

Eph. 4:14-16 “Growing Up”

For the Children: There wouldn't be much point in saying to a baby, "Don't be a baby!" A baby cannot help being a baby. But a 6 year old, or a 12 year old, an 18 year old or an 80 year old *can* help it. We don't like to see people act childishly, throwing tantrums and so on, once they get beyond that early-childhood stage. The Lord also expects His children to grow in spiritual maturity – learning to act more and more like the Lord Jesus. He expects that, because that is what He enables His children to do – to grow in knowledge, obedience, grace and godliness. **Questions:** Give some examples of how someone your age might act like someone who hasn't grown up knowing God's Word. How does knowing the Bible help protect you from believing wrong teaching? How can we help others in the church to grow more mature in the Lord?

Introduction:

First Point: Don't Be a Baby!

- 1) As a result: The previous verses made it clear that believers need to grow in maturity so that the church can grow as well. Complete maturity is never attained in this life.
- 2) No Longer Children: Though our level of maturity is far from what it should be, that doesn't mean we should be satisfied with acting like children – the word here refers to a baby who cannot speak. This refers to being a "baby" in the sense of persisting in immature behaviour, ignorance, naivety or instability.
- 3) Neither Tossed Nor Blown: In other words, we are not to be like a small boat tossed by the waves and blown about by high winds during a storm. Immaturity makes us prone to being easily swayed by error and sin. This is a clear danger, since the devil and his human agents can be very manipulative – employing "trickery," "craftiness" and "deceitful scheming" to lead others into error and sin. Lack of knowledge, discernment, wisdom or stability leave us more open to such manipulation.

Second Point: Grow Up!

- 1) Looking to the Lord Jesus: To grow in maturity we need to look to the Lord Jesus. He is the Head of the body, the church. We cannot make ourselves spiritually mature; it must come from Him. As Head, He fits together the various parts of the body, the members. He builds them up, so that we can then help build up the church, with His help. He "orchestrates" the whole process, so that the church is "fully supplied" as the members use their gifts. It is important to ask God for personal growth so that we can be used for growth of our congregation.
- 2) Church Involvement: Our own personal growth also involves the church helping us – through its ministry, and through other members encouraging, teaching and admonishing us. The Lord uses the church to help equip us to help the church!
- 3) Truth in Love: A vital part of this process of maturing is speaking the truth in love (v. 15), which leads to the building up of the body in love (v. 16) – and in truth. That means teaching, encouraging and admonishing each other using the truth, but for the right reason – love of God and our brethren. Truth without love is less effective, and love without truth is a contradiction of terms!

Conclusion:

