

SPIRITUAL ADOLESCENCE

Growing up in God



When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Steve Highlander

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About the Author

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Spiritual Adolescence: Growing Up in God!

I was walking into my local home-town grocery store in the small, Midwest, county-seat town where I was pastor of a church. The store featured one of those mechanical ponies that cost a quarter to ride. I do not know how long it had been there. The paint was chipped in places. An ear was missing, and the tail partially broken off. What caught my eye on this day was the young man riding the pony. He must have been 10 or so and a bit too big to be riding the pony. What really stood out was the expression on his face. I am not sure if it was real—or put on for my benefit.

His face betrayed his thoughts, “this is thing is for little kids and I’m doing it, but not really enjoying it. His look said, “this is boring,” I am sure when he

dropped the quarter in and climbed on, he expected a bit more excitement—like in his younger days.

Because the Lord drew my attention to this situation, I contemplated what He might be trying to tell me.

I realized something about the young man—he was caught in that awkward stage of growing up. No doubt he had ridden that pony many times, begging his mother for a quarter when they got out of the car.

I am sure he knew he was too old, but he wanted one last ride, unwilling to let a part of his childhood slip away. However, he also had to make it look like he was not enjoying it—because, after all—he was not a little kid anymore.

He was in that in-between-time when he was not what he was—a child—and not yet what he was going to be—an adult. Such is growing up. Both physically and spiritually.

The Church of Jesus Christ is in the midst of transformation. Things are not what they were, and they are not yet what they are going to be. I can think of no better phrase to describe this than SPIRITUAL ADOLESCENCE.

Adolescence is a TEMPORARY period of dramatic change. It is about coming of age. It is about that person growing up to become what they were destined to be—in a physiological sense. We do not

expect full-grown adults to come out of the womb. No mother says, “I am expecting a teen.” (Thank God they are not born full-grown for several reasons.) However, no mother expects their baby NOT to grow into a strong mature person.

That said, the natural process requires a few years of growth and development. Learning and education are part of the process, as is trial and error. Muscles get stronger, and the brain develops, increasing comprehension. Skills are recognized or acquired and honed. That is a natural part of the process of becoming a healthy, mature, productive part of society.

The same thing occurs spiritually. Even the same terms are used scripturally. Jesus said, **“You must be born again”** (John 3:7). Peter said, **“As newborn babies desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow by it”** (1 Peter 2:2). In another place, Paul said, **“strong meat (chewable food that needs to be digested) is for men of full age”** (Hebrews 5:14). Peter said, **“Grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 3:18).

Paul shares an important insight in 1 Corinthians 13:11: **“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”** Unfortunately, this verse often gets bogged down in the controversy of spiritual gifts, and we miss the full impact of what he said. In a general sense, Paul was saying, as I grow up, things change. It was

perfectly all right for me to act like a child when I was a child, but no longer is that acceptable behavior—more on this verse in a little bit.

The Dynamics of Adolescence

Going back to our theme of adolescence, we want to apply this to our spiritual lives. Adolescence is characterized by several key dynamics. These dynamics translate directly into our spiritual lives as well:

1. **It is Universal:** Everyone goes through adolescence. You are not alone in the experience.
2. **Things change:** Things are not what they were, and they are not what they are going to be.
3. **Transformation takes place:** This may seem redundant to change, but things can change without being transformed.
4. **It's temporary:** Fortunately, as tough as adolescence can be, it is relatively short compared to the overall life span
5. **It involves an identity crisis:** One of the most profound characteristics of adolescence is developing a personal identity, which involves finding out whom and what you were meant to be.

6. **It is greatly impacted by peer pressure:** While peer pressure is not exclusively an issue of adolescence, it seems to be much more profound in the developing years, especially concerning identity.
7. **The process is not generally comprehended by those experiencing it.** It is generally hindsight that allows us to make sense of what happened and put things into lifelong perspective.

Let's take a more in-depth look at these dynamics.

