

Indications of Infancy

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning again. We're so glad we're here together this morning, just as Nathan said, and also Jeremy. We're glad to be here together as the body of Christ and open up the Word of God this morning as we are continuing with our little mini-series in growing in the Lord, growing in grace.

We're going to be this morning in the book of 1 Corinthians, chapter number 3. And if you know anything about the Church of Corinth from the Apostle Paul's writings, we know that the church at Corinth experienced some problems.

They were, as we're going to see in just a moment, the Apostle Paul used the word fleshly, carnal, and they had not grown very much in their Christian life.

The way Paul addresses them, he addresses them as believers, as brothers and sisters in Christ. But he said they had not grown from the foundational principles of the gospel.

And so because of that, they were experiencing some behavioral issues. They were experiencing some problems in the church. And there was some sin that was going on that was not being dealt with.

[1 : 21] And so we're going to look this morning at the indications of infancy. How do we know when a believer is or has not grown as a Christian?

How do we know when a believer in Jesus Christ, when a follower of Christ may have trusted Christ as their Savior, may have begun following Jesus, but has not progressed from the baby stage, where we know babies and we know of all that goes along with that, and there are certain indications of growth that are not there.

We looked last week at the necessity of the new birth. And as we look into Christian growth, we see that God's plan is birth.

First, we have to come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior. Jesus, when he was talking to Nicodemus in the Gospel of John, chapter 3, talked about having to be born again, having to be born of the Spirit, having to be born into the body of Christ and being a brand new creation. And that begun a new growth in that person's life, starting from the baby stage and growing into maturity.

[2 : 43] And growth is expected, and growth up to the point of maturity in the Christian life. We recognize it immediately in the physical realm.

We see a baby, and we expect certain things from babies. There are certain things we don't expect from toddlers. There are behaviors that we know that in certain stages, certain behaviors can be expected.

And it can be excused to a degree, but yet we still have to teach them and train them to be able to behave properly. And we see the same in the Christian life when it comes to the stages of growth. We're going to see in just a moment that as babes, God doesn't expect us to be mature Christians the moment we trust Christ as our Savior.

It is a growth process. But when years go by and we're still acting like babies, then there's something wrong and something needs to happen.

[3 : 45] We recognize the need for growth and also the process of growth in the physical realm. We see it in the life of Christ when he was a baby.

He wasn't born talking. He chose to go through the normal physical stages of growth. The Bible says that he grew in stature, and there are things that he was probably fairly normal, if we can use that term, when it came to physical growth, playing with other boys and learning different things, learning how not to eat with his hands and other things that go along with that growth.

We see it in our children. We expect growth, and we foster that growth. We give them vitamins. We provide the utmost care.

We bring them to the doctor when they're sick or when they're not progressing as they should. We get tests done and wondering why they're not growing or they're not maturing as they should.

So we do almost anything to foster growth, emotional growth, psychological growth, physical growth in our children.

[5 : 03] But spiritual growth is often neglected, and we see that in the body of Christ from time to time. Now, there's much attention at the new birth.

People are excited. There's even in the individual that comes to know Christ as their Savior, there's a certain excitement that comes along with realizing our sins are forgiven, realizing we have a place in the body of Christ.

But some remain infants for years, never really grow, never really learn how to approach the throne of grace and pray and trust and behavior, and our lifestyle may or may not change as it should.

So we're going to look this morning a little bit into verses 1 through 4 of chapter 3 and look at the Corinthian catastrophe where they were not growing.

They hadn't grown. So let's take our Bibles and look at 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and verses 1 through 4. And there we read verse number 1, And I, brethren, so we see here immediately that Paul is talking to believers in Christ.

[6 : 23] He said, could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as to carnal babes in Christ.

And Paul was going into chapter 2 talking about spirituality, things that are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, people that did not have the Holy Spirit, could not understand, could not discern the things of God.

He says, now what we have received, he said we not receive the Spirit of the world, but we've received the Spirit of who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God, verse 12 in chapter number 2.

And so he's been contrasting those who are of the world and those who have the Spirit and those who are spiritual. And that's why he says in chapter 3, He says, and I, brethren, could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

Verse number 2, And the sad thing is, they had sat under the Apostle Paul's teaching, but they had not grown. And so when someone says, well, I'm the way that I am because, well, you know what, I'm not being fed.

[7 : 45] People leave churches for that reason. They say, you know what, I'm not being fed. And, you know, that may be the case. The person who is presenting the Word of God may never even open up God's Word and might be just talking about whatever it is they feel like talking about.

