

# MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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January 2015  
The New Generation

Dear Friend,

Thank God for the New Birth! Thank God for the privilege of dying the death of the cross in Jesus so that we don't have to pay the price for our own sin in hell for eternity. As wonderful as that is, it's only part of the miracle. God also made it possible for us to be reborn into His family as His children. Think of it, we who have made Jesus Lord of our lives have not only been freed from sin and death, but have been born again into God's family as His children. We have truly entered our Promised Land. But, as with children, maturity is essential in order to possess the Land.

What I mean is this, entering the Promised Land is only the beginning of taking possession of it, just as being born again is only the beginning in the maturing process. In other words, we haven't "arrived" simply because we are born again, we have only taken our first step on the road of spiritual development. Surprising as it may be, progressing on the road of spiritual development isn't God's responsibility it's ours.

The New Testament is filled with references to the new birth that takes place in a person the instant they make Jesus Christ Lord of their life. Even though we come into the kingdom of God as spiritual babies we shouldn't stay babies. That would be the same as if a baby were born into this natural world and never grew or developed. Peter tells us what we need to do in order to grow spiritually.  
(1 Peter 2:2)

***“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.”***

Notice who it is that must have the “desire”; it is the individual who must desire the sincere milk of the Word. I can't have the “desire” for you. You must desire it yourself and then follow through on that desire by feeding yourself with God's Word. In so doing, the result will be that you will “grow thereby”. Clearly,

spiritual growth and development isn't automatic; it happens because we accept responsibility for feeding ourselves.

Paul had this to say about "growing up" spiritually. (Ephesians 4:14-15)

***"That we henceforth be no more children (an infant, a little child) tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight 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."***

Praise God! We can grow up into Him in all things. We don't have to stay spiritual babies all our lives. We can develop into the kind of believers that God can use to reach others for His kingdom. But, if a person fails to feed them self on God's Word they are withholding from their spirit the "food" that it needs to grow.

Even though Paul's admonishment to the church at Ephesus to grow and mature as believers follows his description of the five ministry gifts, (Ephesians 4:11); we shouldn't expect ministers to bear the sole responsibility for feeding us. A sermon once or twice a week isn't nearly enough for us to grow and develop into the mature believers Paul described in Ephesian 4:13. We must accept responsibility for our own growth and development and not depend on someone else to feed us.

In addition to making sure we are "feeding" our spirit with the Word of God so that we grow "spiritually", we must also take responsibility for doing something with our outer man. (Colossians 3:5)

***"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."***

The "members" we are to mortify aren't the other members of our church, (Ha). He's talking about mortifying our flesh. Paul had already pointed out that we are **dead**, in verse 3, referring to the death sentence yet to be carried out on our body and "untransformed" soul. So, even though we are accounted as dead right now, we must still "mortify" or "put to death" our members that are upon the earth.

While we are busy feeding our spirit man on the Word of God, enabling it to grow and mature, we are to be simultaneously putting to death the deeds of the outer

man. The inner man is growing up strong in the Lord and the outer man is on its “death” march.

It might surprise you to hear that I have come across people who balked at the idea of growing up spiritually. For whatever reason, they clung to the belief that we are to always be like babies dependent on our heavenly Father.

Please don't conclude that I'm saying we should develop to a place of independence from our heavenly Father. **On the contrary**, the more we develop spiritually and put the deeds of the body to death the more we will stop depending on our own flesh to save us and depend more on God.

Why is that? It's because we will grow in our willingness to follow God as He leads us into impossible circumstances where we won't make it without Him. Spiritually immature people won't follow God like that because they have never put to death the fears that control them. At the first sign of danger they retreat to the “arm of their flesh” to save them instead of trusting in God. Consequently, the proof of greater spiritual maturity is an even greater dependency on God.

