

THE BIG IDEA: God wants us to GROW UP before we GROW OUT.

The Take-Off

What are some things that we do for babies but we'd hate to do for adults?

It's kind of a weird question, but let's play around with it for a bit.

We don't mind changing a diaper for a baby. Probably not for an adult.

It doesn't look odd when you're giving your baby a bottle, but might seem odd if you were holding a bottle for a man.

What about wiping the drool from your baby's mouth with a spit-up cloth? No one's looking at you funny then, either, unless you're wiping your wife's mouth at 35 years of age.

How about baby talk? We are all instantly transformed into blubbering knuckleheads when babies are around, but try talking to your boss like that! Not gonna end well.

There are times that it's ok to be a baby, but as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:11, as we grow, we have to put away childish things.

This morning, Paul talks a lot about the need to grow up in our faith, and the benefits of refusing to do the things that babies do when we should be doing what adults do.

Here are some pretty important truths that we need to learn in Ephesians 4:14-16...

1. God wants his children to grow

- a. Ironically, God isn't much different from every other parent on the planet, is he?
- b. Granted, parents can have very different parenting styles, and very different parenting values, but one thing that all parents have in common is a very strong desire for their children to...leave!
- c. It isn't because we hate our kids, is it? It's because we want them to grow up and be confident on their own.
- d. It's important to recognize that all of us were, or are, infants spiritually.
- e. Paul isn't saying that it's bad to be an infant, or even that it's bad to be tossed around by personal preference and teaching that makes us feel good.
- f. What he's saying is that God doesn't want any of his kids to stay there!
- g. Most new parents struggle with being full of hope and dread for their baby at every milestone.
- h. If a baby isn't walking by age 1, we begin to wonder. If it's 18 months, we worry. At age 2, we're looking for specialists because we realize that something isn't right.
- i. But we'd never kick that kid out yelling, "Good luck!"
- j. Really hear what God's saying in verse 14: it is the nature of infants to not be able to stand on their own, but it is the nature of life for us not to remain infants.
- k. Are we at times infants? Yes. 1 Peter 2:2 tells us that.
- l. Is it okay to stay infants? No. Hebrews 5:12 tells us that.
- m. Before we talk about HOW we're supposed to grow up, let's remember WHY we're supposed to grow up.
- n. To do that, we need to remember the last things Jesus told his disciples (and us):
 - Matthew 28:18-20 - Go into all the world and make disciples
 - Acts 1:8 - You'll receive power so you can go be my witnesses
- o. Why do we grow up? The Big Idea sums it up: God wants us to GROW UP so we can GROW OUT.
- p. Sometimes we get that backwards spiritually and we go out before we grow up and then we wonder why we're tossed around like a rag doll in a dog's mouth.
- q. You or I would never give birth to a baby and then set him or her out on the curb to live and grow alone.
- r. Neither does God.
- s. His desire is that his children will grow up before we grow out.
- t. It's important that we stop being infants first.
- u. Sitting in a packed arena of mature adults at a loud concert? Fun.
- v. Sitting in a packed nursery full of crying babies? Not so much.
- w. Numbers and greater impact will come, but our command from Jesus wasn't to make bigger churches. Before anything, it was to make disciples and grow his kingdom.
- x. GROW UP before we GROW OUT.

