

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: How to Be a Growing Christian

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 John 2:12-14

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2105

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Are you a growing Christian?
 - i) Are you moving toward maturity?
 - ii) The problem in many of our churches is that there are people who have been born again, but they cease to grow.
- b) Today's message will share how to be a growing Christian.
- c) Fellowship in churches comes when we grow.
- d) 1 John 2:12-14
 - i) Three categories of persons are mentioned in these verses:
 - (1) Children
 - (2) Young men
 - (3) Fathers
 - ii) The Apostle John is speaking here about growing into maturity, coming from children to fatherhood.
- e) What are the marks of maturity?
 - i) Spiritual health is not necessarily a mark of maturity.
 - (1) A young child can be perfectly healthy, but he's not mature.
 - (2) A person can have spiritual health but not be mature.
 - ii) Having spiritual gifts is not necessarily a mark of maturity.
 - (1) A person can be greatly gifted and not be mature.
 - (2) Samson was a man with great gifts, but he was very immature.
 - (3) The Apostle Paul spoke of the immaturity of the gifted Corinthian church.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 1:7
 - (b) 1 Corinthians 3:1
 - iii) Maturity is not the same thing as spirituality.
 - (1) A person can get their heart right with God and be filled with the Holy Spirit and be instantly spiritual, but that does not mean that he or she is a mature Christian.
 - iv) Maturity is Christ-likeness.
 - (1) Ephesians 4:13
 - (a) The word "perfect" here does not mean sinless but mature.
 - (2) Maturity should be measured by whether or not we are becoming more and more like Jesus.
 - (a) This was the goal of Paul's ministry.
 - (b) Colossians 1:28
 - (i) The word "perfect" here also means "mature."
- f) Maturity is a lifelong process.
 - i) No one is instantly mature.
- g) In our Scripture today, the Apostle John shows us how to move into maturity, from childhood to adolescence to fatherhood.

2) THE THRILLING WONDERS OF CHILDHOOD (1 JOHN 12:1)

- a) 1 John 12:1

- i) The Apostle John talks about the childhood stage.
 - b) There are joys, thrills and excitement when God brings a baby into a home.
 - c) There are certain things we know about little children and babies:
 - i) They are selfish.
 - (1) If you take something from them, they can go into a rage.
 - ii) They can be rude.
 - iii) They can be lazy.
 - (1) They lie around the house and don't help clean or cook.
 - iv) They are inconsiderate.
 - (1) They'll wake up their parents in the middle of the night.
 - v) They can sometimes be mean.
 - (1) They will bite one another.
 - d) There are some people who look at a baby Christian and say that if that is a Christian, then they don't want to be one.
 - i) Have you ever heard anyone who looked at a little child say that if that's a human being, then they didn't want to be one?
 - ii) Baby Christians must grow.
 - (1) No one is saved full grown.
 - (a) Regardless of our age when we get saved, we are a babe in Christ.
 - e) A great church is not a church where everybody is a mature Christian.
 - i) This would be a failing church.
 - ii) We need to make baby Christians who come to Jesus feel at home in our churches, and we need to love them.
 - iii) The problem is when some people stay baby Christians and don't mature.
 - (1) They don't grow, don't serve and don't work.
 - (a) Instead, they have to be served and are still selfish, unthoughtful, etc.
 - (2) There is a legitimate childhood, but we are to grow.
 - f) 1 Corinthians 1:7, 3:1
 - i) The Corinthian Christians were using spiritual gifts as toys, not tools.
 - (1) They did not understand what it means to be spiritual in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - g) 1 John 2:12
 - i) The blessing of getting saved is that our sins are forgiven, and we are on our way to Heaven.
 - (1) The main thing that a little child is concerned about is going to Heaven.
- 3) THE TRIUMPHANT WARFARE OF MANHOOD (1 JOHN 2:13-14)
- a) 1 John 2:13-14
 - i) The Apostle John addresses the young men in these passages.
 - (1) No longer milk bottles but mighty battles.
 - (2) These have become workers and warriors.
 - (a) They are no longer being served, but they are servants.

- b) There are several in our churches today who think that they do God a wild favor by simply going to church.
 - i) They're not workers, they're not warriors, and they're not in the battle.
 - (1) They have been saved and are thankful that their sins are forgiven, but that's where they stopped.
 - ii) 1 John 2:14
 - (1) When we move to the next stage, we overcome the wicked one.
 - (a) The question is not whether or not you are afraid of the devil, but is the devil afraid of you?
 - (b) Are you a threat to Satan's kingdom?
 - (c) Have you overcome the wicked one?
 - (2) James 4:7
 - iii) In the average church, the members are not strong, and they don't know anything about the battle.
 - (1) And Satan is having his way because it is like he is fighting against an army of children.
 - c) 1 John 2:14
 - i) Young men are strong, and they have overcome the wicked one.
 - (1) Are you a victor or a victim?
 - (2) Are you an overcomer, or are you overcome?
 - (3) Are you strong, and does the Word of God abide in you?
 - d) Delayed growth is a shame to Almighty God.
- 4) THE TESTED WISDOM OF FATHERHOOD (1 JOHN 2:14)
- a) This is the stage that the Lord is moving us to.
 - b) 1 John 2:14
 - i) The idea of a father is a person who has come to mature wisdom.
 - (1) He knows, he understands, and he has moved beyond building and battling.
 - ii) He has wisdom and a God-likeness.
 - (1) He has been with the Lord so long that his life is beginning to manifest the likeness of God.
 - (a) He has become a father.
 - (i) We speak of God as our Father.
 - iii) This passage is not referring to chronological age or gender.
 - (1) The wording in this passage is an illustration.
 - (a) This passage is referring to men and women.
 - (b) A person can be a spiritual father and be a teenager.
 - (2) This passage is referring to spiritual maturity.
 - c) A father is someone who has children.
 - i) Do you have any spiritual children?
 - ii) Paul spoke of Timothy as his son in the faith.
 - (1) 1 Timothy 1:2
 - iii) Paul also spoke of himself as a spiritual father to the church in Corinth.

