

# Growth of the Inner Man

## Introduction

In our previous lessons we looked at the results of the fall and its effect on our inner man. We saw that our spirit was cut off from God and was dead. We saw that our understanding was darkened and that we now interpret reality through the eyes of the soul based on our partaking of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which results in a deformed perspective. We saw that there is a process by which the inner man is restored, our understanding is enlightened and our behavior changes. We saw that this process is what we call the salvation of the soul. In this lesson we will look at the growth of the inner man and what that really means.

## A New Creation

The Scriptures are very clear that we are a new creation in Christ.

### 2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB

- (17) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

How do we become a new creation? This happens with what we call “being born again”.

### 1 Peter 1:23 NASB

- (23) for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

It is the seed of the living word that impregnates us and causes the new birth which gives us a new spirit; that is, a new inner man, a new self.

Jesus made it very clear to Nicodemus as to the importance of being born again.

### John 3:3-7 NASB

- (3) Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- (4) Nicodemus \*said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"
- (5) Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
- (6) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

(7) "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

The new self is born of the Spirit and is, therefore, spirit itself. This new self spirit is required before we can see or enter the Kingdom of God. It is in this new self that the life and light of God abides.

#### Ephesians 4:24 NASB

(24) and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

It is the new self that is in the likeness of God and exhibits God's character because the new self is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

We are to live now as our new self. We are required by the Lord to put off; that is, no longer live by our old self.

#### Ephesians 4:22 NASB

(22) that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

Colossians also tells us that we are not to live by our old self but instead live by our new self.

#### Colossians 3:9-11 NASB

(9) Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,

(10) and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--

(11) *a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

The new self is being renewed according to the image of Christ. This renewal is not distinguished by anything that we are but only by Christ. He is the model, the yardstick by which we are measured. We are to be changed into His likeness and are to grow up into Him.

It is the new self that is taught spiritual truth by the Holy Spirit. Our old self has no comprehension of spiritual things.

#### 1 Corinthians 2:14 NASB

(14) But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

It is the new self that is becoming Christ like. Our old self cannot become Christ like. Our old self is dead; our new life is in Christ.

## Growing Up

It is God's intention that our new self matures as His son. Maturing is a process and takes time. It is

mature sons that participate in the plans and purposes of the Father. Maturing affects our thinking process and our emotional responses. In other words, a major portion of our growing up is the process of renewing our mind, which includes the laying aside of our old self and living in our new self

The difference between a child and an adult is the *way* they think, how information is processed, and the *way* in which they react emotionally. The renewing the mind process changes the way we think and the way that our emotions respond.

### 1 Corinthians 14:20 NASB

(20) Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.

Before we know the Lord, we have a *heathen* mind, our thinking process is heathen and operates completely from the old self. When we are born again, we receive a new spirit but we still have our heathen thinking processes. We have a *carnal* mind because our inner mental process operates at the direction of the flesh, our old self, rather than the spirit, our new self. The renewing the mind process moves us from a carnal mind toward a renewed *spiritual* mind so that we can come into the *corporate mind* of Christ. This is the essence of growing up.

There is nothing wrong with being a child when you are a child. But, it is wrong for us to remain as children. We are to mature in the Lord.

### 1 Corinthians 13:11 NASB

When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

A child reasons like a child; his thinking process is like that of a child; he talks like a child. All because he *is* a child. But, Paul says, when we mature we put away childish things; that is, thinking, reasoning, and talking like a child.

The bulk if not all of the Institutional Church is made up of children who are playing “dress-up”, pretending or playacting as adults. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:3-4 that while there is jealousy, strife, divisions among us, we are still carnal, fleshly; this is, we are acting like children. One says I follow this teacher, another says I follow that teacher—what do we think our denominations are but the result of this same thinking process?