But I have heard people say that they were under the teaching of someone and they said, I wasn't being fed. And I know that person. And I've heard them preach. And I know they preach the Word of God.

And I know they teach the Word of God. And so if people who were under the preaching of Paul didn't grow, then the problem wasn't with the preacher.

The problem was with those who were wanting to be spoon-fed and were not wanting to put the time and the effort into growing themselves. And so Paul says, I fed you with milk and not with solid food, for until now you were not able to receive it.

He said, I couldn't progress to the weightier things, the things that may be a little bit more difficult to understand. And the Holy Spirit had to open up our minds to understand these things.

[8 : 54] He says, you were not able to receive it. And even now you are still not able, Paul said. And in verse number 3, for you are still fleshly.

You are still carnal. And then he goes on to talk about the things that were taking place because of this. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not fleshly?

Are you not carnal? And behaving like men, like mere men? For one says, verse number 4, For I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos.

Are you not carnal? So the question this morning is, how do we recognize spiritual infancy? The first thing that we see is the spiritual infant is concerned with self rather than service.

The spiritual infant is concerned with themselves. with what they feel, with what they want, rather than with serving others, rather than using their spiritual gifts within the body of Christ to build one another up, which is why we're here, why we have spiritual gifts.

[10:14] People expect the church to meet all of their needs. Again, with people talking about their church, they've said, well, not only was I not fed, but we weren't having our needs met.

And so, what does that tell you? What does that tell you about their focus and about what they expect out of the Christian life? They expect someone else to meet their needs rather than focusing outward and saying, God, help produce within me the fruit of the Spirit, and by your power and by your grace, I want to be able to use the gifts that you've given me to build up and edify my brothers and sisters in Christ.

So when we look into the body of Christ, our attitude should be, when we come together and when we separate and we go out during the week and we are there for one another, our focus should be, Lord, help me to make a difference in the life of someone else.

And by doing so, we in turn are built up. We in turn are edified. We in turn receive what we need. It's the same with a marriage.

I've done marital counseling and I hear, well, they're not meeting my needs or they're not doing this or they're not doing that. And then the very first question I ask is, well, what are you doing for them?

[11:49] Because in a marriage, it's not what can I get from my spouse? The correct way of looking at a marriage is, how can I meet the needs of the one that God has placed within my life?

And so when we meet their needs, they in turn meet our needs and we mutually are built up and edified and our needs are being met.

And so it's not a what can I get? So many people go into marriage that way. What can I get out of this relationship? What can they do for me? And I hear people say, well, you know what, we're getting a divorce because, you know, they're just not whatever.

They're not meeting my needs and they're not whatever. Rather than what can they give? And so carnal, fleshly, baby Christians are concerned about their needs being met rather than serving others.

So instead of mature behavior that would be characterized by humility and concern for others and obedience to God, the Corinthians were, they were infantile, they were self-centered and therefore they were divisive.

[13:04] We see that in verse number four. And also if you look at chapter one and verse number 12, he also talks about this. He says, each of you says, I'm of Paul or I'm of Apollos.

I'm of Cephas or I am of Christ. You know, there are some who say, well, you know what, I'm not following so-and-so. I'm just following Jesus. I've heard people say that.

You know what? I just follow Jesus. Well, that's code for saying, you know what, I don't want anybody to tell me what to do. And I don't want to listen to anybody preach to me. I just follow Jesus. Well, we ought to follow Jesus, but what has God given to us?

God has given us spiritual people. God has given us leaders within the church to be teaching, to be leading, and also to be responsible for the body of Christ.

So, and that's why we have church membership. The body, the Bible doesn't talk about belonging and having to sign a form or being a member of a particular church like you're a member of a country club.

[14:07] But what we look at church membership as is more of a, of a, I am willing to place myself under the authority or under the oversight of a local body of Christ.

And that would be from the lead elder, the pastor, all the way down to all those who are in, who are leading within the local church.

And so, so they're, they're concerned about themselves and so they are divisive. They wanted lives of exaltation. We see that in verse number eight.

Paul was a little sarcastic here. He says, yeah, you are kings and yeah, you're, you're smart. They, they knew very little, but they were very proud of what the little they knew. And so, they wanted exaltation without humiliation.

exaltation. Verse 19, because they didn't understand that Christ was crucified and that we are to crucify ourselves. We are to put our own desires to death.

