

# Three Stages of Spiritual Growth - Part 5

by Zac Poonen

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*To experience spiritual growth, one must go through the stages of becoming a child of God, allowing God's word to abide, and becoming a father in the spiritual sense.*

**Duration:** 10:13

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:4, John 1:12, John 8:31-32, Romans 8:15, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 3:16, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 12:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being like a spiritual child, starting with the acknowledgment and gratitude for the forgiveness of sins as the first step towards spiritual growth. It highlights the need to cut off old connections and fully surrender to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. The sermon also discusses the significance of knowing God as a loving Father who rejoices in His children, and the necessity of allowing the Word of God to abide in us to overcome spiritual battles and mature in faith.

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## Transcript

What does a child do? A child, according, a spiritual child, I mean, the first thing he knows his sins are forgiven. And that's where we all got to begin as children. Thank you, Lord, for the blessing that my sins are all blotted out.

And if you haven't got there, brother, you can't proceed. You're not even born. Maybe you're still in the womb, but you're not born.

When you're born again, your sins are forgiven. Your entire past life is blotted out. It's something like, you know, when a baby is born, it's linked to its mother with a thing called the umbilical cord, and it's cut, finished.

The old connection is gone. Can you imagine a baby still living with that umbilical cord? They don't even do that in the jungles. It's cut, its connection is gone with the old life.

I want to ask you, is your connection gone with the old life you had before you gave your life to Christ? Was there a cut? Or you say, it's painful, the scissors. I mean, these are all good friends of mine. It's like the baby saying, you know, for nine months, I got all my food from this umbilical cord.

It supported me, cared for me. The Lord said, cut it. I don't know.

It's so hard. You don't want to give up your old friends. You don't want to give up your old associations.

You don't want to give up your old habits. Okay, then hang on to the umbilical cord. That's it.

There has to be a cutting to be born. And no, as long as you're not born, that's fine. But I mean, you know, if you stay too long in the womb, you die as well.

I hope you know that. Nobody stays in the womb 18 months and lives. Maybe a few weeks more, but not too long.

And I'll tell you this, if you reject what the Lord is saying to you, to repent and turn and give your life to Christ, after some time, you'll just be like a dead baby in the womb, sitting here and listening, listening, listening, listening, because you don't want to cut something. You don't want to be born. So you better hurry up and make that decision, perhaps this morning.

Say, Lord, I've decided I'm going to give my life to Christ. I'm going to turn from my sins and everything. I'm going to cut that old umbilical cord, no matter how much good it did to me all these years.

I'm going to cut it. And maybe you have to cut your relationship. Not that you stop loving your relatives and parents, but if they're going to hinder you from following the Lord, you've got to cut it.

Sure. And that's really the best thing for a baby, couldn't be born. And so baby receives forgiveness of sins.

My past life is gone. The Holy Spirit does that. The Holy Spirit is the one who does that.

He's the midwife who cuts off the cord. And he says, your sins are forgiven. You're a child of God.

You've turned to the Lord. You've come and said you're a sinner. You deserve nothing but hell.

Christ died for you and rose again. You received him. You're forgiven.

You're received. Then the other thing is a child knows the father. That's the other blessing you can have.

As soon as you're born, you know, it's wonderful. The mother and father pick it up. The first thing the child has is a mother and father.

It's wonderful. Security. It's not just helpless out in the world to take care of itself.

You're not just, God hasn't just forgiven your sins. Okay, take care of yourself. No.

He's a father and you know him as one who rejoices in you. You know, real father. I don't mean these types who bang their babies against, head against the wall because they want to watch some TV program.

I'm talking about a real father who'd sacrifice anything, who'd destroy the TV and keep the child. That type of father. We need that.

And who'd pick up the child and, you know, the gleam in his eyes when he sees his child. That's, God is like that. I believe there's a gleam in God's eyes when he looks at me.

Do you believe that? What do you say? Oh, no, no, no, brother. I am pretty filthy. You can't be looking at me like that.

Maybe for you, but not for me. Rubbish. What has that little baby done for the father that the father should be so excited? You say, because I've done so much for God, he's delighted in me.

Okay, that's different from, you know, you see a grown-up son who's done 101 things for his father. The father's delighted in him. But what has that newborn baby done for the father? Tell me.