Adolescence is Universal

Everyone goes through adolescence. It is a part of life, like potty training and learning to walk. Spiritually, you too have gone through, are going through, or will go through a time of change and transformation. Of course, there can be change without transformation. Some people never grow up. We all know a 60-year-old hippy or a housewife that acts like a child, throwing tantrums and demanding her way. As the saying goes, getting old is mandatory, growing up is not. The same is true spiritually. Forty-year-old baby Christians are sitting in pews today. They have not grown spiritually in years.

That is not to say that we each do not get the chance for spiritual transformation. As I have already said, growing up is optional. God does not

force any of us to mature. There are many reasons people never grow spiritually.

Many people are never told they need to grow up. They were given a doctrinal statement, a service schedule, tithe envelope, and a shortlist of don'ts and don'ts and told this is the epitome of the Christian life. Just be a good church member.

Others were told that it was all about salvation. They got saved and are awaiting their trip to heaven. To me, they are much like the man in the parable of the talents (money). Two men went and traded with their money and made again for the master. The third was scared and hid his money so that he would not lose it. The Master returned and asked for an accounting. He praised those who had made a gain with what they had been given. But the man who hid his was so pleased he did not lose it and was able to give it back. However, the Master was displeased. He called the servant wicked and slothful—not exactly what the guy had hoped.

Today I am afraid there are many Christians sitting in churches that have done absolutely nothing with what God has given them, and they think He will be pleased because they didn't lose their salvation. Salvation is just the beginning of authentic spirituality, not the whole thing.

Some do not want to grow. They are self-satisfied and think they have it all already. Enough said.

The fact is that every Christian has the opportunity and responsibility to mature; it is not an exclusive club. Perhaps this article is your opportunity to recognize what God is trying to do in your life.

Things Change

Adolescence is a time of change—and change can be very bewildering. There are not a lot of people who like change as a rule. We are much more content with our comfort zones of sameness.

There is a time for this change physiologically, and the time is not the same in each person. There are “late bloomers.” Expecting everyone to mature at the same rate, time, or place is unreasonable. That is important for two reasons. The first is that spiritual leaders need to have patience and not try to force growth. The second is that we need to have some patience with ourselves. Spiritual transformation is a work of the Holy Spirit, not self-effort. Many burn themselves out (and annoy the heck out of the rest of us), trying to produce spiritual maturity by self-effort. They end up being religious, critical, self-righteous, and legalistic.

However, change must happen. Paul said it best in 1 Corinthians chapter thirteen. He acknowledged a time he spoke as a child, understood as a child, and thought as a child. Once again, there is a spiritual parallel. When we mature spiritually, these things change the way we think, the way we understand, and the way we talk. Salvation is wonderful, but it is

just the beginning. Paul explains there is the “sincere milk of the word.” Most people still enjoy a fresh glass of cold milk from time to time. But it is not enough to nourish a growing person.

As we mature, the focus of our Christianity begins to shift from us to God. From what Jesus did for us to what we can do for Him. Our understanding begins to change. We begin to see God’s bigger plan and our part in it. We move from convert to disciple—from saved to servant. Our issues take second place to God’s issues.

Psalms 131:2 (KJV) says: “Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.”

Here David relates spiritual growth to the weaning process. In the weaning process, the child goes through a time of emotional discomfort that he does not understand. The baby is not physically hurt nor deprived of food. *The turmoil has to do with his expectation and experience needing to change so he can grow properly.*

At first, a mother holds her baby to her breast and feeds him warm milk. She cuddles and coos and speaks to him. She rocks him and stokes him and loves on him. There is a bonding that takes place. Then one day, mom sticks a bottle in his mouth. HMMM, this is different, but okay. Then comes the day mom does not hold the baby and feed him. She lays him down and places a bottle in his mouth. The

baby screams. Why? It is because of confusion. “Doesn’t mom love me anymore? Where is the breast! Where is the warmth! Where are the attention and the cooing over ME? I DON’T LIKE THIS! WAAAA!” The process is repeated when the bottle is taken away completely. Some children take a long time to get over needing a pacifier.

