

Growing in Grace

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I. Introduction. Text: I John.

II. John's purpose is to restore Christians to fellowship.

A. This ought to be the supreme concern of every Christian because from it all satisfaction and power comes in the Christian life.

B. All this begins first with an act of relationship—God does something to us by uniting us to Him.

C. Fellowship follows relationship.

D. Maturity follows fellowship.

1. The curse of the church has always been maturity.

2. Christians who have never grown up have caused headaches and difficulties.

III. Three states of spiritual development in the Christian life.

A. These are not a factor of age or gender.

B. The three groups.

1. Children.

a. This is a reference to those born into the family of God.

b. One must be born into the kingdom of God.

c. The first thing that Christians become aware of is the forgiveness of sins.

d. The goal is that every person be matured in Christ, but at this stage, he or she is just starting in his or her growth so there is room for mistakes.

2. Fathers.

a. This is a reference to those mature.

b. The mark of a father is one who has come to know Jesus Christ.

c. This implies a long experience of personal acquaintance and extended time.

d. Fathers possess the characteristics of Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians 13)

3. Young men.

- a. This is a reference to those moving into maturity.
- b. Their lives have been opened to the true struggle of life. (Ephesians 6)
- c. This kind of Christian has recognized that the battle is not with men but with invisible forces.
- d. They have learned to live deliberately and consistently with Christ.
- e. They still lack maturity however.
- f. Maturity is gained through fellowship only—experiencing Christ and depending upon Him in every way.

Application questions:

1. What does it mean to be a mature Christian? How is this attained?

2. Who in your life best exhibits a mature Christian faith? How do they exhibit this?

3. What place do you have in your life for fellowship with God? What can you do to press on to greater maturity?