Previously, we looked at how the natural events surrounding Israel's wilderness experience foretold spiritual events that were to take place once Jesus died and rose again, like a picture in a picture. One event in particular illustrates the increase that is to take place in us as we grow up spiritually, while at the same time putting to death the part of us that opposes the things of God.

The event I'm referring to begins after Israel's initial failure to enter the Promised Land. They were well into their second year of wandering through the wilderness when Israel came to the border of the land that God had promised to give them. God said to Moses. (Numbers 13:1-2)

***“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, ‘Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall you send a man, every one a ruler among them.’ ”***

Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land, but 10 of the spies returned with an evil report. (Numbers 13:32-33)

***“And they brought up an evil report ..., ‘The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. (33) And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.’ ”***

Only two spies, Caleb and Joshua, believed. (Numbers 14:8)

***“If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.”***

Sadly, the children of Israel sided with the ten spies, which led to one of the most unique exchanges between God and man. Moses interceded on behalf of Israel until God finally acquiesced to his pleas and pardoned Israel. (Numbers 14:20) But, Israel’s actions were not without consequences. (Numbers 14:22-23)

***“Because all those men which have seen My glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice. (23) Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it.”***

Israel’s disobedience cost that generation the right to enter the Promised Land. (Numbers 14:29)

***“Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward...”***

Only the two spies who had a good report, Caleb and Joshua, would be allowed to enter the land, as well as, the children younger than 20 years of age and those yet to be born. (Numbers 14:31)

***“But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land, which you have despised.”***

As God sent Israel back into the wilderness let’s consider what began to unfold. Within every tent was housed a family, both old and young. The old carried **the sentence of death** while the young, and those yet to be born, were growing up and being prepared **to take possession of the Promised Land**. As far as God was concerned, He had already accounted the older generation as dead. Their fate was sealed and every passing day brought them one step closer to their demise.

While the next generation was growing and maturing in preparation for possessing the Promised Land, the older generation, those who were accounted as dead, grumbled and complained about how unfair God had been to them.

Just imagine what that must have sounded like as, in the same tent, the younger ones grew up watching the older ones grumbling and complaining.

Under the shadow, this illustrates the growth and development of our reborn human spirit that is sharing this tent with our unmortified flesh. The flesh, as with the older generation of Israel, constantly doubts God and has no interest whatsoever in following God or fulfilling His plan for our lives. That's right, the tent each family lived in under the shadow was a picture of the tent in which we now live, shared by both our reborn human spirit and our unmortified flesh. (II Corinthians 5:1)

***“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (or tent) were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”***

Our spirit man, the real person on the inside, has been reborn inside this tent that was previously occupied by a spiritually dead human spirit. Under the shadow, the only way to illustrate this conversion was by the birth of children, making an exception for those younger than 20 years of age. The children represent our reborn human spirit. The parents represent our unmortified flesh that is hopelessly destined for destruction. The “new generation” is our reborn human spirit and the “old generation” is our soul that has yet to be transformed, along with our body that is accounted as dead.

Our goal should be to grow and develop into mature sons of God by feeding ourselves on God's Word, as well as, using every spiritual tool available to us to put to death the deeds of the body. Unlike the natural example in which the first generation had to completely die off before entering the Promised Land, we are able to take possession of more and more of our Promised Land as our reborn human spirit matures and our unmortified flesh is put to death.

Our Promised Land is what we are born into when we make Jesus Lord of our lives. We are reborn into God's family as His children. The war for possessing the land is between our flesh, under the influence of the devil, warring against our spirit. It often manifests in our inability to believe we are who God made us to be as His children.

The bottom line is this, the benefits of the Promised Land are available to any born again child of God who chooses to grow up and take possession while putting the flesh to death. If we choose to do this we can enjoy all the benefits that living in God's Promised Land provides. It requires a 100% reliance on Him and not ourselves. As we experience the maturity in our reborn human spirit and

the mortification of the flesh we will walk in a confidence in our Father that will make all things possible to us because we do believe.

~ Grace be with you

*Mark Jenkins*