One of the covenant names of God is El Shaddai; it means “many-breasted-one.” It is the one term that gives God feminine qualities. It also relates to God as a nurturing mother. At one point, Jehovah asks Israel, “can a mother forget her nursing child (Isaiah 49:15)?

Spiritually speaking, the weaning process takes place when God stops breastfeeding us. He may pull back in His presence for a time. The special feelings we had when we got saved may begin to wane. Prayer may not be as dynamic. Bible reading becomes more of a chore. WHAT IS HAPPENING? DOESN’T GOD LOVE ME ANYMORE? WHY CAN’T THINGS BE LIKE THEY WERE?

The reason is, God needs us to grow up! A mature Christian cannot live according to emotion. God must break that tendency out of our lives. Emotions are fickle. Emotions may feel real, but they are not necessarily valid. A child may think there is a monster in the closet and be genuinely terrified. That emotion is real; however, it is not valid. I like to say emotions make great slaves and poor masters. Growing Christians must learn to control their

emotions and stop allowing their emotions to control them.

He wants us to learn to walk on our own, to stand strong even when the feelings are not there. God wants us to grow in faith. Remember, faith is “evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

The weaning process never really hurts us; it matures us—unless we give up and give in. That is why it is so essential to understand the process of weaning and the process of spiritual adolescence. If we could see into the spirit realm, I think we would see some older Christians walking around sucking on spiritual pacifiers, needing to be coddled by the ministry to feel loved and important. These Christians have never experienced weaning. Unfortunately, too many pastors believe it is their job to keep these babies on the bottle or at least keep shoving the pacifier in their mouth. Ministry today often perpetuates baby Christians.

If you expect to grow spiritually, things must change. Get over it.

Transformation Take Place

As I said earlier, things can change without transformation taking place. The most fundamental thing Jesus wants to do is transform us into His image. Romans 8:29 says, **“For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son...”** The word ‘conformed’ in Greek is

SUMMORPHOS, which is made up of two words, one being MORPHOS, the word from which we get metamorphosis. That is the transformation from one thing to another. While a biologist may technically disagree with using the word metamorphosis to describe adolescence, the thought is there.

The concept of metamorphosis is that a creature changes. A tadpole 'morphs' into a frog. A worm transforms into a butterfly. You cannot say that it is a different creature, but things have definitely changed. One form was preliminary to the other. One is incomplete, the other complete. Once again, these things can be likened to our spiritual journey.

The first miracle Jesus did was to transform water into wine. It happened at a wedding—you can read the story in John chapter two. Sadly, most Christians are still auguring if it was wine or grape juice. They missed the entire point of the miracle. For His first miracle, Jesus took the most common substance on the face of the earth and TRANSFORMED its very nature into the best and rarest wine. There are two important things to see here. First, we are told the water was being purified after the ceremonial tradition of the Jews. The lesson here is that legalistic rituals will never transform us. The second thing is that Jesus changed its very nature. He did not add a few packages of Kool-Aide and flavor the water. Too often, people settle for a religious flavoring instead of a transformation of their essential nature.

“Don’t be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind....” (Romans 12:2). Here we discover the word ‘transformed’ in Greek is METAMORPHOO It is where we get the English word Metamorphosis.

Paul often used contrasting words to make a point. Here he used “conformed” and “transformed” to hammer the concept home. Confirmation is outward change brought about by applying pressure. Like modeling clay can be conformed to various shapes by squeezing and pressing it. External pressure can change its shape, but it cannot change its nature; it will always be clay. Peer pressure often conforms us—for good or bad; however, it can never transform us. Kids are often pressured to drink or try drugs or sex because of peer pressure.

On the other hand, peer pressure in a church setting can cause people to conform to religious standards externally, but it can never change their hearts. That is why when a person gets away from the church they often revert to pre-Christian behavior. A heart transformation never took place.

In an interesting passage of scripture, Paul tells the Galatian Christians, **“My children, for whom I again travail until Christ should be formed in you....”** (Galatians 4:19). Here Paul uses the MORPHOO translated ‘FORMED.’ These Christians were saved, but Christ had not yet transformed them. They were born again but not mature. Spiritually they were in a dangerous place.

