

## **GROWING TAKES TIME**

Galatians 6:9 ... “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

Sometimes we Christians forget that we did not become spiritually mature overnight. We easily become intolerant of new believers who do not quickly change their habits, language, attitudes, and behaviors after they get saved. Our bodies did not grow into adulthood the day after we were born. Likewise, our mental, social and spiritual development takes time.

God designed our bodies to develop from birth to adulthood over a period of many years. Our mental capacity grows steadily from birth to old age. I do not know of anyone who was mature enough to marry, raise children, produce sufficient income for a family, or handle the stresses of marriage and life when they were ten years old. Our social skills also develop gradually. The way that most of us treat other people evolves from an initial phase of self-centeredness, to – hopefully – genuine care, kindness and sacrifice for others over a period of years or even decades.

A few years ago, Datu Wali Mission stopped providing free transportation to local students – after doing so for 4 years – because very young children (10-12 years of age) are now riding motorcycles; children who lack the physical strength and mental development to handle a machine and avoid accidents. In a period of one week, three such children nearly ran into our truck head-on in what would have been tragic accidents had I not had the seasoned skills to avoid them. We ended our operation because the risks became too high and authorities did nothing. Yesterday I watched as a child, perhaps 11 or 12 years of age, nearly ran over an elderly lady on the Wali Barangay road. If you are the parent of such children, you must understand that your children need more time to develop before they take on adult responsibilities and risk hurting or killing others.

God engineered our minds and hearts to change gradually because there is so much to learn in the process. The process of maturing in our faith allows us to see God work, to sense his guidance, and to experience conviction for our sins. However, if you resist change, deny the Holy Spirit's guidance, or stubbornly continue your sinful lifestyle out of rebellion, there will be suffering to experience.

Paints and glues that dry instantly are not strong and will eventually fail or peel. Medicines that rapidly attack your infection may also have negative effects on your body. Decisions that you make too quickly or without the leading of God, will often hurt you. However, a faith that matures gradually will be robust and help you to be resilient to temptation, patient under stress, and provide comfort in adversity and hardship. I only caution you not to delay your spiritual growth, or avoid change out of stubbornness or rebellion. God does not reward disrespect or rebellion.

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