2. A better kind of CrossFit

- a. In case you haven't noticed, CrossFit is sweeping the country.
- b. It's basically a return to fitness the way it used to be. Lots of body weight exercises like pull-ups, leg lifts, pushups, etc.
- c. It mixes in a lot of cardio workouts and CrossFitters hang out in sweaty places called boxes.
- d. We've got a CrossFit box here in town right down the street from here.
- e. The crazy thing about CrossFit is that it's tough, it takes discipline and it costs a lot.
- f. And people are lining up to pay for a chance to be a part of it.
- g. Can I introduce you to a better kind of CrossFit?
- h. It's a training plan that takes us back to the basics, just like CrossFit does.
- i. It takes us back to truth, because Ephesians 4:15 says that the way God ordained for his children to grow from infants to adults was in a community committed to speaking the truth in love.
- j. The literal translation of that phrase "speaking the truth in love" is "doing truth" or "acting truly"
- k. God uses the truth that we speak and do - the commitment we have to act truly with one another - to grow us
- l. It's uncomfortable, it requires lots of discipline, and it is costly
- m. But this won't cost you or me \$120/month like the new CrossFit.
- n. The original, better CrossFit will cost you and me our pride.
- o. It will require a willingness to believe the best about each other, that what we say is always motivated by the love that Jesus showed all of us at Calvary
- p. We'll need to be willing to hear what we need to hear, not just want we already know
- q. **If you tell me what I know, I'll blow up** (with pride or knowledge). **If you tell me what I need, I'll grow up.**
- r. It will cost us time, the time it takes to invest in relationships that stay connected to one another even when truth - no matter how lovingly it's spoken - hurts and we want to pull back.
- s. It will cost us comfort, because nobody gets sharper and stronger without discomfort
- t. Proverbs 27:17 - God sharpens us with hammers swinging, fire burning and sparks flying
- u. Here's the problem: the world is paying hand over fist for a physical training program just like that, but "Christians" aren't willing to invest anything into God's plan for their spiritual training program.
- v. Our willingness or unwillingness to live in a community that has a "doing truth" culture is what determines whether the church is a beautiful portrait or a monster

3. Why loving Jesus isn't enough

- a. In full disclosure, I understand why we don't like the CrossFit I just described
- b. It's because church hurts sometimes. How many of us have been in a church where things didn't go quite like we expected and it hurt? A lot of us.
- c. No church is perfect, and so we feel like "I don't know if I want to go all in when it might hurt"
- d. And so we buy the lie that we can love Jesus. That me and Jesus can have a good thing going, and I'm better off without the church He died for
- e. The problem with that is, according to verse 16, without the church all we have is the head.
- f. Some churches don't have Jesus. They're function like civic organizations doing a lot of good but never preaching the Gospel about man's sin and Jesus' salvation. They've got a headless corpse.
- g. Some people don't have the church. They're in love with the face of Jesus and want to see him everywhere but there's no sustaining power because there's no body, no hands, no feet. They've got a severed head.
- h. But the picture of the church here in Ephesians 4:14-16 is a strong, mature body that has grown UP into a complete body connected securely to Jesus - the head of the church - and to one another - the body of the church.
- i. And instead of being an infant, or even a hideous body with no head, the church has GROWN UP in truth and now, by using the gifts that each of us has been given, is ready to GROW OUT with truth.
- j. No positions, no rights, no jockeying for the best seats.
- k. Because we've loved each other honestly and served each other faithfully, there is a bond of unity that we must have as we take the Gospel to our city, our county, our world.

The Landing

As we start to wrap this morning up, let me share a quick video with you from the movie "Friday Night Lights"
Let's watch it and then I'll come back up to close out.

We're called to something so much greater than winning a football game. The stakes are higher. The needs are greater.
All around us are people drowning in sin and a world racked with the effects of sin.

And God's great plan for growing us up before he grows us out is a body connected to one another and to him,
faithfully serving each other and growing up.

A body not content to be a grown man drinking from a baby bottle, but a fully matured meat eating body giving itself
fully to each other and to the mission we're called to: seeing the lost come to know Jesus.

It won't happen because a few decided to start this church and a whole bunch more decided it would be a cool place
to hang out on Sundays.

It will happen when - as Paul wrote at the end of verse 16 - each part does its work.

That's what these iOS Ministry Teams are all about.

This morning is about giving you the opportunity to start functioning like a body. To start growing into maturity.

These teams are the chance for all of us to stop being the 35 year old man who still leaves his underwear on the floor
because he knows his mom will pick it up for him.

Joining a team is your chance to simply serve.

They aren't about busy work. They're about body work.

You and me finding our place - what we were made for - and doing it with the passion of people who are all in on a
mission to see the lost found.

We don't serve so the body can grow out faster. We serve so the body can grow up stronger.

God wants us to GROW UP before we GROW OUT.