will hasten His work, until we are found complete IN HIM, to His praise and glory.

The first Greek word to be considered is *blephos* referring to *an unborn*. “For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the *babe* leaped in my womb for joy”(Lk. 1:44). *Blephos* also means **a new born** as used in Luke 2:16: “The *babe* lying in a manger.” In Luke 18:15 “They brought unto Him *infants*, that He would touch them.”

This development process begins when one first believes in Christ. The Spirit plants the living Word in our inner man and the Christ life begins growing. **“As newborn babes this child needs the sincere milk of the word that it might grow thereby.”**

The second word is *nepios*, means “*a babe without the full power of speech.*” There is limited speech because of limited development. It takes teaching and training to increase a child’s vocabulary. Gal 4:1-2 says: “**Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child (*nepios*), does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.**” The time appointed by the Father is when the child becomes an adult.

Healthy humans grow: “**That we should no longer be children...but speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things unto Him who is the head—Christ**” (Eph. 4:14). *God purposely gave the ministries of Eph. 4:11, to equip, train, develop and edify believers, until we all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, a perfect (mature) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children” (vs.12-14). Most churches are filled with undeveloped sons waiting to be fed and trained.*

How to be spiritually gifted and childish

Paul commended the Corinthian church for their abundant use of the gifts; however, he said they were yet carnal and childish. Why? Because they quarreled among themselves, arguing which preacher satisfied their personal desires. He urged them to grow up. In other words, STOP following preachers and spiritual leaders. Follow Christ the Pattern Son!

We come to the word *pai, little children*, which often includes the thought of a servant, when children begin helping with the tasks. This word is used in Matt. 21:15:

“And the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David...”

Another word closely related to *pai* is *teknion*, **which also means little, or young child.**

John used this word when he wrote:” **I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake...my little children...that you sin not” (1 Jn 2:12; 1:28).** Little children like to wander, touch and explore, but John admonishes:

“**Abide in Him,**” for it is in this abiding that “we sin not.”

Then there is the word **teknon**, *an all-inclusive term for child or son*, but not in the mature sense. “**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (Jn. 1:12).** When we were born again God planted the Seed of Life in our spirit and the process of becoming a child began. Our Father loves us and will bring us to maturity regardless of how long it takes. “**Beloved, now we are the children of God: and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”(1 Jn. 3:).**

Translating the word *tekna*, as son meaning an adult son rather than a child, causes what marvelous words, and what confusion. Are we yet mature sons? We are the children of God, a precious relationship, but we need His discipline and training process to bring us to the fullness of maturity.

Neotes means “youth.” (Mt. 19:20). Jesus commended the young man for keeping “these things from my youth up,” but added: “**If you will be perfect (mature.), a state of completeness, then sell all you have and follow Me.**” *Neanoskos* means: *a young man in the prime of life.* ”Acts 2:17 says, “Young men shall see visions.” Little children are content to play in their own backyard with its activities centered around “self,” but as

the child develops a vision forms and they reach for things beyond. John said, ***“I have written to you, young men, because you are strong and the Word of God abides in you... (1 Jn. 2:14).***

The last word *huios* speaks of a mature son. 120 times it identifies Christ as the Son. He said: **“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me” (Jn. 5:30).** Notice this! The Spirit of God led the Lord’s entire ministry and it is this measure of the Spirit’s leading we experience as we grow into maturity. **“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God”(Rom. 8:14).** **In Romans 8:19** Paul emphasizes the necessity of this growth. **“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. Why? “For we know the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now, and not only they, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit.”**

When Adam sinned all creation experienced both death and decay. In the fullness of time “The Seed of the Woman” came and he would bless all nations of the earth. Meanwhile there’ll be testings, trials, chastenings, purifications, denials and sufferings. To become like Him we must follow Him (Heb. 2:10.). We must follow Him to Gethsemane and Calvary. We must be willing to endure suffering and rejection by those who still reject Him (Jn. 15:18-21). If we’ll follow Him to the empty tomb we’ll share His resurrection (Rom. 6:5). “If we endure we shall reign with Him” (2 Tim 2:12).

Friends: It’s time to get a passion for Jesus. **“All things work together for the good of those who love God” (Rom. 8:28).** And no testing or trial of this life can compare to the glory we’ll share with Him...SOON!