

Why You May Need to Grow Up—And How to Get There

Jesus was and is all about life. “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” (John 1:4). “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10). When you said yes to Jesus, what did you expect would happen next? What were you saying yes to? Have you experienced that life?

Forgiveness of sins and living eternally are incomparable gifts beyond anything we could do for ourselves. That would be more than enough for us to love and worship Jesus forever!

But what does that mean for right now? How does saying yes to Jesus affect your life today?

Jesus’ primary message during His earthly ministry was, “The kingdom of God is at hand” (see Mark 1:14-15). As great as eternal redemption is, you don’t have to wait. It’s here now!

That means you don’t have to wait for heaven to experience the freedom, joy, peace, victory, love—the *life*—that’s available to you as a follower of Jesus.

You don’t have to stay addicted to unhealthy substances, pornography, dysfunctional relationships or sex.

You don’t have to exist paralyzed by fear, anxiety, depression or unhealed trauma.

You don’t have to be isolated from true authentic loving relationships, whether single or married.

You don’t have to keep engaging in the same sinful destructive thoughts and behaviors over and over again.

You don’t have to remain in the broken-down, miserable condition in which Jesus found you.

You Don't Have to Live Like This!

Saying yes to Jesus doesn't automatically change your circumstances. But Jesus always changes *you* if you give Him that chance.

God doesn't usually "zap" you from here to there, instantly mature and fully transformed into the person He created you to be. Most change happens over time. God invites you into a process of becoming, a process through which you become more and more like His Son Jesus: "For those whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom. 8:29).

Our spiritual growth is not for the purpose of making us nicer people (who wants to be "nice," anyway?), healthier and wealthier, or more successful. It's not to make us into model church members. It's all about becoming more like Jesus.

Are You Growing Up?

Think back to when you first said yes to Jesus. Are you looking more like Him then when you first believed? How about compared to a year ago?

The Holy Spirit will not stop working with you as long as you give Him any room in your life. Regularly He will reach down into your soul, grab onto something, pull it into the light and say, "This right here; it needs to change! Let Me have this!"

If the enemy can't get you to completely walk away from God, He will keep shouting lies that your sin is too big to change, your problems too ugly for God to do anything with you, the transformation journey too difficult to go through. The sense of failure, guilt and shame will sound like your own thoughts, but it's the enemy's lies instead.

Jesus had a two-part message for those who were caught in

troubles, even if they caused those troubles themselves. And both parts are vitally important.

- “You’re free and forgiven! I’m offering you *life*!”
- “Now let’s deal with your stuff.”

When Jesus had stood up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you?”

She said, “No one, Lord.”

Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more” (John 8:10-11).

The person God created you to be is an original, built uniquely for a specific place in His kingdom both here and now, and in eternity. In that journey there are certain common challenges most of us face, and there are common steps we need to take.

You really *don’t* have to live like this! But if you want things to be different, walking this journey of transformation is important. {eoa}

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