Here then is the essential difference between religion and spirituality. Religion starts on the outside and applies religious pressure to bring conformity. It says, “do this and don’t do that,” and somehow, the external discipline will soak inside and change us. It simply does not work that way.

Spirituality, on the other hand, starts on the inside. Jesus says, “Let me come into and change your heart.” That internal transformation will then begin to work its way out, changing how we think, understand, talk, and act.

Weaning is a time of spiritual and emotional growth, but adolescence is a time of transformation of thought and purpose. We are made into the image of Christ during these times. The cross is applied. The flesh nature dies, and new resurrection life begins to take its place. Slowly, the way we think, act, speak, and understand changes as we wait on the Lord during these formative days of spiritual adolescence. They will come, and if you live through them, you will become a man or woman of God. Understanding that you are in this time of adolescence is vitally vital to allowing the process to work in your life.

Transformation takes place during this time of spiritual adolescence. Let it do its work.

Spiritual Adolescence is Temporary

Praise God—the good news! Adolescence does not last forever. You will get through it. You will be changed if you do not give up. It is a sad fact that suicide is the leading cause of death in teens. They do not make it through this critical time. Spiritual suicide is a reality also. Some people give up and quit, walking away from God because they do not understand two crucial things. *The time is temporary, and there is a process that must take place.* The very purpose of this message is to help you (or someone you know) understand that things will not always stay the same.

Even the cross had its end. He understood the process, though he did not particularly like it from a fleshly point of view. In the garden, He prayed with great drops of blood streaming down His face, **“If it be possible, let this cup pass from me....”** Hebrews tells us this about Jesus’s attitude and admonishes us to have the same mind, **“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”** Hebrews 12:2

Jesus looked through the cross. He looked beyond the cross. He understood it was temporary. We can do the same. The times of cross-bearing in our lives are always temporary; however, afterward, it yields to resurrection life. It is a faithful saying: No death—no resurrection life. Could it be that the exciting

spiritual life we long for is waiting on the death-to-the-flesh we try so hard to avoid?

I cannot tell you how long your spiritual adolescence will last. I have a sneaking suspicion it lasts just long enough to get the job done. I also suspect that we can shorten or prolong its duration by understanding the process, seeking the Lord, and yielding to His purpose in our lives. While we cannot generate spiritual transformation in the flesh, we can undoubtedly hinder it. We must understand and cooperate during the process, even if that means waiting patiently at times.

It Involves an Identity Crisis

Puberty is a physiological process. Adolescence includes puberty but is more comprehensive. Adolescence is a time of change from child to adult, both physically and emotionally. It is temporary and intermediate, but it tends to be intense. That is why adolescence is so hard physically and spiritually. A young person going through adolescence is not what they were, and they are not what they are going to be. On the one hand, they are reluctant to let go of the childish things, yet they want to grasp adult things with their other hand.

I remember vividly the year I understood there was no Easter Bunny. My mother wanted to know if I still wanted her to hide the Easter eggs. I said, “One more year.”

One of the most significant issues of adolescence is the issue of identity. It is when a young person is trying to define who they are, where they are going, and what they believe. Often, the beliefs, values, and standards instilled by their parents are brought into question. That includes God. No longer can they take things at face value. They must question to see if they believe these things for themselves. Their parent's faith was good to a point. But remember, God does not have any grandchildren—only sons and daughters. Every person must come to a place where they have their own faith. Each of us must form our convictions and make our own commitments. Parents would do well to allow (and help) their children to question and form their beliefs while still in a place where the parents have some input. Otherwise, their high school or college years will rob them of their parent's faith.

That concept is fundamental during spiritual adolescence. A new Christian will naturally believe what they are taught. However, as they begin to grow and mature, it is natural to re-evaluate what they once took for granted. The entire New Testament experience hinged on this principle. Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached the same initial message, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Today we take the word "*repent*" to mean, "stop sinning!" That is not the meaning of the Greek word. The word actually means, "to rethink" or to "think again." So, let's plug the first-century understanding into the familiar passage. "Rethink

because the Kingdom of God is at hand.” Jesus was confronting the Jewish people with an entirely new way of thinking about the Kingdom of God, and they were going to miss it if they didn’t rethink what they believed. Some did, and some did not. Those that did cried, “Jesus is Lord.” Those that did not shouted, “crucify Him!”