[15:15] We are, we should be submissive and humble to what Christ wants. It was a message that was concerned not only with justification, but also sanctification.

We should be growing more like Jesus Christ in, not only in service, but also in behavior. We should become more and more holy and set apart.

And so, our behavior should show the signs of maturity as we grow in, in Christ. We see that in Philippians chapter two, verses one through eight.

So, this misunderstanding of what being a Christ follower was, was at the root of their disunity. First Corinthians chapter one, verse 10, we see that there.

And we also see that in chapter three, verse number four, that we just read. And that was an error that Paul wanted to correct. And that's what he does in his teaching in the book of first Corinthians.

[16:16] So, we look again, verse number one, he says, and I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal or fleshly as to babes in Christ.

Now, we all know there's a time of great rejoicing at birth when a baby's born. Everybody's excited. Everybody is happy. There's joy. There's the same thing when a person trusts Christ as their Savior.

There's rejoicing in heaven. There's rejoicing down here because they've been snatched from the lake of fire and we know that now they're safe in Christ.

They've been delivered from destruction and there is great joy. The same is true with the natural birth. All eyes are on the baby, right?

I know you who are parents and you remember you first bring that baby into public and where does all the attention go?

[17:19] The attention goes to the baby. Everybody oohs and ahs and pinches cheeks and you mamas, you are just there, right?

Sometimes you feel like, well, what about me? Because everybody, first thing you do, they walk in the room, oh, they ooh and ah over the baby. So there's a lot of excitement.

That does kind of wane and wears off after a while but there's joy and excitement and that's to be expected and it's good, it is okay. And the same thing happens in the Christian life when someone trusts Christ as their Savior but just like babies and toddlers who may get accustomed to the attention, that's when maybe they, when they don't grow and they're, they want, always want the attention, they always want their needs to be catered to rather than growing and learning how to do things on their own.

And so, this is considered carnal or fleshly. And we all know the results of when babies are pampered, when toddlers are pampered.

Many young parents don't have the heart to let their infants cry themselves to sleep when the time is appropriate and so, they always learn that if I cry, I get my needs met.

[18:50] If I continue to cry, mama or dad's going to come into the room and or they're going to let me do whatever I want to do and so, they learn that they get their needs met by throwing a tantrum or by crying or by, by being vocal and they get their needs met.

Same thing is true with toddlers. to learn how to sleep in their own bedroom. They, they, they find out that if I cry and pitch a fit that I get to sleep in mom and dad's bed and I get to be in their bedroom and there's a time and a place and mom and dad don't have privacy and most parents eventually learn.

But young babies, young Christians are the same way. There's a period of time when yes, they have to be coddled, yes, they have to be taken care of with a little extra care and, and understanding because their baby isn't Christ.

They, they don't know any better. But there comes a time when we need to learn how to read the Bible for ourselves. There comes a time when the Holy Spirit produces within us the humility and, and, and gentleness and meekness and kindness, the fruit of the Spirit because that's what helps us to work together as the body of Christ.

we, we learn to look outwardly and care for the needs of, begin to care for the needs of others rather than continuing to have other people care for, for our needs.

[20:19] And so, the result is we, we may get frustrated eventually at, why aren't they progressing? The same thing with, with followers of Christ. In verse number two, if you look back at verse number two, we see that, I said, I fed you with milk and not with solid food.

Milk probably refers to the original gospel message that the Corinthian believers had accepted, verse, chapter two, verses six through 16 when they first trusted Christ.

The essential elements of the gospel were all sinners, were all saved by grace through faith in Christ, and all of the blessings that we receive in Christ.

Those are the elemental things of God. Those are the things that we first learn when we trust Christ as our Savior, but they hadn't progressed from there.

God's salvation revealed through the Messiah, Jesus Christ. That's the milk of the word. The author of Hebrews uses that term milk to refer to basic Christian teaching.

[21 : 32] I don't have it up on the slides, but if you want to turn to the book of Hebrews, it's in chapter number five and verses 12 through 13.

Hebrews five, verses 12, 12 and 13. He says, for though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again.

Here we have it. The first principles of the oracles of God, the first things that you learn when you trust Christ. And you have come to need milk and not solid food, for everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe, or she is a babe.

And as we think about, and as we correlate infancy in the physical realm and infancy in the spiritual realm, we know that an infant is upset over the smallest things.

And we know that some Christians who haven't grown in Christ have to be handled with kid gloves. They get their feelings hurt all the time.

