

Three P's of Christian Growth

Eph. 4:14-16

Introduction:

- A. Christians need to grow up (vv. 14,15) so the body (church) can grow. (v. 16).
- B. Church has too many babes that hinder its growth.
 - 1. Not chronological babes -- are assets that just need time to grow.
 - 2. Retarded babes -- have had time but have not grown. (1 Cor. 1:1-3)
 - 3. Regressive babes -- "second childhood" (Heb. 5:12-14).
 - 4. Just plain babies -- must be petted and pampered to keep them going.
- C. Christians need to grow in both "grace and knowledge". (2 Pet. 3:18).
 - 1. Knowledge alone tends to puff up. (1 Cor. 8:1).
 - 2. Knowledge needs to be tempered with grace. (cf. Col. 4:6).
- D. Three areas where Christians can expect to grow up.

Discussion:

I. *Perception.*

- A. Of what the Bible teaches. (cf. Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:15-17).
- B. Of how to apply the Bible. (cf. Heb. 5:13; Acts 8:31-35).
- C. Of good and evil. (Heb. 5:14).
 - 1. Babes sometimes are under scrupulous -- morals, marriage, modesty, etc.
 - 2. Babes sometimes are overly scrupulous -- (cf. Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8)
- D. Of the relative importance of things.
 - 1. Of money and material things. (Matt. 6:24,33; Lk. 12:20,21).
 - 2. Of personal things.
 - a. Of outward adorning. (1 Pet. 3:1-4).
 - b. Of bodily strength. (1 Tim. 4:8; Col. 2:23).
 - c. Of what people think of us. (1 Cor. 4:1-5).
 - d. Of what we think of ourselves. (Rom. 12:3).
 - 3. Of church things.
 - a. The style and spirit of religious teachers (Phil. 1:15-18).
 - b. The statistical growth. (of numbers and dollars).

II. *Personality* (Eph. 4:31-32; Jas. 3:13-18; 1 Pet. 3:8-11)

- A. Are we growing out of a self-centered personality?
- B. Are we growing out of a hot-tempered personality?
- C. Are we growing out of an attention-seeking personality?
- D. Are we growing out of discourteous/rude personality?
- E. Are we growing out general childish personality?
- F. cf. "Brother Blank has not changed a bit in 20 years?" -- What pity!

III. *Performance.* (Jas. 1:22,23).

- A. Performance depends on three factors:
 - 1. Desire (2 Cor. 8:12).
 - 2. Ability (2 Cor. 8:3; Acts 11).
 - 3. Opportunity. (Gal. 6:10; Phil. 4:10).
- B. Can grow in all three areas.

Conclusion:

- A. We need three things to really grow up - teaching, time and opportunity (cf. Rom. 14:1)
- B. Time, teaching and opportunity will not do it - unless one is wants to grow.