The Lord has given us all that we need to mature. He sent us the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit and He provided equipping gifts to His people

### Ephesians 4:11-12 NASB

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

The goal is to bring our new self to maturity. The Holy Spirit works on us individually to renew our minds and conform us to the image of Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a gift of the Father; but, the Lord has given us the five fold ministry as His gifts to bring us to maturity. They work on us corporately to

move us toward the expected result of maturity.

### Ephesians 4:14 NASB

As a result, we are no longer to be 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;

The expected result is that **we are no longer to be children**. The work is to go on until we all grow up, individually and corporately.

### Ephesians 4:13 NASB

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 which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Notice that the maturing process continues with the help of the five fold ministry until all of us attain to maturity which is determined by the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. This means that our inner man must mature into the fullness of Christ.

We cannot become content with an arrested spiritual development. We need to have the attitude that Paul had:

### Philippians 3:12-14 NASB

Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, [*complete, mature*] but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. (13) Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, (14) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Christ has laid hold of us. He has a purpose for us. He has apportioned work for us. The work cannot be done by children, only by mature sons. We press on so that we can lay hold of that which Christ has apportioned to us.

## Sons and Fathers

As the maturity of our inner man progresses, there are two major phases: we are first sons and later we become fathers. So, we reach a point where we are both sons and fathers. We have to learn to be a son before we can become a father.

Under the Old Covenant, the people of God were servants. He was their God and they were His people and they were to obey and serve Him. We have a better Covenant under the New Testament—He is our Father and we are His Children.

### (Galatians 4:6-7 NASB)

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Our problem is that we don't grow up as Sons to become fathers but instead remain at the level of a servant.

This idea is also reflected in Jesus' words toward His disciples.

(John 15:15 NASB)

"No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

The disciples had grown up enough that they could understand the purpose of the work of the Lord. They had reached a point that they could participate in the purposes of God. Jesus revealing to them all that He had heard from the Father had achieved this. In other words, He had shown them the full expression of the Father's heart, which included His plans and purposes. They had reached a point where they could understand the paternal plan of the Father. This is the Lord's goal with us also, that our inner man matures into an understanding of the Father's heart and is able to participate with the Lord in fulfilling the Father's purpose.

It is the Father's intention to bring many sons to glory. This is His paternal plan. We participate in the Family as a *son*. We appropriate the inheritance as an *heir*. We mature as overcomers to *reign* with Him, which is the qualification of the Father's work in the Millennium.

A son becomes an heir when he has received the father's instructions and obeyed them from his heart. In other words, he has been imbued with the father's heart. Normally, the "black sheep" of a family doesn't receive the inheritance because the father doesn't trust him to take care of it.

(Romans 8:17-18 NASB)

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

(Galatians 4:7 NASB)

Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

As children we become heirs of God and join-heirs with Christ. This is conditional on us suffering with him. We appropriate our inheritance by identifying with the suffering of Jesus so that we can be glorified with Him also.

Once we share in his heirship then we must be qualified to reign with Him. He is now on His throne in the heavens. We, as believers, are made to sit together in the heavenly places; however, we are not sitting with Him in His throne.

(Ephesians 2:6-7 NASB)

and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

However, for us to reign with Him (sit with Him in His throne) we have to qualify. Reigning with Him

is something that He only grants to those who overcome. (This is not salvation that we are talking about.)

(Revelation 3:21 NASB)

'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.'

To overcome requires us to do some things. You cannot overcome by being passive. As Jesus said, “**the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force**”.

What is it then that we are to overcome? The same things that Jesus overcame, 1) the desires of the flesh; 2) the power of the world system; 3) the deception of the Enemy. We have His example in these areas; but, we have to learn how to do it through the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are some things that we receive from the Lord as gifts: His life, His spirit, and His nature. Gifts are gifts and don't involve anything that we do. However, there are other things that must be developed: His character, His mind, and His vision. These come as our inner man matures. Fulfilling His purpose is a product of training, overcoming, discipline, trials, hardship, and intensive spiritual qualifying. These things happen as our inner man functions in maturity.