- iv) We should have spiritual children and spiritual grandchildren.
 - (1) These are people whom we have won to Jesus who have also won other people to Jesus.
 - (2) Are you going to Heaven empty-handed?
 - (a) Will you have any spiritual children there?
- d) A father is known for his wisdom and his ability to give.
 - i) One of the great joys of life is to give to your children and grandchildren.
 - ii) When you become a spiritual father in the Lord, you will want to give to your spiritual children to help them grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- e) In these Scriptures, God is not saying that we should substitute fatherhood for manhood or manhood for childlikeness.
 - i) A father is a composite of all of these things.
 - ii) Never lose the wonder of childhood.
 - (1) The Bible says to put away childish things, but it also says to still be childlike.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 13:11
 - (2) Keep the wonder, excitement and the joy inside you.
 - (3) Never forget that your sins have been forgiven.
 - (a) 1 John 1:12
 - iii) 1 John 2:13
 - (1) When you become a father, you don't cease in the battle; you don't step out of the warfare.
 - f) When we think of the Apostle John, who wrote the book of 1 John, we think of the beloved disciple.
 - i) He was the disciple whom Jesus loved.
 - (1) John 13:23
 - (2) John 20:2
 - (3) John 21:7
 - ii) He wrote about love and told us to love one another.
 - (1) 1 John 3:11
 - (2) 1 John 4:7
 - iii) But John was very different as a young man.
 - (1) His nickname was "Son of Thunder."
 - (a) Mark 3:17
 - (b) He had a quick temper.
 - (2) He was selfish.
 - (a) Mark 10:35-37
 - (b) Luke 9:51-56
 - (i) When the Samaritans did not receive Jesus, John wanted to call down fire from Heaven on them.
 - (3) John grew in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (a) Later on, he was called the beloved disciple.

- (b) When he went to Samaria the second time, he was the one who led revival there.
 - (i) It wasn't consuming fire but Holy Ghost fire that he brought down upon them the second time he came.
- (c) John was no longer trying to be first, but he was the one who taught us to love one another.
- g) Are you a growing Christian?
 - i) To fail to grow is a sin.
 - ii) If you don't love Jesus Christ more today than yesterday, then you are backslidden.
- h) What are the means of growth?
 - i) Growth requires the miracle of life.
 - (1) 1 John 2:12
 - (a) John calls them "little children."
 - (b) John uses two words for "little children" in this passage.
 - (i) One word means "born ones," and the other word means "children under discipline."
 - (2) We must be a born one.
 - (a) We cannot grow up and then get born.
 - (i) Some people say that they want to get some things in their life straightened out before them come to Christ.
 - 1. That is like saying, "I'm going to grow up, and then I'll get born."
 - (ii) Birth precedes growth.
 - (3) We must give our heart to Jesus Christ.
 - (a) We must be born from above in order to grow.
 - (i) Are you saved?
 - ii) Growth requires the passage of time.
 - (1) We will not be instantly mature.
 - (2) There are no shortcuts.
 - iii) Growth requires the receiving of nourishment.
 - (1) 1 Peter 2:2
 - (a) Don't take a new Christian and give him a study in Revelation, Ezekiel or Leviticus.
 - (i) Get him or her in the Gospel of John, the milk of the Word so that he or she may grow thereby.
 - (b) The word "desire" in this passage means "to crave."
 - (i) This word is also in the imperative form.
 - 1. We are commanded to crave the Word of God.
 - (2) We have to feed day by day on the Word of God.
 - (a) That is where the strength comes.
 - (3) We must get the Word of God in our heart and life if we are going to grow.
 - (a) We have to be constantly feeding on the Word of God.

- (4) Little babies will eat junk food and put anything in their mouths.
 - (a) Baby Christians will sometimes have literature from a cult in their homes.
 - (i) They don't understand; they don't have discernment.
 - (b) They need to feed on the Word.
- iv) Growth requires discipline and exercise.
 - (1) Hebrews 5:14
 - (a) The word here for "exercise" is the word from which we get our word "gymnasium."
 - (2) We have many flabby Christians in our churches because they get saved and baptized, but then they come to church each Sunday to sit, soak and sour.
 - (a) They do not exercise.
 - (b) To go on to maturity, they need to find a place of service, something to do in the church.
 - (3) We need to get busy for the Lord Jesus Christ.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) Are you a growing Christian?
 - i) If you're a child, then be thankful to God that you've been born into the family.
 - ii) But you need to become a young man.
 - (1) There is a battle, and there's work to be done.
- b) Are you a young man, a worker and a warrior?
 - i) Then, you need to become a spiritual father.
 - (1) Remind others of God.
 - (2) Become a giving person.
 - (3) Be a person who has the knowledge of God so that when someone else has a problem, they can come to you.
 - (4) Spend so much time with God that you begin to act and look like Him.
- c) The first step is being born, becoming a little child.
 - i) Are you saved?
 - ii) If not, you can be saved today.
 - (1) God will forgive your sin.
 - (2) Trust Him today.
- d) Pray to Him and ask Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16