There are two dangers at this point. One is to reject what we were taught just because we can. Pride can easily lead some to think they need no spiritual leaders. The other is to question nothing and plod along spiritually without ever testing the waters. Remember, dynamic Christianity must reside in your heart, not your head.

Too often, the growing Christian is met with scorn when questioning the status quo. When difficult questions arise about some church practice or belief, they are told not to rock the boat, accept—or be outside of the will of God.

Of course, not everything that pops into your spiritual head is automatically legitimate. We need to honor our leaders and be careful about not chasing every wind of doctrine. People going through adolescence physically or spiritually need to be encouraged to trust the Lord to keep them in the truth.

Peer pressure plays a big role in adolescence. I saw a cartoon once where the teenager comes out of their room with spiked blue hair, a nose ring, and

baggy clothes. The parent and teen argue, and the teen says, “Why won’t you just let me be an individual?” The next scene shows the teen outside with his friends, who all have spiked blue hair, nose rings, and baggy clothes. We tend to want to be individuals as long as we fit in with everyone else who want to be individuals.

It is unfortunate that adolescents, adrift on the sea of change and looking for answers, seek advice from their peers in the same boat. To those of us looking in from the outside, that does not sound like a good plan. However, that is what most people do.

This issue of identity is critical. Who am I? What am I going to do with my life? What do I believe about the world, God, politics, and life in general? These are all issues with which the adolescent grapples. Spiritual adolescence involves many of the same questions. What does God want out of my life? What is my spiritual purpose? Do I have a destiny? What do I really believe? Is my church right for me? Is it time for a change? These and other questions need answers because the pat answers we learned in Sunday school do not seem to be real anymore. Remember, this is okay. Christians must advance from believing something just because they were taught to believe it.

During spiritual adolescence, God will take beliefs and transform them into convictions. Good ideas will never spur a person to greatness, but convictions will. That is often the reason people fall away from

God during their teens or early 20's. Their beliefs never became convictions because they have never been allowed to hammer them out for themselves in a safe environment.

Discovering who you are in Christ is central to spiritual maturity. Our spiritual identities involve several things. Our primary identity is as sons or daughters of God. We also need to discover that we are **“the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus”** (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Self-righteousness (our efforts at morality and religion) do not make us right with God. This is hard for some Christians to accept—even if they have doctrines that proclaim it. Maturity balances this absolute sense of freedom from performance-based righteousness with the fact that God still desires us to live right and serve Him. Grace is not an excuse to sin; it is a reason to live out the righteousness which was imparted to us through faith.

Another identity crisis arises when we try to apply the various concepts presented in scripture. At different times, the Bible identifies us as the Bride of Christ; the Body of Christ; soldiers; unprofitable servants; bond slaves; kings; priests, etc. It is easy to see why many people get a concept of one identity and structure their entire Christian experience around it. Some think that Christians ought to rule and reign, and some believe they should just humbly serve. The militant ones approach everything as a battle to be fought. The

priestly bunch tends to want everything to be ceremonial.

So, are you a bride or a soldier? Someone wiser than me said, “You are a bride in army boots.” Each of the identities presented in the Bible is true and valid for every person. The tricky part is (and this is where adolescence comes in) learning when to wear which hat. Certainly, there are times to serve and times to fight. There are times to humble ourselves and times to stand and take our God-given authority in the spiritual realm. **“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...”** (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Our identity also includes our spiritual gifts, ministry gifts, and calling. The spiritually mature have wrestled through these issues and are comfortable in their own spiritual skin. Paul has some good advice for those coming to this place of maturity. **“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”** (Romans 12:3) Paul did not say we were not to think highly of ourselves. He said not to think more highly than we ought to. Accurately assessing who and what we are in God is fundamental to maturity. To accept that God made us something without getting an ego about it is critical. Every young ministry must deal with the fact that God is using them, but it is not about them.

