

## How Not To Be Babes In Christ

Prolonged spiritual childhood or 'babes in Christ' is carnality, and the two are often mentioned together in the scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul says, "I could not talk to you as spiritual men but as to non spiritual (or men of the flesh in whom the carnal nature predominates) or as to mere infants in the new life in Christ. I fed you with milk not meat, for you were not yet strong enough and even now you are not strong enough for you are still of the flesh and under the control of carnal impulses."

Being carnal had reduced the Corinthian people to the status of spiritual babes. There was no distinction between carnality and babes, because carnal people act childishly. If a person doesn't grow as they should in Christian character, then they are immature babes. Growing up as a Christian doesn't mean being able to quote many scriptures; it means to produce fruit or good Christian character. Having a good memory for scriptures does not signify maturity. If a Christian goes whimpering off to the church leadership about silly trivialities, they are childish and that signifies immaturity.

If we wrong any person and can't humble ourselves and go to put things right, that is immaturity. The sin of pride is there. Christianity has to be of the heart, not head knowledge. A person is a babe when he can't eat strong spiritual food. How many Christians love the excitement and joy of the house of God and see a lot of miracles but can't take the discipline of the leadership? Some can't take the solid word of truth where a strong foundation can be laid so God can bless that life, work through that assembly, adjust their relationships in terms of discipleship, touch their materialism, their lifestyle, their rich houses, their carpeted floors, all their modern appliances, and their late model cars which they will tell you they need. If these same 'babes' had seen the Christians in Africa for example, who are dressing in bark because they have no clothes, how they would react? How would they like to have one Bible shared amongst 5000 people like in pastors do in some areas in China?

The Corinthian church had many gifts but they also had many problems caused by immaturity. Gifts given by the Lord are not a sign of growth, but of grace. Maturity is knowing how to handle the gifts to glorify God and to edify the body of Christ. If the gifts do not edify, they should not be exercised.

The scriptures say the doctrine of the carnal man is unstable. Ephesians 4:14 & 15 says, "So then we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine following unscrupulous men in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead. Rather let our lives express truth and let us grow up in every way."

Hebrews 13:9 says, "Do not be carried about by different teachings for it is good for the heart to be established by means of grace."

Hebrews 5:12 to 14 says, "Even though by this time you ought to be teachers of others, you actually need someone to teach you over again the very principles of God's Word. You have come to need milk not solid food or meat. For everyone who continues to feed on milk is obviously unskilled in the doctrine of righteousness, for he is a mere infant; but solid food is for full grown men who can discern between good and evil."

A mature Christian will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit which are revealed in Galatians 5:22 to 26. "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and those who have crucified the flesh with its appetites. If we live by the Holy Spirit let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not be carnal and vainglorious, conceited, competitive, irritating one another, envying and being jealous of one another."

The story of the elder brother of the prodigal son in Luke 15 shows a very immature man who complained about the father's welcoming home party for the prodigal. Many Christians are like that. They don't realise Jesus has made the way of deliverance for them, nor do they realise they have an

inheritance. They are still struggling to gain the victory. They don't have to gain the victory for it has already been given to us by the blood of Jesus. All we have to do is live in Him and we live in victory. Paul said we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Some people take a long time to grasp the deliverance of sickness, weakness, sin and carnality. "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed." See John 8:36.

The scriptures need to be understood by the mind but experienced by the heart. How does one know how or in what areas they need to grow up in God? By seeking the Word of God and asking the Holy Spirit to reveal those areas. Spending time with the Lord, being completely silent in His Presence; waiting for His word to come to you, worshiping, fasting, listening to Christian music, attending church on Sundays and being involved in church activities will all help with spiritual growth. Once a person feels they can't get enough of God's presence even after spending hours with Him, that individual is growing up. If every Christian spent two or three hours reading His Word, praising, worshiping and praying, every single day, we would have very few babes in Christ.

Amen and God bless you.

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