[22 : 42] And it's like walking on eggshells with them. They wear their feelings on their sleeves. They're like bombs, always ready to explode over other people.

The infant is the receiver. And there's a time when that is expected. But infants aren't givers. When they grow, we expect them to start giving back to the family.

Those who grow beyond being a toddler, what do you expect them to do in the home? Pick up behind them, maybe begin to learn how to dress themselves.

When they get a little older, learn how to take out the garbage. When they get even older, learn how to do dishes. And so there are things that they're expected to give back.

But in certain stages of life, we don't expect that. But later on, we do. And the same thing with the Christian life. There are certain things that we expect in terms of behavior.

[23 : 44] in a believer, the Corinthian believers weren't doing that. And the writer of Hebrews said, you have need to be taught and you are like babes.

So, the spiritual infant examines everything as a receiver rather than a giver. Secondly, the spiritual infant is concerned with argument rather than action.

Concerned with contention. Concerned with who's right or who's wrong or concerned about petty things rather than doing something that will build up the body of Christ.

We see that in verse number 3. He says, for you're still fleshly, you're still carnal, for, here we have it, for where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you.

And he gives a reason for it. He says, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? So, envying, strife, divisions are the occupation of the infantile believer.

[24 : 54] Perhaps the most underestimated sin in our life is that of strife. Just not getting along with one another. And divisions.

And I'm of this, I'm of that, and I believe this, and I believe that. Contentions and quarrels about religion or church matters are sad evidence of carnality and immaturity.

And the word fleshly or carnal that the Apostle Paul uses, it's a Greek word, sarkikos, and it refers to what's physical or what's earthly.

Just like Jesus when he was talking to Nicodemus, he says, we're born, we're born physically at one point in time, but that's, that's the physical part.

He says, we have to have a spiritual birth. We have to be born and placed into the body of Christ. And so there is something different.

[25 : 58] The Holy Spirit comes to reside within us. And then the Holy Spirit begins to produce spiritual growth. So Paul says, you're still operating in the earthly realm.

You're still thinking fleshly. You're still thinking about the things that concerned you before you came to know Christ as your Savior. So the physical, the earthly, in contrast to spiritual and the heavenly.

It refers here specifically to the Corinthians' behavior. Now Paul doesn't fault them for being human. But he does fault them for their unethical conduct.

As people who assume they're wise, they should have known to behave better. true religion, as the Bible calls it, what does the Bible call us to?

It calls us to be peaceable, not contentious. Factious spirits, factious people act upon human principles, not upon the principles of true religion as the Bible refers to, but they're guided by their own pride, guided by their own passions, and not by the principles of God's Word and Christianity. [27 : 13] Look at Galatians 5, verses 19-21. Here we see the works of the flesh. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, and then what is that next word we see?

Contentions, arguments, people take sides. Well you know what? I wanted blue carpet. No, I wanted brown carpet. Well no, I wanted this, and no, I wanted that.

And so people take up sides. You know, some churches have aisles in the center, and you can tell who's not getting along with who. I kid you not.

And sometimes that happens. Sometimes somebody just prefers to be on this side or that side, but sometimes you have people that will never cross the aisle because so-and-so sits on the other side. And he says contentions are fleshly and Paul puts contentions and factions with adultery and fornication and lewdness and idolatry.

[28 : 23] Contentions and arguings and things about petty things he says are just as bad as all these sexual sins. And he says sorcery, but then we come to contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath.

Unfortunately, we hear of, and I recall back to our church when we were in Alabama, they told me that before we got there, a few years before, that the deacons had gotten into a little bit of a contentious argument over something.

I don't even remember what it was. And they said the head of the deacons pulled out his knife on the other deacons and said he was going to cut them.

I kid you not. You know, so things like this happen. And if I remember correctly, it really was not a big deal.

It wasn't even over anything biblical. It was over something that they had disagreed over that was in the physical realm. It was earthly. It had absolutely no spiritual value whatsoever.

[29 : 40] And so we're talking immaturity. We're talking fleshly carnality. That's what Paul was dealing with. He was dealing with Christians who should have grown by that time, who should have become more peaceable, and should have become more gentle and kind and loving with one another and said, we can work this out.

You know, this is not this serious. Let's work this out. That's the way Christians ought to act and ought to behave toward one another. He says selfish ambitions.