Remembering that God once used a donkey to rebuke a prophet helps balance this out.

Spiritual adolescence is a time when all these conflicting concepts start to work themselves out in us. The same two dangers exist here. The one is to allow everyone around you to define who you are, and the other is to do nothing, just plodding along, never discovering your divine purpose or destiny.

It is Greatly Impacted by Peer Pressure:

Since we have already discussed the effects of peer pressure in conjunction with the other issues, I won't say much here. I will repeat that peer pressure is external and molds us—either in negative or positive ways. However, that external pressure does not really change us on the inside. Peer pressure in a church setting tends to force conformity to the group's ideas, producing self-righteousness and creating a spiritual facade without the power of the Spirit. Paul tells us these people have a form of Godliness but deny the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5). It is interesting to note that the word “form” here is MORPHOSIS in Greek. It is transposing the outside without changing the inside.

My wife and I got saved in a fundamental, independent Baptist Church that was pretty legalistic. The church did not believe women should wear pants. While we were in that church, my wife and I were “convicted” that this was a standard of

righteousness required by God. When we left the church a couple of years later and got around others that seemed to have a realistic Christianity but did not think it was wrong for women to wear pants, our “convictions” changed. So, did we experience genuine spiritual conviction or religious peer pressure? Convictions do not change so easily.

Be careful to balance respect for spiritual leaders and older Christians with a solid sense of defining your own convictions during the time of spiritual adolescence. Some growing Christians tend to act a lot like rebellious teenagers who do not want to hear anything their parents have to say. The Bible tells us that stubbornness is as idolatry and rebellion as the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23).

Of course, there is positive peer pressure in church. Just remember that peer pressure can conform us, but it cannot transform us.

***The Process is not Generally
Comprehended
by Those Experiencing it***

It has been said, “Hindsight is 20-20.” Generally speaking, those going through adolescence don’t understand the process unless they are told AND comprehend it. They usually do not do as well unless they cooperate with it and take some things in stride.

One aspect of adolescence that appears tied to the identity crisis is that every minor issue seems life-threatening. Adolescents tend to over-emphasize small things and under-emphasize the important stuff. For example, for some teens, getting pimples can cause their world to crumble for a day. Breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend (the fourth one in as many months) can be devastating. Never mind that the person probably won't meet their future spouse for some time.

During spiritual adolescence, single issues become defining, and sometimes immature Christians will break fellowship over some minor issues. I find it interesting that those who think they are spiritually mature are the ones who often divide the body over petty differences. Paul's advice to the Ephesians seems appropriate for us during this time. **"...with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"** (Ephesians 4:2-30).

Another old saying is apropos here. "I can't see the forest for all the trees." Most "kids" entering adolescence are unprepared for it; the process and issues have never been explained. They have no idea what to expect. Nor do they understand that this is a temporary time, and a little patience will go a long way.

This article aims to explain the spiritual process and the issues one will face as one grows to maturity in Christ.

Because the spiritual adolescent is left to wander in the dark, they often struggle deeply in their faith and identity. Some never make it through this time, remaining spiritual children, thinking like children, speaking like children, and understanding things in childish ways. Jesus said we should be child-like, not childish. There is a huge difference. Others fight the “War of Independence” and run off on their own without accountability or support. They become the proverbial “Lone Rangers.”

The good news is that God is faithful, and He is a part of the whole process. He leads and guides. Your Father knows exactly where you are going and how to get you there. As your heavenly Father, He has the wisdom to make spiritual adolescence what it is supposed to be: a brief time of transition to spiritual maturity. Do not make the mistake many young people do. Listen to your Heavenly Father closely. Guard your heart. Allow God to take you from spiritual childhood to spiritual maturity during this season in Church history.

