[Growing Up In Grace](http://savedbygrace.com/christian-life/growing-grace)

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**Introduction**

Have you ever told anyone to grow up? Has anyone ever told you that you need to grow up. What did they mean when they said that? What did you mean when you said that?

**Illustration**: In *The Last Days Newsletter*, Leonard Ravenhill tells about a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village who walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked, “Were any great men born in this village?” The old man replied, “Nope, only babies.” A frothy question brought a profound answer. There are no instant heroes — whether in the world or in the body of Christ. Growth takes time.

Paul tells us to grow up, not to be a baby anymore!

God wants us, as believers, to grow up. To realize our adult status in the body of Christ.

Notice: **Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:**

**How Can We or How Do We Grow Up?**

When we say grow up we mean to mature. Maturity is “full development”. Christians sometimes remind me of schoolchildren who want to look up the answers to their math problems in the back of the book rather than work them through.

God’s will for all believers is that we would “grow up” and be mature saints. Toward that end, the Apostle Paul gives us **three distinct principles**that will assist in our efforts to function like the adult sons of God that we have been made in Christ.

These three principles of maturity in the Age of Grace are **faith, hope, and charity**.

**Faith, Hope, & Charity**

Paul wrote to at least 2 assemblies regarding **faith, hope & charity**.

One group was immature and the other was not. One employed the principles of **faith, hope & charity** and one did not. *Do you know who they were?*

**The Immature Corinthians!**

**1 Cor 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.**

**The Maturing Thessalonians!**

**1 Th 1:6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.**

**What a contrast!**

one assembly must be dealt with as “babes in Christ”

the other assembly are “ensamples to all that believe”.

Question: How are you known? Your Assembly? How would you and I like to be known?

**What is the reason for this great contrast** in the maturity level of the assemblies at Corinth and Thessalonica? The difference can be found in the extent to which the assemblies and the individuals in them functioned based on the principles of **faith, hope & charity**

The Corinthians demonstrate their immaturity by not putting away childish things.

Paul writes to them and says…

**1 Cor 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

When we look at the Thessalonians we read Paul commending their maturity .

**1 Th 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;**

Clearly then, **faith, hope & charity** were missing in the church at Corinth and were present in the church at Thessalonica!

It is these principles that made the assembly at Thessalonica a much more mature and properly functioning assembly than the one at Corinth!

These principles are the principles that describe how mature Sons of God are to function in the Age of Grace.

**The Work Of Faith**

Our walk today, in the dispensation of the grace of God is to be by faith!

**2 Cor** **4:18While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

**2 Cor 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)**

**Faith is not based on physical circumstances of life.**

**2 Cor** **11:24Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.**

**2 Tim 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:**

**Question**: Was God displeased with Paul’s service? It might look that way but Paul says by inspiration of the Holy Spirit **“I have kept the faith!”**

**Paul’s evaluation of his service was not based upon his physical circumstances. It was based upon comparing his service with the revealed will of God in His Word.**

**Doing a work of faith, not looking to circumstances for guidance or confirmation of our faith, is a principle that will allow us to function as the mature adult sons that God has made us in Christ.**

**The Labor of Love**

Charity is the outworking of Love! Many corrupt translations change the word charity in Corinthians to love. However the word of God defines charity as the product of love. There can be no true act of charity without love and there can be no true love without it producing an act of charity.

The Apostle Paul makes clear to us that we are motivated to service by God’s love, not by His wrath as with Israel.

**2 Cor** **5:14For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:**

Paul encourages us to serve the Lord, **not** because we fear His wrath, but because we are **grateful** to Him for having delivered us from His wrath by His grace.

This principle can be clearly seen in admonitions from Matthew and Ephesians concerning the act of forgiveness.

**Mat** **6:12And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, (then) your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, (then) neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

**Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;**

God’s desire to have his people be a forgiving people has never changed, but His way of motivating His people to do so has changed.

As Israel prepared for the kingdom they were motivated to forgive out of a fear that they would not be forgiven. As we forgive in the Age of Grace we are motivated to forgive because we have already been forgiven.

**The Patience of Hope**

In Romans 8 the Apostle Paul tells us how we are to view physical sufferings in the Age of Grace.

**Rom** **8:22For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.**

Notice that what Paul uses to describe our physical deliverance is exactly the opposite of that used by Moses to describe Israel’s physical deliverance.

First, Paul says that our physical redemption is something that “we see not”.

Second, our physical redemption is something that we “with patience wait for”.

*Our lives in the Dispensation of Grace are not lives that are going to be marked with miraculous displays of deliverance from physical distress. Rather they are lives that must be lived enduring tribulation while patiently waiting for the deliverance of our bodies.*

Living our lives in the patience of hope, not looking for immediate deliverance from our physical difficulties, is a principle that will allow us to function as the mature adult sons that God has made us in Christ.

**Walk Worthy of Your Calling**

In Paul’s closing admonitions to the church at Corinth he once again returns to these three principles of adult sonship as he encourages them to push toward maturity.

**1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work (of faith) of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour (of love) is not in vain (patience of hope) in the Lord.**

We, as individuals and as local assemblies, as we follow these three principles of faith, hope, and charity will walk worthy of our position as adult Sons of God.