That's where people say, well, you know what, I'm just a deacon. I want to be an elder. You know, the responsibilities that come along with leadership. Do you really want all those responsibilities? And so they wanted their name on the door. They wanted the leadership position without taking care of the leadership responsibilities. And so he says, ambitions, dissensions, and heresies, envy, verse 21, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.

All of these things he puts in dissensions and not getting along with one another alongside murder. He says, which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[31 : 06] He says, they're not things that followers of Jesus do. They're not things that Christians ought to be engaged in and involved in. Verse 27, Philippians 1, 27, he says, only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Have you ever seen children bicker? They might bicker over a toy, they might bicker over something, and we expect toddlers to do that. We expect little ones to do that.

That's part of the process of learning interpersonal relationships and sharing. And so we take those opportunities to teach them, to train them, and to discipline them in the ways that we ought to relate to one another.

So they're teaching moments, teachable moments. And for us as human beings, it's always easier to get into the faction than to get into action.

It's always easier to take a side than be part of the solution, than to act and do something that is spiritual and something that will further the mission of Christ and strengthen the body.

[32 : 27] So it's always easier to get into faction than to get into action. It's easier to grumble than to go. You know, a lot of people grumble and complain over something rather than going out and doing something constructive about it.

It's easier to argue than to act. And then thirdly, the spiritual infant looks to people rather than the master.

Spiritual infants look to people rather than the master. So we see, first of all, baby Christians look at or looking inwardly, looking at themselves, looking to get their needs met rather than serving. We're also, we've also seen that the spiritual infant is more concerned with argument than productive action. And then thirdly, the spiritual infant is looking at people to have their needs met, looking at people rather than the master.

We see that in, well, that's as far as my slides go. Because what were they saying?

[33 : 42] Look, if you look back at verse number four in chapter three, it says, for when one says, I'm of Paul and another, I'm of Apollos, he says, are you not carnal?

Well, our lights worked, right? And so what were they doing? They were saying, well, I'm following Paul.

Another said, I'm following Apollos. And what were they doing? They were dividing up into factions. And we see that today. We see little fan clubs.

We see people who are a fan club of so-and-so on the radio. And that's bright. And we see others who are saying, well, you know what?

I follow so-and-so. And they're a better teacher. And, well, you know what? I believe what they have to say. And so-and-so says, well, no, because you haven't heard so-and-so yet.

[34 : 40] You need to follow them. You need to subscribe to their podcast because, you know what? That's the one you need to follow. And so you've got all these little fan clubs. Paul had his fan club.

Apollos had a fan club. They were probably saying, no, don't follow me. What did Paul say? He did say, he says, follow me as I what?

Follow Christ. And so Paul did not want anyone to worship him, did not want anyone to, because what happens sometimes, we'll see that in a church.

We'll see maybe a pastor who's been there for a number of years and may have been very eloquent, maybe have been very charismatic, and I mean that in terms of being a people person, very likable, and when they leave, we see people follow them.

Maybe they go to another church in town. What do the people do? People follow that person. What does that tell us about people? That we're following a person. And that's what Paul was saying, you're baby Christians, because we have given our allegiance, or so to speak, we have given ourselves over to this family, to this body, not to a person.

[36 : 04] And we follow the head, we follow Christ together. And so he says, when you say, I'm of Paul, and I'm of Apollos, he might say, well, you know what, I appreciate that you say you're following me, but don't follow me.

Just because you're saying you're following a man means you're fleshly, you're carnal, you're looking to the wrong thing. And I've heard people say, well, you know what, I'm not into that church stuff anymore because, well, you know what, I used to go to church, or you know what, I used to follow so-and-so on the radio, and well, you know, then they were involved in that scandal, you know, where they stole all that money or they ran off of their secretary, and well, you know what, I just, you know, just forget it all.

What were they doing? They were looking to a human being and expecting a human being to be perfect when they should have been looking at the only one who is, and that's Jesus Christ. So he says, just because you're saying I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm following him, I'm following that person, he says that just shows that you're carnal and you're not spiritual.

You know, the infant's world is what? Mom, dad, grandparents, aunts, uncles, they have a very small world.

But what happens as we grow? You're in school, your world grows a little bit larger, and your world grows a little bit larger, you get out on your own, you go to college, you go to the business sector, then your world grows even more and more and more.

[37 : 44] And if for a child, if mother doesn't respond or dad doesn't respond in enough time, well, they despair and they scream.

The spiritual infant looks to human resources. They may look to the person who led them to Christ or the evangelist who preached a special sermon.