A Special Note to the Spiritual Mature

We have already said the spiritual adolescence is universal. However, it is also important to note that, unlike regular adolescence, spiritual adolescence

may occur more than once as God takes us through the process of maturing in different areas. You may be a leader in the church right now. Perhaps you have walked with God for fifty years, yet you sense many of the things in this message apply to you. Don't fight it. We all have areas of maturity and areas where we need to grow. Christian maturity does not happen overnight any more than a baby goes to college, gets married and finds a spouse in a few months. Neither does God deal with everything in our lives at once. Becoming like Jesus is a life-long process.

I genuinely believe that God is bringing a new reformation to the Church in the 21st century. In this respect, we are all adolescents—in that we have not yet been where we are going. In the truest sense, we are not what we were, but we are not yet what we will be. As the worldwide Church, we are in adolescence—a time of transformation or metamorphosis as God prepares us for the end-time task at hand.

There are two pitfalls to avoid. One is to allow our pride to stubbornly insist that we are mature and know everything we need to know to serve God in the future.

The other is to cling to our present reality regarding what we believe and how we do '*Church.*' From the reformation in the 1500s, God has moved in waves to restore biblical truth and experience to the Church. He did this one movement at a time.

However, by the second and third generation of a movement, the doctrines and practices were crystallized, but the life of the Spirit that birthed them had been lost. These second and third-generation Christians began to cry to God for a fresh moving of His Spirit. When they did, God started revealing the next step. Every generation of Christians must embrace the new thing God was doing—or resist it and remain with the previous revelation and experience. You and I have the same choice. The entire denominational system seen today was formed by those who settled into a previous experience and refused to go on with God.

My prayer for you echoes the sentiments of Peter and Paul:

“But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

I Peter 3:18

“Let us go on to perfection, not laying again a foundation.....”

Hebrews 6:1

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine....But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all

things, which is the head, even Christ....”

Ephesians 4:14-15

May the Lord Jesus bless and keep you on your journey to maturity.

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The Two Mysteries of the Last Days

The Bible tells us two spiritual “mysteries” are playing out these days. The “Mystery of Godliness” and the “Mystery of Iniquity.” Which one will you choose?

Essential Church The Church is the Body of Christ on earth. Finding and fulfilling your place in the Body of Christ is necessary for fulfilling your spiritual destiny. Discover how in this message.

Be the Church

What is the difference between “Going to church” and “Being the Church?” Discover five life-changing truths in this message

True Sabbath: The Sabbath Isn't a Day; it is a Person

Like all Old Testament types and shadows, the Sabbath principle points to an awesome New Testament spiritual reality. Jesus said, “come to me, and I will give you rest.” Discover the spiritual rest you have been looking for.

Two Anointings for Everyone

The anointing of God is required to accomplish anything of spiritual or eternal value. Discover the two anointings that God wants every Christian to experience to live an authentic life of worship and service.

Spiritual Circumcision

God required the Israelites to be circumcised as a sign of being in covenant with Him. The New Testament speaks of a “circumcision made without hands” and the need to have our hearts circumcised. How can we experience the power of spiritual circumcision? Find out in this message.

Full-Length Books by Steve Highlander

Test the Spirits

Jesus and every New Testament writer warned explicitly about an outpouring of demonic deception in the last days. We are admonished to “test the spirits to see if they are from God.” Test the Spirits looks at these warnings and provides ten “tests” to apply to any person, doctrine, or spiritual experience. You will also discover how to grow in spiritual discernment. The last chapter discusses the reality of the greatest spiritual harvest the world has ever seen in the days ahead and how Satan wants to derail it with deception. (Available in print and eBook format on Amazon.com. A Free eBook version is available on stevehighlander.com.)

Four Anointings Every Church Should Have: Establishing the Body of Christ in the Local Assembly.

God provided three anointings to manage His Kingdom in the Old Testament: prophet, priest, and king. As the Old Testament expression of the Kingdom of God translated into the New Testament expression of the Kingdom, the anointing provided to manage the Kingdom also transferred to the church. The New Testament anointings include the fivefold ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. When these anointings are operating correctly in a local church, they release an anointing on the congregation to operate in the Charismatic gifts found in 1 Corinthians chapter twelve. (Available in print and eBook format on Amazon.com. A Free eBook version is available on stevehighlander.com.)