

## A GROWING CHRISTIAN LIFE

### Ephesians 3:13-19

**Introduction:** Saul left Jerusalem headed for Damascus, some 137 miles North and had authority to arrest any Christian he found. Shortly before getting to the city, Saul encountered the Lord Jesus Christ and was converted. He went to Arabia where he studied, prayed and grew very close to the Lord Jesus. He then went on to Damascus and then on to his home town. Meanwhile great persecution in Jerusalem of Christians scattered them. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to investigate new churches. Barnabas met Paul (Saul) and was very so impressed with him that they went off together to do mission work. Being "set apart" Paul did mission work for 24 years, made three journeys, was beaten five times with 39 stripes each time, was shipwrecked, imprisoned at least twice and while in prison, wrote several letters which are now called New Testament "books." Yes, Paul was truly a giant Christian BUT each of us can be just as great as Paul was.

### I. YOU MUST BE STRONG

1. Paul was a small, weak, sick man physically, but was a spiritual giant. Someone once said that the greatest trouble with Christianity today is that there are too many small statured Christians.
2. A married couple had two girls but they wanted a boy and soon found they were expecting another baby and this time it was indeed a boy, so while waiting, the dad bought a horse for his soon to be son. When the son was born the parents were told that the boy was blind and would never see and would have to be nursed and cared for by someone all his life. The parents would have given anything if only their long awaited for son would be able to see and to grow up to be a normal person.
3. People have that same kind of relationship with God. Too many Christians remain "babes" in Jesus. Too many never grow and never see what God has for them and it breaks the heart of God as the hearts of the parents of the little blind, helpless baby were broken.
4. How can Christians grow to be strong?
  - By Spiritual Exercise.
    - Normal responsibilities often cause one to neglect his/her prayer life.
    - Household responsibilities should not be a cause.
    - Business responsibilities should not be a cause.
    - Going to school should not be a cause.
    - Nothing should interfere with a Christian growing in the Lord.
  - Exercise of Church attendance.
    - The reason there are so many spiritual "pygmies" is that they neglect the house of God even though they profess to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Exercise of Stewardship of Possessions.
    - God owns the cattle, the oil, the gold, everything.
    - We are but care takers and we should give to God His share.
  - Exercise of Personal Witnessing.
    - There is a divine commission: **"...Go Ye..."** If one disobeys this great command, he/she is a failure and is an immature Christian.
    - Only when we seek the lost with Jesus do we properly mature.

## **II. YOU MUST BE SURRENDERED (v17)**

1. Paul was surrendered if anything.
2. We cannot quietly treat Jesus Christ as a house guest, we must treat Jesus as the sole owner of our hearts and lives.
3. *"What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"*

## **III. YOU MUST BE SENSITIVE (v17-18)**

1. It is very difficult for us to understand the love of God as we tend to compare our love with His.
2. Long ago, out West, there was a drug store clerk who was in love with a certain girl. There was a runaway horse that was about to run over the girl and the drug store clerk jumped in front of the horse to save the girl and was struck and died, but his last words were "I proved that I loved you didn't I?"
3. God asks that same question to each person, "I proved that I love you didn't I?"

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. It should be the prayer of every member of this church that every member be not little, but big, that each be not an infant, a baby, but be an adult, mature and that each member be a spiritual giant and not a spiritual pygmy.
2. Let each of us open our hearts and let Jesus in, as owner, not merely as a guest.
3. May we at least partially understand the wonderful love of God and grow into spiritual maturity.