They'll travel many miles to hear a particular singer or a preacher or a program, but they can't even go to an evening service. They can't even go to a Bible study to learn and grow even more.

And I've heard people do that. I've heard people do that. You know, they'll go, they'll drive three hours to go hear a singing group, but they won't come back on Sunday evening to learn and grow in the Word of God.

Because what happens when you go to a concert? It's fun. It's enjoyable. It's what the people on the stage are doing to us and we enjoy the experience. But to come on a Sunday evening or to come whenever we're learning the Word of God, it takes work.

[38 : 48] It takes time interacting with one another. And so they're concerned with people rather than God in His Word.

So it allows people to dictate how, when, where, and how they serve because they're immature. I talked to someone in the gym just last week.

We were there in the morning and, matter of fact, I know the church where they attend and they're asking him about, he said, well, you know, I don't really go to church that much anymore because, well, because some families, you know, there were cliques in the church.

You know, there were just little groups in the church. And so they stopped attending just because some people chose to spend their time only with a few people.

Now, some of that is expected. You know, we're not going to be as deep of friends with everyone in a church. They're a little bit larger church. They have about 100 to 150 people. And so we can expect that.

[39 : 55] You're not good friends going out to eat every week with everyone. I mean, we don't have time for spending time with 150 different people all the time.

And so some of that's to be expected. And I don't know whether his complaint was valid or not, but that was his complaint because of little cliques in the church.

And so he just kind of gave up on church. That tells us that maybe they weren't looking to the right, in the right place. They weren't looking to the right person. They weren't looking to the master.

So what does the spiritual infant need? And we will close with that. Well, number one, look to Christ. There's our answer. There's the one to whom we need to look.

And that's Jesus Christ. They need to begin building. They need to begin building their life upon the Word of God, spending time in God's Word and learning how to feed themselves.

[41 : 00] You know, all infants go through that stage where, first of all, they're on milk. And then it's the time to wean them off the milk. And they graduate to baby gruel.

I call that. That's the stuff that comes in a jar that might say peas and carrots, but bears absolutely no resemblance to the peas and carrots that I know.

And have any of you ever tasted that stuff? I don't know how babies can live with that. But it's part of the growth process.

And then when they get to solid food, you know, you put their food on their tray and they eat with their hands and they make more of a mess. It's more on their face and their clothes and the floor that goes in their mouth.

But that's part of the process. They're learning how to feed themselves. They're learning how to take care of themselves. Same with the spiritual life. We open up God's Word. We may not understand all of God's Word, but when we take in what we can and what we can't, then our parents pick up and help us with the rest.

[42 : 10] Our leaders, our teachers, Sunday school teachers help us learn the rest. And they'll say, well, you know what? I got this, but I didn't get that. I don't get that.

Well, okay, let's take God's Word and let's see if we can learn this together. It's the same as the physical growth process. We take in what we can and we look to someone else to feed us the rest. And then before we know it, the parent, the guardian, the caretaker has to feed less and less. And so we're able to begin learning and growing for ourselves.

And then thirdly, to remember one day we're going to receive a reward at the judgment seat of Christ for how we've lived here on this earth.

There's going to be a reward for service. There's going to be a reward for sharing the gospel of Christ. There's going to be a reward for looking forward to the return of Jesus Christ and so on and

so on.

[43 : 11] So, question is, isn't it time to grow up? Having said that, we meet together on Sunday evenings. May come as a surprise to some, but we open up God's Word on Sunday evenings.

And we go through verse by verse. We take time to read God's Word. We take time to discuss what God's Word means. So I would encourage you, and you may do some inner searching and saying, am I really growing as a follower of Jesus Christ?

And that's one little step. Another step would be asking, what can I do here? How can I get involved? How can I serve others? We have things that can be done around here.

We have bulletins that can be printed. We have other things that can be done, folded, visiting, visiting hospitals. If you want to visit a hospital or if you want to do something, just let me know.

I can take you wherever. And if you want to know what a pastor does, or if you want to learn how to serve others, we can do that. We can help you.

[44 : 28] So let's begin growing as the body of Christ. Let's pray. Father, tonight, this morning, we thank you. We thank you for your goodness. We thank you for your love and your care for us.

We thank you that your Holy Spirit is there to teach us and help us to grow. Help us, dear Father, that we may be able to grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ and to grow into the stature of being a mature follower of Christ.

Lord, this morning, I pray for each one of us that we may grow, that we may learn, and that we may be able to please you in all that we do. Father, we thank you for this.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.