As the father looks at this baby, he knows this maybe is going to be a nuisance for me for the next 18, 20 years. And this baby is going to mess up his diapers at least for the next two or three years. This baby is going to demand, demand, demand, demand.

There's a gleam in his eyes. Do you believe there's a gleam in God's eyes when he looks at you? You must believe that when you're a child. When you're born again, that you've got a father.

The Holy Spirit comes in and says, Daddy, have you felt that cry in your heart? Looking up to God and saying, Daddy, hey, I'm not an orphan. A lot of orphans in the world, but I'm not one of them. And you're not one of them if you have accepted Christ.

That's the blessing of being a child. Receiving. You can receive, receive, receive everything.

The Bible says every spiritual blessing in heavenly places is ours in Christ. You know, think of a child who's born to a billionaire. As soon as he's born, the billions are, he's an inheritor of all those billions.

If the father and mother die the next day, you know who will get those billions? That one day old baby. That's how we are when we are born again. I become an inheritor to all of God's wealth.

I mean, you understand for your children. It's true with, if you're really a child of God, that's true as far as God and you are concerned too. Every spiritual blessing is yours.

Then we go on from there. Before we become fathers, there's this intermediate stage. And that's why people never become fathers.

That's what I want to tell you. And this intermediate stage is where you allow the word of God to abide in you. Verse 14, last part, God's word gets deep inside you and you overcome Satan.

You know, if you don't get past this, you'll never be a father. And I think that's the reason why some people never become fathers. You know, when it's a baby, when you're a baby, it's so easy.

You don't even have to chew the food. Isn't that wonderful? Everything is mashed up. You don't even have three, four months old and you just swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow.

Even if you have one or two teeth, mommy still matches up everything. You just swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow. You never have to bite anything and chew anything.

Just drink and drink and drink and swallow and swallow and swallow and swallow. You know, it's like people who come to the meetings here and swallow and swallow and swallow and swallow everything they hear. They don't reject it.

They like it. They say, oh, that was a great message. You know, mommy, that is nice tasting food.

I'm coming again next Sunday for some more of this nice tasting food. Swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow. I said, do you ever take the Bible and try to chew some of that yourself and eat it? No,

no, no, no.

I like coming to CFC where I can swallow and swallow and swallow and swallow. Well, you'll never grow up that way. You need to get some teeth or you have got some teeth but you're too lazy to chew.

Think of people who have been in this church so many years and they've never got up here and said one thing that they got directly from God's word till today. Oh, they will do every single thing to arrange things for the conference, sweep the floor, do this, this, and work day and night. But spiritually, babies.

I told you, you can be 80 years old physically and spiritually a baby. Why? Is it because God doesn't give? No, it's because we're lazy. It's because we don't get to God's word.

Young men, what does it say? The word of God abides in you and you overcome Satan. You know why you can't overcome Satan? Because you don't have the word of God abiding in you. Jesus had all of God's word abiding in him by the time he was 12.

And later on, 18 years later, when he was tempted by the devil, he took out one word and said, it's written. Another temptation, he said, it's written. Another word.

And then another temptation to God, it's written. That's just three examples. You can take 300,000 times when the devil came to Jesus, he'd have taken out 300,000 verses.

It's written, sorry. End of temptation. Well, we get tempted by the devil with this, that, and the other, and we don't have any word in our, in our heart because the word of God is not abiding in us.

Do you know the difference between abiding in a home and visiting a home? Can you think of that? Can you think of homes where you abide? That is where you live and where you visit? I want to ask you, does the word of God visit you or live in you? Which is it? I mean, right now, the word of God is visiting you. Is it going to live in you? That's another thing. Here it says the word of God lives in you.

That means you've made your home the home for God's word. Say, hey, God's word, this is your home. You're going to live here, not just visit an hour on Sunday morning and say, bye, see you next Sunday.

That's how many people are. God's word, they, oh yeah, they never tell God's word not to come in. God's word knocks at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning and says, sure, come in.

But I hope you go away at 1130 also. We're not expecting you to stay here forever. Then we'll never be strong.

So that's the thing, to overcome, to overcome. God's word in us and Satan comes and tempts us and we stand against Satan and we overcome. Do you know you can be an overcomer?

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