

Three Stages of Spiritual Growth - Part 3

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen explores the three stages of spiritual growth, emphasizing the transition from receiving blessings as a child to giving as a mature believer.

Duration: 10:17

Scripture: Ephesians 4:15

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Maturity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the transition from being spiritual children who only receive blessings from God to becoming spiritual fathers and mothers who give and bless others. It challenges believers to move from a mindset of constant receiving to one of giving and being a blessing to those around them, highlighting the importance of spiritual growth and maturity in the Christian walk.

Transcript

There's two different ways of knowing the father. One is to know the father like a little two-year-old knows his father, who takes care of me, hugs me, blesses me, provides my need, cleans me up when I'm dirty. I hope your fathers do that sometimes, your little children.

And don't leave it to the mothers. And that's how little children know their father. You take care of them, provide for them, and comfort them, wipe their tears.

And there are some Christians who only know God like that. Oh, Lord, I'm so thankful that you care for me, you provide my need. Whenever I'm in trouble, I run to you.

And that's about the only time I run to you, really. It's like little children. I mean, they're busy going here, going to their friends, playing cricket, this, that, and the other, all types of things.

When they're in trouble, daddy or mommy. That's a child. People who turn to God only when they're in trouble.

And the rest of the time, they're just having a lot of fun on the earth. And they're so thankful there's God. You know, there are a lot of people sitting in CFC like that.

They don't run away. They come to God. Every time they're in trouble, they come to God and say, God, we only have you.

They're like children. Then there are, and they never seem to overcome Satan, the oppression of Satan in their life, et cetera, et cetera. In other words, their sins are forgiven.

You know, that means their diapers are dirty. They got it clean. They feel, don't you feel nice, doesn't the baby feel nice and clean when diapers are changed? That's exactly how many Christians feel, oh, my sins are forgiven, I'm so happy.

In other words, we can say their whole attitude of a child is receiving, receiving, receiving, and it's good. We need to receive forgiveness of sins. However old you are, you need to receive forgiveness of sins when you sin.

To receive from God is a good thing. Children are the gift of the Lord. That's a good thing to receive.

So God blesses us in so many ways. In other words, children are those who experience the first part of Abraham's blessing, that is, I will bless you. When can you receive the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Not when you're a father, when you're a child.

Do you know that you can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a baby spiritually? They were all babies on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached to them. You can receive the Holy Spirit today, right now. That's not for fathers, no.

It's for babies. It's something you receive. Just like a baby receives milk, drink, come to me and drink.

That's what Jesus said, that is, to receive. You can't be a blessing to others before you receive. Jesus said, you drink from me and then the rivers will flow.

So the Lord has to bless us first. When the Lord said, I'll bless you, he told Abraham, that's the stage of children. All that children do is receive.

You ask a child, where do you get those clothes from? Got it from dad or mom. Where do you get that food from? Dad and mom. Where do you get your education from? Dad and mom paid for it.

Everything. Where do you get the cycle from? Oh, dad, mom. They have nothing which they earned and bought.

Everything is received, received, received, received. And we all are like that. We all came into the world like that.

And spiritually, that's how we begin. I will bless you, I will bless you, I will bless you, I will bless you. We begin like that.

And I tell you, every preaching that tells you that God will bless you is absolutely right. The only thing it keeps you as a child forever. That's what I'm against.

I'm not against it. I believe that God is a God who blesses us spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically too. Sure, materially.

I believe in a God who blesses us materially, physically, but that's not primary. Even spiritual blessing is not primary. Because as long as we are receiving, receiving, receiving blessing, you're like a child.

Supposing you're 40 years old and you still say, no, I'm not getting anything. I mean, I'm not earning anything. Then you must be a beggar.

Because you're 40 years old and you're still dependent on other people for your clothes and your food and a place to stay and everything. You don't earn one cent, one paisa yourself. I think some of us would have a serious problem if we were like that.

Aren't you happy that you're not a beggar, always dependent on others? I mean, when we are children, it's okay. It's okay. It's perfectly all right for a 10-year-old to say, everything I got is from somebody else.

But it's pretty serious if you're 40 and you still say, I haven't earned anything myself. I just depend on others to take care of me. And that's exactly the condition with many believers.

What is right when you're 10 years old is serious when you're 40. And what's right to receive when you're a spiritual child is wrong if you stay on in that state of childhood for a long time. So, are we against receiving? No.

We receive, we receive, we receive. But we say, we got to learn to give. And fathers.

Gee, if you look at the life of a father. When I say fathers, I include fathers and mothers. Please remember, when I say young men, I include young men and women.

It's just instead of saying that every time, please remember, I'm talking about fathers and mothers combined. So, what are fathers and mothers like? You take the life of an average father and mother in any home who's got small children. The whole day, they're giving.

What does that dad go and work so hard in the office for? Is it to enjoy himself with all the money he earns there? Oh, no. It's to pay the rent. For whom? For his family.

It's to provide food on the table. For whom? For his family. To buy clothes.

For whom? For his children. And a good father and mother will almost spend very little on themselves. They'll spend the minimum on themselves unless they are some of these good-for-nothing selfish parents who only think of themselves.

I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about those who are real fathers and mothers who care for their children, who will give their children good food and deny themselves and eat simple food themselves. And so a father is giving, giving, giving, giving, giving, blessing others, blessing his children, blessing with all types of things.

He's a blessing to others in his home. So, he's moved from being a child to a father. You know, when he was 10 years old, he was receiving, receiving, receiving, receiving.

Now he's 40 years old, and he's giving and giving and giving and giving. You see how the child has become a father? How the one who kept on receiving a blessing has now started giving, giving, giving? All of us are doing that in our home. If you have grown up, it's not only Christians.

Look at all the non-Christian fathers and mothers. Don't they do the same thing? Sure. Nature is like that.

I mean, all over the world. So, what the Lord is saying is something similar to that can happen in the church. That in the church, which is like a large family, children are born spiritually, and they're born again, and they receive and receive and receive and receive, and then they must grow up to the place where they start blessing others.

They're not now thinking of only receiving, receiving, receiving. They're thinking, now I've got to be a blessing to others. I've got to give and give and be a blessing to other people.

Now, I want to ask you whether your mind works like that, or are you going to be a child forever and ever and ever? How long? And as I said, you can be 80 years old physically and still a child spiritually. And you can be 18, 1-8, 18 years old physically, and be a spiritual father and mother, blessing others who are younger than you. There are millions of people younger than 18 in the world, just by the way, in case you didn't know, to whom you can be a blessing.

There are millions of people in the world who, even though you're 18 years old, who know less about Jesus than you do. In the city, you don't have to go outside Bangalore. Among your friends, among those who know you, you can be a blessing to them.

You can be a spiritual father and mother when you're 18, 1-8 years old, and you can be a spiritual baby when you're 80, 8-0 years old. It's got nothing to do with physical age. It's got to do with how much you open up your being to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When he says, I stand at the door and knock, you say, Lord, come in. Then, you know, your heart is like a house with a thousand rooms, and he will not enter one room without knocking. Jesus is a gentleman.

He doesn't force his way into some area of your life if you don't want him. That's why he doesn't disturb you one bit when you use all your money for yourself and don't care for him. Has he ever disturbed you? No, because he's a gentleman.

He's knocked many times at that door of your finances. You say, no, I'd like to run this room myself. He goes away.

He may knock again after a month or so. You say, no, just leave me alone, Lord. All the other rest of the house is yours.

This room is mine. He leaves you alone. And I'll tell you, after a few years, he won't knock there again.

He wants to run that room himself. And that room will be the darkest room in your life forever. Because he, Jesus, brings light.

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