

## 9 Levels of Our Faith

All of us are on different levels of our walk with the Lord. No level of your walk should be considered as inferior to another. They are all important steps to the prize of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus. However, to continue on the same level without advancing in your walk with the Lord is stagnant. Those that are babes in the Lord should be working on taking the next step and those that are fathers in the Lord should be encouraging and lifting up those who need to take the next step in the Lord.

A young person in the assembly asked me not to long ago; where they would be with the Lord if they were to die today? This really pricked my heart. If you are asking... If you are seeking... If you are knocking... Then you are on the right track. It says in *Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* Are you asking? Are you seeking? Are you knocking on the door? When I have needs, I keep asking and I keep knocking on the door. I don't believe that I have seen the full completeness of Jesus today and his work, so I keep seeking. *Proverbs 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.*

There are nine steps that I would like to review. These are not anything new as they go back to the day of Bro. William Sowders and other men of God through time. These nine steps walk toward perfection in the Lord that we are striving for. Some of us may get discouraged along this journey. We think; why am I not there yet? Is there something wrong with me? But God is taking us through a process. We have seen so many that come in on fire for the Lord and say, "this is my church, this is my people, I have found this great vision. I am ready to go out into the highways and the byways and tell them what the Jesus did for me." Well then 2 weeks later they are gone.

This is a growing process in the Lord. That is why we say when we receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost that we have been born again. What does born again mean? To me it means a new birth and a power to overcome. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus. You are on the road toward perfection.

We give a baby in the natural milk for nourishment. We do not give them steak or even bread. Bread would choke a newborn. A toddler cannot live on milk alone. They need green beans, corn and some meat. If you are not fed the right things in the area of your walk you will not grow or make that next step. That is why it is so important to; Watch the Spirit in our services. Only Jesus knows exactly what you need. However, if you come closed and refusing to eat from the table of the Lord, you will not grow.

### 1) Conception of the Holy Ghost:

There must be a beginning in your walk with the Lord dealing with your heart. That tugging in your heart that says there needs to be a change in my life. The wonderful Salvation experience which is the beginning of your walk.

*Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

*Galatians 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you...you notice it says...until. There is a travailing that takes place until "Christ be formed in you."*

*Proverbs 20:12...The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made both of them.*

*Matthew 13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. And if you look back at Mathew 13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*

The conception of the Holy Ghost is a part of the salvation experience. What's the first thing you have to do when you come to the Lord? You should repent. You must repent to have your sins forgiven.

So in repentance, you are acknowledging the Lord in your life. You are asking him to forgive you of your sins and to save your soul.

## **2) Birth**

*John 3:6... gives us a wonderful example of the Holy Ghost. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. We were all born of the flesh. Now we must be born of the Spirit and it says that, which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.*

*John 7 & 8 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is Born of the Spirit.*

Each and every one of us can be born of the Spirit. If you have not received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, don't be discouraged, you are still in that first step. When you make that first step, do it well, and let God increase that first step to the second. Some have an easier time than others in receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I do know it seems easier to tarry while you are young.

*I Peter 1:23...Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Adam or our fleshly nature is the corruptible seed. Jesus came as that second Adam and when he came, he made the condemned, the justified.*

*Isaiah 66:8...Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Vs. 9...Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? Saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? Saith thy God.*

For Zion's sake, this means, the order of God. We are trying to bring forth the overcoming church, the very elect of God. We are striving to bring forth children, not natural but spiritual children of God. We don't want to be children of the world; we want

to be children of God. We don't want to be children that are of the corruptible seed, but we want to be children that are incorruptible.

*Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

*3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

*4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

### **3) Being a new born Christian**

*1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,*

*2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

*3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

I have experienced some who feel when they get the Holy Ghost they need bread or steak. But it says, "The sincere milk of the word," which is what a newborn needs.

*1 Corinthians 3: 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

*2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

*3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

*4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

You can have repentance, be born again, and still be carnal. It's been said, if you have the Holy Ghost you cannot be carnal. Maybe you have done things that you knew were not right...and Paul said, you are not able to handle the meat. Where it says you have envying and strife and divisions. If you are dividing God's people, you are carnal, period.

### **4) The suckling child**

Moses dealt from one spectrum to another in the Children of Israel's walks of life. I have a lot of fondness for him, because I think of what Moses went through with the people. He was a father in the Lord, he loved the people and gave his life for the people. But many times it was difficult on Moses. Sometimes he questioned the Lord on some of these things.

*Numbers 11:12 Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the suckling child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?*

Moses said, "Should I carry them in my bosom as a nursing father?" Notice it says...nursing father. We have to be as a mother to a suckling child. God help us.

