

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: How to Be a Growing Christian

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 John 2:12-14

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2484

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Are you a growing Christian?
 - i) Do you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ better today than you did last year or last week?
- b) There are some people who are saved, but they're not growing.
- c) We will never know the kind of victory and joy that we ought to know unless we learn to be growing Christians.
- d) To be a growing Christian refers to maturity.
 - i) We grow on toward maturity.
 - ii) You can be young only once, but you can be immature for a long time.
- e) Hebrews 6:1
- f) It is possible to be spiritually healthy and not mature.
 - i) A young child can be healthier than a 50-year-old man, but he is not mature.
 - ii) If you are a newborn babe in Christ and rejoicing in the Lord Jesus, then you are healthy, but that does not mean you are mature.
 - iii) You may be gifted but not mature.
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 1:7
- g) Maturity is Christ-likeness.
 - i) Maturity is being like Jesus.
 - ii) Ephesians 4:13
 - (1) The word "perfect" here does not mean sinless but mature.

2) THE MARKS OF MATURITY (1 JOHN 2:12-14)

- a) Maturity is a life-long process, and we actually go through three major stages.
 - i) 1 John 2:12-14
 - (1) In these verses, the apostle John speaks of childhood, young manhood and fatherhood.
 - (2) Each of us are in one of those three categories.
 - (a) God wants to move us in progression through these stages until we come to the fatherhood stage.
- b) The thrilling wonders of childhood:
 - i) This is the mark of the childlike Christian.
 - ii) 1 John 2:12
 - iii) When someone becomes a newborn babe in Christ, he is thrilled at knowing Jesus.
 - (1) All of his sins have been forgiven.
 - (2) He is all tomorrows and no yesterdays.
 - iv) The little child lives in the realm of his feelings.
 - (1) He hasn't lost the wonder yet.
 - v) Little children are wonderful, but we don't want them to stay little children.
 - (1) Little children can be uncooperative, selfish and rude.

- vi) A failing church is a church where everyone is a mature Christian.
 - (1) This would mean that people are not being saved day by day.
 - (2) Once someone is saved, at that moment they are a child in Christ.
 - (3) The church should be a maternity ward for new Christians, but it is sad when some stay in the maternity ward for the rest of their lives and never mature.
 - (4) Someone once said that to cease to be better is to cease to be good.
- c) The triumphant warfare of manhood:
 - i) 1 John 2:13-14
 - (1) The apostle John calls those who have come from childhood to manhood workers and warriors.
 - ii) They are workers in the church.
 - (1) They no longer have to be served, but they have learned to serve.
 - iii) They are also warriors in the church.
 - (1) The Word of God has made them strong.
 - (2) 1 John 2:14
 - iv) The devil wants to keep us in the childlike stage.
 - (1) He doesn't want us to be strong.
 - (2) He doesn't want us to be workers or warriors.
 - v) We can only be made strong by the Word of God.
- d) The tested wisdom of fatherhood:
 - i) 1 John 2:13-14
 - ii) The father stage is maturity where we have grown on.
 - iii) We think of God, not as a child or as a young man, but as Father.
 - (1) Matthew 6:9
 - iv) The goal of our lives is to be Christ-like, which is really to be like God the Father.
 - (1) John 14:9
 - (2) When we spend enough time with someone, we begin to think and act like they do.
 - (a) When we spend time with someone, we become like that someone.
 - v) What do fathers do?
 - (1) Fathers reproduce through soul winning and discipleship.
 - (2) A father not only meets his own needs, but he also provides for the needs of others.
 - (3) Fathers have wisdom.
 - (a) Do people go to you when they have a heartache, a tear, a fear or a problem?
 - (i) If so, then you have come to the fatherhood stage of maturity.
- e) As we grow up, we do not substitute fatherhood for young manhood, and we don't substitute young manhood for childhood.
 - i) All three stages are legitimate, and a father is a composite of them all.
 - (1) In a father, there ought to be the vision and zeal of a young man.
 - (2) In a young man, there ought to be the wonder of childhood.

- ii) We don't grow from one stage to another; we just add each stage on.
- iii) If we're perfectly whole, all of these stages will be in us.
- f) The apostle John, who wrote these passages, had to grow in maturity.
 - i) When John was saved, he was a bit mean and nasty; and he stayed that way until he grew.
 - (1) He had a violent disposition.
 - (a) Mark 3:17
 - (i) His nickname was "Son of Thunder."
 - (2) He was selfish.
 - (a) Mark 10:37
 - (3) He was very prejudiced.
 - (a) Luke 9:54-55
 - (4) He was intolerant.
 - (a) Luke 9:49-50
 - ii) John grew up; and when he wrote the Gospel of John, he was the disciple who leaned upon Jesus.
 - (1) John never even mentioned his own name.
 - (a) John 13:23
 - (2) No longer is John seeking the chief place.
 - (3) John is no longer prejudiced.
 - (a) Acts 8:14-15
 - (i) The first time John prayed, he asked for fire to come down upon the people.
 - (ii) The second time he prayed, he asked God to bless the people and to fill them with the Holy Spirit.
 - (4) He is no longer intolerant.
 - (a) 1 John 1:7
 - iii) John was changed and transformed.

3) THE MEANS OF MATURITY

- a) There must be the miracle of life.
 - i) We can't begin to grow until we have life.
 - ii) We must first get saved; become a Christian.
- b) There must be the passing of time.
 - i) There is no instant maturity.
 - ii) God wants us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - iii) Secret of maturity is spending time; we're not going to mature overnight.
- c) Growth requires nourishment.
 - i) We have to feed on the Word of God.
 - ii) 1 Peter 2:2
 - (1) There is no way that we can grow without taking nourishment, and our nourishment is the Word of God.

- iii) We need to feed upon the Word, not merely read the Word, but ponder over it and apply it.
 - (1) Jeremiah 15:16
- iv) Many of us read the Bible like it's a recipe book then never eat the meal.
- d) Growth demands the discipline of exercise.
 - i) Hebrews 5:14
 - ii) Our physical bodies, when exercised, toughen and harden.
 - iii) Many Christians are spiritually flabby; they have no strength or vitality because they have no exercise.
 - (1) They go to church on Sunday morning and sit and soak and think by being in church that they're serving God.
 - (2) We call going to church "the service," but the service actually begins when we walk out of the church building.
 - iv) When we begin to serve God, we're going to grow; and we're going to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - v) Read the Word of God, and don't worry about what you don't understand.
 - (1) Obey what you do understand, and you'll soon be understanding what you didn't understand.
 - vi) When it comes to service, don't worry about what you can't do; find out what you can do, and begin to do it.

4) CONCLUSION

- a) Take inventory of your life.
 - i) Are you a child who is thankful that your sins are forgiven?
 - ii) Are you a young man who's a worker and a warrior?
 - (1) The church could not exist without workers and warriors.
 - iii) But these two stages are not the final goal.
 - iv) The final goal is to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (1) John 10:30
- b) You need to be the kind of Christian who can reproduce, who has fatherly wisdom and who can meet the needs of others.
- c) If you've never received spiritual life, then you need to be saved.
 - i) There is good news: God loves you, and He wants to save you.
 - ii) You don't have to beg Him to save you; He has promised to save you if you will trust Him.
 - iii) Believe that Christ, the Son of God, paid your sin debt with His shed blood on the cross and that God raised Him from the dead.
 - (1) Ask Him to come into your heart as your Lord and Savior.
 - iv) Acts 16:31
- d) Ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins; acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) John 3:16