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## “Stages of Growth”



Spiritual Maturity looks like

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### 1. The process of disciple-making is called *discipleship*.

“*Discipleship* is walking alongside someone to help that person follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus and be on mission for Jesus” (*Intentional* by Guindon pg. 12).

- a. Methods of discipleship: Admonishing, teaching, modeling, Q&A, sharing life, etc.

Col 1:28 (NIV) “He [Jesus] is the one we proclaim, *admonishing and teaching* everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.”

### 2. Stages of Spiritual Growth

#### a. Spiritually Dead

Ephesians 2:1-3 (NLT) “Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.”

#### b. Born Again

John 3:3 (ESV) “Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

#### c. A Spiritual Infant

1 Thess. 2:7-12 (ESV) “But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

9 For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. 11 For you know how, like a father with his children, 12 we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.”

- i. What do spiritual infants need? Truth, care, a model, exhortation, etc.
  - 1. We don’t gain value or love as we become more spiritually mature.
- ii. What do they need from me? To share truth, share life, share habits

#### d. Stunted Maturity

- i. Maturity doesn’t happen merely through time.

Hebrews 5:11-13 (NLT) “There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don’t seem to listen. 12 You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God’s word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. 13 For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn’t know how to do what is right.”

Hebrews 5:14 (ESV) "But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."

### 3. How Do I Stunt My Spiritual Growth?

- a. Eat once a week.
- b. Don't allow others to speak in your life and call you up.
- c. Don't practice what you learn... just consume.

### 4. How Does Spiritual Maturity Come About?

Biblical truth + time + relationship + "discernment trained by constant practice" = growth

### 5. An Example of Spiritual Maturity: Timothy

- a. Spiritual Maturity is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and on mission with Jesus wherever you work, live and play because you love God and others.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV) "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

- b. Timothy's Example

Philippians 2:19-22 (ESV) "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel."

- i. Timothy will genuinely care about you.
- ii. Timothy seeks the interests of Jesus Christ.
- iii. Timothy serves "as a son with a father" in the gospel

### 6. Conclusion

- a. What does God's word say **spiritual maturity** looks like?
  - i. You will aim for what you think the target is.
- b. Two questions:
  - i. Who is helping you grow in spiritual maturity?
  - ii. Who are you helping grow in spiritual maturity?

### Life Group Questions

**Ice Breaker:** Are you more like your mom or dad or neither? In what way/s?

**Main Passages:** 1 Thess. 2:7-12, Hebrews 5:12-14, Phil. 2:19-22

1. Read 1 Thess. 2:7-12. What do spiritual infants need from a disciple-maker?
2. Read Heb. 5:12-14. What are ways that we stunt our spiritual growth/maturity?
  - a. What are things in your life that stunt your spiritual growth?
3. Read Phil. 2:19-22. How is Timothy an example of spiritual maturity?
  - a. Who is helping you grow in spiritual maturity? How so?
  - b. What is a next step for you to take to position yourself to grow in maturity?
4. Who are you helping grow in spiritual maturity?
  - a. What "stage of growth" are they at and what do they need from you?

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