

# Characteristics of Babyhood

LECTURE

# 1

*Christian Character develops through growing up to be like Jesus. Baby Christians can't handle pressures of discipline, circumstance and trials. They need help!*

## Session Topics:

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>1. Innocence</b> . . . . .   | <b>144</b> |
| Begins with being born again as a baby in Christ. A Baby has no past. The Spirit is reborn. The inner man has a future. |            |
| <b>2. Ignorance</b> . . . . .   | <b>145</b> |
| Comes from lack of knowledge and experience. Baby Christians. Parental care. Suitable Training.                         |            |
| <b>3. Irritability</b> . . . . .  | <b>146</b> |
| Is a mark of immaturity. Babies demand attention, satisfaction and self-pleasing.                                       |            |
| <b>4. Dependence</b> . . . . .  | <b>147</b> |
| Requires parenting. By themselves babies cannot feed, stand or walk alone. Babies are self-pleasers.                    |            |

## Outcomes:

**After completing this session you should be able to -**

Recognise immature behavioural patterns and differentiate between babyhood and mature Christian Character.

## Objectives:

- **Appraise maturity levels**  
Using Christian norms.
- **Isolate development activities**  
Targeting ignorance, irritability and dependence.
- **Initiate change**  
Developing ongoing growth.

**Ephesians 4:16** *And He gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. As a result we are NO LONGER CHILDREN, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love we are to GROW UP IN ALL ASPECTS INTO HIM, who is the HEAD even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and joined together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, CAUSES THE GROWTH OF THE BODY FOR THE BUILDING UP OF ITSELF IN LOVE.*

This portion gives the definite idea of **progressive** and **steady growth**. We see phrases like ...

- ◆ Mature man
- ◆ No longer children
- ◆ Grow up in all aspects
- ◆ Causes growth of the body

The Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, has placed within the church **an extremely effective means** to cause growth of His Body **both corporately** and **individually**. **Jesus Christ gave leadership to** the Church, i.e. **The Fivefold Ministry**, for this purpose. We will study this at a future date, but for the present we look at the **growth** of the **individual** Christian.

This Scripture reminds us of the sticker seen on the **Mini Minor** car which says "**When I'm big, I'll be a Rolls Royce.**" The **new born Christian** can say: **when I'm big, I'll be like the Lord Jesus Christ.**

When I'm big,  
I'll be like the  
Lord Jesus  
Christ

### ■ Nobody is Born Full Grown

Growth is a gradual process which begins with the meeting of a seed and an egg. **There is nothing we can do to force growth**, as much as we want to be older and more mature. Maturity comes as the result of **experience** and **of a learning process**.

A little girl wearing her mother's clothes is not mature. Neither does carrying a big marked Bible, speaking in tongues and going to Bible School make a Christian mature – **experience in putting the Bible into practice against all hardships and adversities brings about maturity**. It takes **time** and **practice**!

### ■ It is no Shame

Every stage of growth is wonderful and marvellous. Babyhood is **not a shame** neither is childhood, adolescence, young adulthood or manhood.

- ◆ **Marks of Identity**  
Our purpose here is to **locate you, the believer**, so that you are not ignorant of where you are and where you ought to be. Teenagers who think they are adults are **one big headache**. They get hurt and they hurt others.
- ◆ **Old babies**  
Many Christians have been serving God for many years and are still **big old babies** because of the **lack of understanding** as to where they are, where they ought to be and **how they ought to get there**.
- ◆ **The World does not Understand**  
They often see these twenty year old Christian babies and say – "**if that's Christian ...!**"

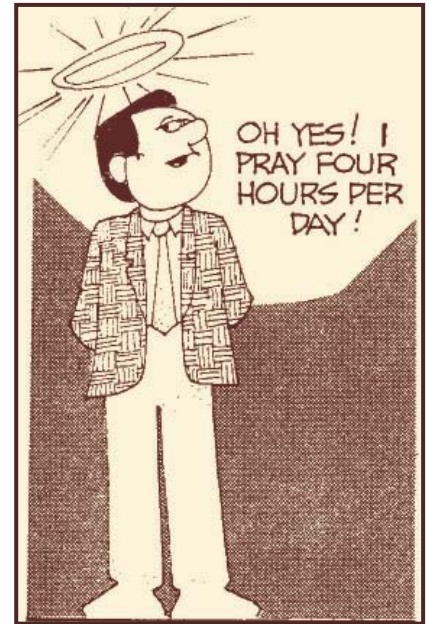
It is a shame  
when you  
do not  
progress past  
a particular  
stage

## ■ Counterfeit Maturity

This is what we call **unsanctified ego** and can be seen in those Christians who want to impress others with their **"spirituality"**. They will boast of their prayer life, their gifts and their usefulness.

