

Babes In Christ

Those in danger

Baby defined

- A baby, by definition, is the young of the species.
- This physical creature can not determine or supply its needs and only by crying can it make its discomfort known. Time and a nurturing environment will usually allow the baby to mature to the point of providing for its own needs. We measure this physical maturity in years and certain achievements at certain ages. At some point most will mature to the point that they are able to create and nurture other babies.

Spiritual vs fleshly babies

- Jesus tells us the nature of the spiritual birth in JOH 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- Paul tells us about spiritual babies in: (1Cor 3:1) And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual {people} but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

Spiritual growth not guaranteed

- In the case of spiritual babes, time does not necessarily bring a person to the point of providing for their own needs, for the needs of others, or spiritual maturity.
- Indeed, an old Christian may be a spiritual babe.
- So then, how do we measure spiritual growth? Not by time...

1. Receive proper nourishment

- Only God's word can strengthen a babe.
- MAT 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (ASV)
- John 4: 14 But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a fount of water springing up to eternal life.”

Milk then meat

- Spiritual nourishment consists of milk and solid food. Both are required for different periods of spiritual growth. (Hebrews 5:12-14 NKJ) (12) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need {someone} to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (13) For everyone who partakes {only} of milk {is} unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. (14) But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.
- Those who teach God's word must know what is appropriate. Remember the elementary principles of the oracles of God in Heb 6:1,2 (Rep, Faith, Bap, Hands, Resur, Jdgm)

2. Exercise is needed to grow

- Spiritual exercise consists of applying God's Word, first to the baby to grow, then to present it to others to cause new birth.
- Open eyes and ears – Mat 13:12-15 stubborn
- 2Tim 2:15 Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. (ASV)

Spiritual vs physical

- Living in the flesh, a spiritual babe must be spiritual minded. Rom 12:2
- (Romans 8:4b-9 ASV) (4b) ... who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (5) For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (6) For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: (7) because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: (8) and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (9) But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Exercise of the new game

- A new babe in Christ must learn new rules.
- We begin spiritual activities: (1Corinthians 9:25-27 ASV)
(25) And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they {do it} to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. (26) I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: (27) but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.
- No excuses: Control thoughts, tongues and bodies. How does one assess the need for spiritual exercise? Physically, we might perform various tests such as measuring the body for weight, strength, stamina, etc.

Exercises of war

- We fight as a good soldier (2Timothy 2:3-4)
(3) Suffer hardship with {me}, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (4) No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of {this} life; that he may please him who enrolled him as soldier
- Are you making excuses because of entanglements?

Exercise of running a race

- We race in 1CO 9:24 Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain.
- The church provides the opportunities to exercise the individuals parts of the body.
- Are you a racer or spectator?

3. Assembly strengthens the spirit

- What happens to the baby learning to walk or the kid learning to ride a bike? Mistakes
- Mistakes are expected, treat them like burns in the kitchen. Clumsy, not sinful.
- Learning expedient ways to live, teach, use God's Word. 2Tim 2:15, 1Pet 3:15
 - Expedients must be lawful and maximize spiritual growth, not flesh.

Assemblies – Christ's body

- Resist sin – know God's Word Mat 4 Satan
- A babe in Christ is not able to recognize sin. There are different kinds of traps, tricks and sin to be recognized:
 - Outward sins: GAL 6:1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (ASV)

Self examination 2Co 13:5

- Inward sins are sins of the heart and are the beginnings of all outward sins. No one but God and the person who sins knows of an inward sin.
- Pro 19:7 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”
- PSA 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring {it} to pass. (NKJ)

4. Self testing

- There is a self-test we can use to determine our spiritual strength.
- (1John 2:9-11 NKJ) He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

4. Self testing

- John seems to expect different levels of spiritual maturity in 1Jo 2:12-14
- Little children: because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. And because you have known the Father.
- Young men: because you have overcome the wicked one. And, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.
- Fathers: because you have known Him {who is} from the beginning. And because you have known Him {who is} from the beginning. (1Jo 2:3)