



Growing Out of Bounds

There are all kinds of exciting passages that encourage us to grow as Christians. Peter says to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Paul told the Ephesians that every joint in the body has a participatory part in a church growing up in Christ. The Hebrew writer encourages his readers to grow past the elementary principles and into maturity. But in my reading of 2 Peter this past week I noted the flip side of this coin was presented as equally important. Peter spoke of “reminding” them.

How many of us know men and women who have grown up spiritually and left their foundation behind? This was brought home to me this week as I read after a young man I knew as a child. I love his parents and know what he was taught. I have no reason to doubt his sincerity. He has been on a spiritual journey of awakening over the last few years it seems and has finally grown up. He has grown to the point that he refers to things like the Lord’s Supper or the Lord’s day as legalistic doctrines. His claim is that God has allowed us to serve Him in any way that we see fit as long as we do it with love as our motivating factor. This young man is too young to remember that this was exactly the same claim of situation ethics, back in the stone age of the seventies. (As long as you believe that what you’re doing is loving—it’s ok.) He has grown up to this realization just now. Others have grown so much spiritually that they can’t read their Bible and figure out how to worship anymore. They participate in any emotionally satisfying form they choose. Some have matured past the need for that old tradition called baptism. Others have called for public apologies for trying to teach what the Bible says about these things to our denominational friends and neighbors. Oh, the horror, to think someone might be wrong about something.

There are things we need to be reminded of from time to time. Pre-eminently might be the fact that God is God and we are not! Jesus said that if His disciples love Him, they obey His commands. The Hebrew writer said Christ was the source of salvation for the obedient. God has NEVER indicated that man could approach Him or serve Him in any way that he saw fit. He has ALWAYS revealed the way to please Him and admonished men to neither add to nor take from what He says.

An older brother used to tell me from time to time that the source of all religious problems was a lack of respect for God’s authority. I believe he had it right. When we grow spiritually to the point that obedience is discounted as legalism, we have grown out of bounds. We need reminding of some things. We have left our foundation of dependence on the Word of God and traded it for our own philosophies and standards.

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