Christian, take stock and grow!

Their **goal is to receive praise**. The **mature get on with the 'doing'** without any 'saying', with a **willing and eager** heart!



## ■ What is the Test?

### Discipline Produces Maturity!

A person who cannot take the discipline of the **Word of God** and of **God ordained authority in the church**, will never grow. When Christians are confronted with change **they throw a tantrum or sulk** and even **run away** from home. They will never grow up and mature.

*Hebrews 12:7* **Endure hardships as discipline; God is treating you as sons ... no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT.**

Sickness, calamity and destruction **are not** from nor are they God's means of discipline! The **Word of God** is God's **rod of discipline**. It is when we are threatened by those disasters that we must **be found under the discipline of God's Word**.

An immature Christian cannot handle the pressure of ... discipline, circumstances and trials

A mature person will be found **steadfast and immovably established in the Word in the face of destruction** – an immature person will crumble, fall and run in terror, instead of yielding to what the Bible says about the situation.

*1 Peter 1:23-2:2* **For you have been born again ... Like NEWBORN babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that you may grow up in your salvation ...**

The Bible clearly draws a parallel between the **natural** and the **spiritual**. In fact, the natural is a **type of the spiritual**. We will take natural processes of growth and apply them to our growth as Christians.

**Babyhood** is where we all start as Christians. Jesus Christ, with the anointing of the Holy Spirit by the will of the Father, **gives birth to children of God** through the **body of Christ**.

Identify where you are and submit to the processes of growth

Intercession is the **labour pains** which produce **newborn believers**. We can work and make preparations as long as we like **but if we do not intercede we will not see babies born**.

And the babies that should have been born will be **stillborn!** Let us, through the **labour of intercession**, produce **converts**, or **baby Christians**.

Lack of intercession is like a woman not going into labour

# I. Innocence

**2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, HE IS A NEW CREATION, THE OLD HAS GONE, THE NEW HAS COME.*

## I.1 A Baby has no Past

The only past that a baby has is the **history of the family**, that is the history of the **parentage**.

**John 1:12** *Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become the CHILDREN OF GOD.*

### ■ God is our Father

- ◆ We are born into **his Name**
- ◆ We are born into **his Reputation**
- ◆ We are born into **his Authority**
- ◆ We are born into **his Accomplishments**

A newborn baby has a brand new beginning – **life starts** at that point. There is only a future ahead to look forward to.

## I.2 We are Born from Above

**John 3:6** *Flesh gives birth to flesh, BUT SPIRIT GIVES BIRTH TO SPIRIT.*

When the Bible says that all things have become new, it means **spiritually**. We stay the same **mentally** and **physically** in the sense of our physical **appearance** and mental **knowledge**.

### ■ Spiritual Rebirth Quickens

#### Mentally and Physically

The man with the legion of demons was restored to his right mind, while many others who were forgiven, were also healed physically. Apart from this, they stayed the same physically but their spirit became alive towards the things of God.

Babyhood is particularly in the context of the spirit of man

### ■ The Inner Man

It is the hidden man of the heart that now has **no past** and a **new future**. What is the spirit of man like?

**Mark 4:14** *The farmer sows the Word.*

**Matthew 13:19, 23** *Whenever anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes immediately and snatches away what was sown in his heart ... but the one who received the seed that fell on the good soil is the man that hears the Word and understands it. He produces a crop.*

**Mark 4:24, 25** *Consider carefully what you hear; he continued. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more. Whoever HAS WILL BE GIVEN MORE; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.*

**Hebrews 6:7, 8** *Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.*



The thought we are looking at here is that the **new born spirit** is like **newly ploughed earth**. Watch out what you plant. We plant by **hearing** and **understanding**. The earth does not differentiate, but produce **maize** if maize is planted or **thorns** and **thistles** if it is neglected. It will produce **whatever is planted**.

## 2. Ignorance

Ignorance is a **lack of knowledge** and the **accompanying experience**.

*Hebrews 5:13* *Anyone who lives on milk, BEING STILL AN INFANT, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.*

He does not know the Word and he also has not experienced the Word.

### 2.1 Right or Wrong, Good or Bad

The most important thing a baby knows how to do is to **crave milk** or **sustenance from his mother**. Instinctively, a baby knows some basic human functions, but knows **nothing** other than that.

It does not know how to be mobile, what to put into its mouth or where to perform its functions.



#### ■ Baby Christians

A major sign of the new birth is **the craving for God's Word**. Yelling, bawling and squalling for the Bible – always **prodding, questioning** and hungry for the Word anywhere and anytime. They give you **no rest**. This is an example of a healthy spiritual baby.

#### ■ Eating anything

If they are not fed by their mothers, they will go looking anywhere and will swallow anything as long as it is **religious** or has any **connotation to the Bible**. They will swallow false doctrine of legalism, eastern mysticism, negativism – they will be tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

### 2.2 Parental Care

The church is the **mother**; God is the **Father** alongside the church leaders.

*1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11*

*... but we were GENTLE among you LIKE A MOTHER CARING FOR HER CHILDREN. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel ... but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us ... for you know that we dealt with each of you as a FATHER DEALS WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN, encouraging, comforting and urging you TO LIVE LIVES WORTHY OF GOD ...*

Here we see the twofold attitude of the mother and father that we must have toward the spiritual babies in our midst:

- ◆ Don't be baby bashers
- ◆ Don't be baby neglectors
- ◆ Don't be baby abusers

#### ■ Suitable Training

*Hosea 4:6* *My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.*

Start with the **basics** ...

- ◆ Repentance
- ◆ Faith
- ◆ Baptisms
- ◆ Laying on of hands
- ◆ Resurrections
- ◆ Judgements

God can cause you to be barren parents if you neglect your responsibility



## 3. Irritability

### 3.1 They Demand Attention

If you do not give a baby the attention it demands, it will **let you and the whole world know about it in no uncertain terms**. If you do not greet them, they think you hate them, if you do not spend time with them, they think you do not care and if you are not all over them, they think they have done something wrong.

Babies want things when they want things

You put up with this as long as they are babies. However, if there is no discipline, the child becomes spoiled. You need to be **firm** or else **they will rule you** and you will not fulfil your parenting responsibility.

These are the reactions of babies

### 3.2 They Demand Urgency

Not only do babies want what they want – they want it **right now** or **yesterday**, if possible. If they do not get it they let the whole world know about it. They will phone the pastor and every Christian in sight. They say God does not care for them and, “this Christianity does not work” and wonder why. They say faith has no reality, tithing is out of date and prayer has no effect!

### 3.3 They Demand Satisfaction

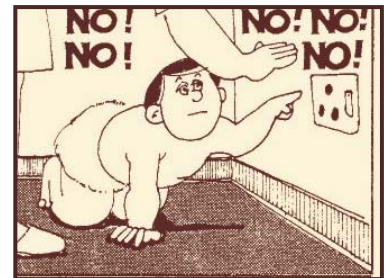
They are easily **frustrated, distracted, fidgety** and **restless**.

#### ■ Constant Repetition

Babies do not understand or hear everything you say – **every bit of information is new and strange**. Therefore they can only take in limited amounts of information at a time.

##### ◆ Once is not Enough

If you tell a Christian baby about **repentance once**, be sure it is not enough.



#### ■ Ignorance Brings Irritation

They do not know how to communicate, do things and how to get things.

Most parents learn to distinguish their needs without any verbal intelligent communication.

Do not get frustrated with babies – practise longsuffering

#### ■ Self-pleasers

Everything revolves around **king baby**. They give in to their **basic instincts** and **desires**.

**1 Corinthians 3:1** *Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as carnal – mere INFANTS IN CHRIST.*

There is jealousy, quarrelling and favouritism.

In the Christian, these are signs of **infancy** and **babyhood**. A baby lives for itself to please itself without any thought or gratitude

for the help of people around them running to their whims and fancies.



## 4. Dependence

This is what every **adult Christian must realize**. Without proper care and attention, the **mortality rate is high**.

### 4.1 They Cannot Feed

Food must be taken to babies. They do not know how to help themselves and will mess themselves.

### 4.2 They Cannot Stand

Babies must be held up otherwise they will **fall down**.

*Romans 15:1* We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak.

Through **intercession, encouragement** and **training** we can make Christian babies stand on their own two feet.

### 4.3 They Cannot Walk

They cannot get anywhere unless you take them. They have no mobility. Do not expect baby Christians to reach their destinations by themselves. **you must take them** into the image and likeness of Christ, take them through **basics**, take them into the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

If you are still dependant and helpless in the things of the Lord, do not worry if you are a **new convert**. It is part of the natural growth process. If you have been serving God many years then **praise God!** Now that you know at what growth stage you are, you can **begin to grow**.

If we cannot **feed, sit, stand** or **walk** in the Word of God, we are still **infants in Christ**.

#### ■ Do not Condemn this Stage

Rather help them grow.

NOTES

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