*Isaiah 11: 8 .... And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,*

## **5) Weaned Child**

Usually when we think of an animal or child first being weaned and there is a lot of crying. Sometimes when you make that step from a suckling child to a weaned child, it is not a pleasant experience, because you can't be sustained. You are weaned and you feel alone. It is a good thing. It is not a bad thing, but sometimes it is a difficult task. You are learning to lean on the Lord.

*Psalms 131:1 LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*

*2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.*

*3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever*

He wasn't talking about being weaned in the natural flesh, but he was talking about his spiritual walk which had been advanced. There are steps that are to be taken to be weaned in the Lord and to know that you are not a suckling child anymore.

*Isaiah 28:9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts, vs. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little*

Notice; "whom shall he teach knowledge and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?" These that are weaned from the milk, doctrine comes after the weaning.

*Isaiah 11:8 (the last half) and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den*

## **6) Little Child**

*I John 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.* This was an established working church. I write unto you little children. He also says I am writing because your sins have been forgiven. He knew their sins had been forgiven, but he also knew they were not suckling children or weaned children anymore, they were little children.

*I John 4:3,4 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

The Spirit of the antichrist only means those that do not believe in Christ. He points out here, that you have overcome them. You have overcome those who are against Jesus because you believe in him. They are not suckling babes, they are not needing to be weaned, but they are at the little child stage and they know that Jesus is the Christ.

*1 John 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*

*6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

If you have been separated from the world, you are a little child. That means that you have made strides in your decisions. You have stood against the enemy. If you are making Godly choices then you are at the stage where you know right from wrong. He chose you and you are apprehended. You are going to be a part of Christ and be a part of His church.

## **7) Son Stage**

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 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.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

You are on this long journey. You are on the path. Don't be upset when you feel a little chastisement from the Lord. You are being corrected shaped and molded by the Lord in your walk.

*Ps 118:18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.*

Sometimes I cry when I disappoint my God, because I love Him and I don't want Him to be disappointed in me. I want to come to the place where I don't have to be chastened by God, but I want to come to the place where I just obey Him and be a Son.

## **8) Young Man Stage**

You are not just a son and you are not just a daughter, but you are a young man or a young woman.

*1 John 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*

Notice how he separates out the fathers, young men and the little children. John designates each stage and he says, "I write unto you young men because ye have overcome the wicked one." There is an overcoming taking place at the young man's stage and the young woman's stage.

*Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves*

If you are a young man or young woman in the Lord, you should be able to bear the infirmities of the weak. Those that are on the earlier steps, you should be able to start helping them. You need to start taking on more responsibility. This journey has a weight of responsibility. You are not just in it for yourself, but you are in it for the will of God, his purpose and his plan. This isn't just Jesus and me. He didn't call and save you so that you could be yourself. He chose you to a vision in the Body of Jesus Christ, to build the house of God so that the House of Jacob might be saved. You must work with all the people of God. Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

*Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

*3 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.*

*4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:*

*5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

*6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*

*7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;*

*8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

We must do these things with a cheerfulness in the Lord. We should not edify the Lord with a hate or irritation, but with gladness.

## 9) Father Stage

*Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

*10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

*11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*

*12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*

*13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

*14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*

*15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

*16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

*17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

*18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

*19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

*20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

*21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

This is how you are to conduct yourself in this stage of the Lord. This is a standard of operation that should be working in your life at this point. Overcoming the flesh and not being a part of this World.

*Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

*John 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

*9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

If you want to know who the Father is, then you look at Jesus.

*1Jo 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

*2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

*3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

We have that life, we bear witness of it and we have seen it. We are bearing witness of Christ when there is less of us and more of him. When I wrote earlier of a young person asking what would happen if they lost their life today, You must know where you are

with the Lord. When you are in the process, and moving in to the next level in Christ, you are overcoming into the very elect of Christ. Just saying I believe in Jesus is not all that is required. It is an everyday walk with him for a manifestation of Him. To be like him...

Will you reach down to someone who is in that first stage and give them a helping hand to the second stage? Are you too proud to ask someone to help you get up to that next stage? We are all in this together. We are all helping one another. We are seeking our brothers wealth.

We all are on different levels in our walk with the Lord. Don't be ashamed of where you are in these steps. However, do not be satisfied either. Don't reject Jesus today and what he has for you. If you are ready to go from that suckling child to that weaned child...that is a big step. It is frightening to let go of what is comfortable. It is fearful to turn loose from that which you felt comfort from, it is not bad, and there is still a certain life there. However, we must continue to progress in this journey with our Lord and Savior. Never give up on Jesus because he has not given up on you.

Being an under-shepherd of God and I am supposed to keep reaching out, to try and nourish and feed the sheep. Remember we are on a long journey with the Lord. We are striving as Paul pointed out:

*Philippians 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*