

Three Stages of Spiritual Growth - Part 4

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen discusses the stages of spiritual growth, emphasizing the importance of allowing Jesus into our lives and the responsibilities of spiritual parenthood.

Duration: 9:13

Scripture: Acts 20:35, 1 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 4:15, 1 John 2:13-14, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Maturity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of allowing Jesus into every area of our lives, particularly our minds, to use our abilities and resources for His kingdom. It challenges believers to move from being spiritual children who only receive blessings to becoming spiritual fathers and mothers who give sacrificially and bless others. The message highlights the choice we have in either remaining self-focused or embracing the responsibilities and blessings of spiritual maturity.

Transcript

Maybe your reading room, the books you read, or the room which you have your television in. You don't want him to come there because you are watching certain things, you know, he won't like. He'll knock a few times, but after some time, he'll just leave you.

Have you noticed how now you can see some dirty movies and feel disturbed about it? Is it because you say you're graduated? No, the Lord stopped knocking. He stopped knocking at that door. He tried a few times and you didn't want to let him in.

He's left you. I mean, he's still there in the house somewhere. But that room, some rooms in your house are dark.

And you have chosen to keep your mind, for example. I remember when I was young and I was doing well in my profession in the Navy. And I realized God had given me a good mind.

And I was 21 years old and I said, now what am I going to use this mind for? I can either use it for God or for myself. That's my choice. He knocks and you say, no, I give you a little bit of time here once in a while.

You can visit this room, but you can't control this room. My mind is for myself. With my mind, I can make money.

I can become famous. I'll tell you honestly, I could have done both. But I'm thankful I didn't go that way.

I asked Jesus to come in and use my mind to make me understand Scripture. Which so many theologians and preachers and professors had made so complicated to people. And I said, Lord, you've given me a clear mind.

Let me use it to understand Scripture so that I can explain Scripture to educated college graduates and to simple villagers equally. But Jesus could speak to both. And I decided to give my mind to him.

And I'm so thankful. You've got a good mind. Many of you sitting here, I know you've got a very good mind.

And the proof of it is that you do so well in your profession when you apply your mind to it. Have you ever thought of allowing Jesus to take you, make use of that mind for his kingdom, for his glory? That you could devote your time a little more to the study of the Scriptures. Let him in, let him in.

It's our choice, you know, whether we want to ultimately be a spiritual father and mother and be a blessing to others, or whether we grow up to the ripe old age of 80 and remain a baby, dirtying our diapers and still drinking, drinking, drinking milk, drinking milk, drinking milk, drinking milk with a feeding bottle in our mouth at 80 years old. You can choose that way if you want. I did not want it.

So you see, John speaks about those who are children who are receiving, receiving, receiving, receiving and fathers who are giving, giving, giving, giving, giving. And you ask any father or mother sitting here or anywhere in the world, would you rather become a child all over again? Or would you rather be a father or mother and have children? I think all of you parents will agree that having children is a bit of a nuisance as well. It's a blessing, I know, but it's also a bit of a nuisance.

It takes a lot of our time and takes a lot of our patience, takes a lot of our money, and takes away a lot of our sleep. I could list a lot of other things like that it takes away. But how many of you who have children would say, yeah, I'd rather not be with children? Not one.

It's worth it, right? All the lost sleep, lost money. Think of how rich you would have been if you had no children. Think of how much sleep you would have got if you had no children.

Think of how peaceful your life would have been at home if you had no children. You want that life? You say, no. You meet the children with all the problems associated with it.

I'll tell you, you have become a father and mother physically. You know, you can be a spiritually also a father and mother like that. You can pull out of responsibility if you like.

You know, like there are some fathers who don't care for their children, they don't provide for them. And it's very sad. I mean, there are very few like that in India, perhaps, because our culture is more family-oriented.

But in many Western countries, I've actually read of a father who was holding a child. It's a true story. It's unbelievable, but true.

And watching television, and some movie he was watching, and this child was born. Small babies, a few months old, bawling and screaming, and he couldn't hear what the television, he banged the child's head against the wall, and the child died. He could watch his movie.

You believe there are fathers like that? It's unbelievable, but true. Totally irresponsible. They only think of, ah, it's a nuisance, that child.

I want to watch this TV program. You know, spiritually, how many people there could be like that sitting here? You're horrified when you hear a story like that. How would anybody ever treat a baby like that? Because he wanted to enjoy himself.

He didn't want the nuisance of a child disturbing his watching a TV program. Is it possible that spiritually you're like that? You don't want to be a father spiritually because you just want to receive. You want to be blessed all the time.

You don't want to take any responsibilities in the church. And even if you sign up for something in the church, you don't turn up to do that because you're watching something interesting. You're just like that father.

What's the difference between you and that father? Absolutely none. The only thing, that father gets arrested by the police and you don't. That's all.

You see, we don't become a blessing because we don't want to. It's too much of a nuisance. You know, if you take a couple who are considering marriage and show them a video, all the things that married couples have to go through.

You know, the thousands of diapers they have to change. And then another baby comes along and then all the problems with standing in long lines to get even entry into the kindergarten for the child. And all the problems in life.

I think they'll say, listen, I think we'd better not get married. We'd just be friends. Yeah.

It's such a nuisance. But thank God that he doesn't allow us to see all that before we get married. We think marriage is just, ah, I'm in love with this girl or this boy and we're just going to have a wonderful time.

Well, that's fine as long as you don't have any children. Even those who don't have children. I know a lot of people who say honey, love, darling and all that for six months and then they can't stand the sight of you and some names I don't want to mention here which they use towards each other.

Yeah. So it's because we want to receive and receive and receive and receive. And there's a blessing in receiving, but you know that verse which says it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Jesus said that in Acts 20 verse 35. It's more blessed to give than to receive. And that's a father.

A child is receiving, that's a blessing in that. A father is more blessed because he gives. He thinks of how he can bless others.

At personal sacrifice. Is there a single father or mother here who has blessed their children without sacrifice? Not one in the world. You cannot bless your children without personal sacrifice.

It requires a lot of sacrifice to have children. And if you have many children, it requires a tremendous amount of sacrifice to take care of them. Tremendous amount.

So in this, when you think of what the Apostle John speaks about children and fathers, you know there's an in-between stage? Young men. So let's look at these three.

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