

Closing The Gap Series #5
Maturing in Christ
Pastor Roger Barrier
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For the last several Sundays Glenn and I have focused our attention on what it means to “close the gap” from where we are to where we’d like to be in our spiritual lives. This morning we focus on spiritual growth. We cannot close the gap if we think that we can find intimacy with God without following the principles of spiritual growth.

TRAGEDY

The Greatest Tragedy In The Christian Church Is The Believer Who Refuses To Grow Up.

It Is Time To Grow Up. Too Many Christians Remain Mired In The Beginning Stages Of The Journey.

Hebrews 5:11-6:3: “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.”

STAGES

Christians are not all at the same spiritual growth stage—some are more mature—or less mature—than others.

1 John 2:12-14: And so I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of His name. I write to you, fathers, because you’ve known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you’ve overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong and the Word of

God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

God never reveals the deep things of the spirit to the Christian who just drops by for a little chat.

INTIMACY

Spiritual Maturity Promotes An Increasingly Intimate Relationship With God And Others.

Genesis 18:16-17: “When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. Then the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?’”

John 17:3: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

IMAGE

God uses every experience we have for the good purpose of molding us to look like Jesus.

God did not bring Christ into our lives solely to forgive our sins and give us a home in Heaven. His desire is that the indwelling Christ be put on display for all the world to see.

2 Corinthians 3:18: “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

Romans 8:28-29: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son ...”

ROAD MAP

We Are Not Left To Wonder About The Process. God Provided A Road Map For Maturity.

Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it”

Galatians 2:20: "I've been crucified with Christ. I no longer live. But, Christ lives in me. And the life I live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

BROKENNESS

Brokenness Is the Process Which Allows Christ To Minister Through Us And Others To See The Christ Who Lives Within Us.

2 Corinthians 4:7-11: But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

John 12:24: "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

Job 23:10: "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold"