

### **MESSAGE.**

Spiritual maturity is defined not by how much you know or how often you volunteer, but by how you treat the people around you. It is possible to be active in church and still act like a spiritual child by clinging to jealousy, pride, and the need to be right. True growth requires the Holy Spirit to transform your heart, shifting your focus away from yourself and toward a life of humble service. Following Jesus means letting go of your ego to embrace a new way of living that values others more than personal status. Ultimately, the evidence of a mature life built on Christ is a changed heart that replaces division and conflict with genuine, selfless love.

### **PRAYER.**

Father,

Your gracious love is the foundation on which I stand. Help me to stand firmly so that I may continue to grow in maturity, continuously walking closer and closer with You.

Amen.

### **ENGAGE.**

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 2:12 & 3:10-15**

- If the Gospel is a "freely given gift" and not something you earn, how does that change your daily motivation? Does your faith feel like a response of gratitude or a stressful attempt to prove your worth?
- What's the difference between a person truly "building" on Christ's foundation versus the person who is performing Christian-like actions simply to fit into a church community?
- What is one "wood or straw" habit (like defensiveness or seeking credit) you can replace this week with a "gold" action (like quiet service or radical forgiveness)?

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

- How is Paul defining spiritual maturity in this passage?
- Look at 2 Peter 1:8-9. What is the foundational knowledge mentioned here and what is the relationship between that knowledge and the way we live our lives?
- Because of their spiritual immaturity, the Corinthians fought over which leader to follow. How do we see this same "celebrity culture" or "my group vs. your group" mentality causing drama in American churches today?

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-23**

- Our culture values being "right" and being "first." Why is it so tempting to value our position or title in the church/community over our posture as a servant? How does the "free gift" of the Gospel undermine our need to feel important?
- Following Jesus requires "dying" to the ego. What is one specific area in your life where your ego is currently getting in the way of a healthy relationship?

#### **Read 2 Peter 1:5-9.**

- In response to the Gospel, what is our responsibility or role in seeking spiritual maturity?
- Maturity doesn't happen by accident; it's a choice to build on the Foundation. What is one practical way you can commit to "growing up" this week—shifting from seeking credit to seeking the good of others?

**For these cities. For all people.**

**DAY 1: The Secret Ingredient****Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 2:12 & 3:10-15**The Big Idea:** We do good things because we are loved, not to *be* loved.**The Talk:** Imagine you're helping your parents bake cookies. Do you help them so they will decide to be your parents? No! They are already your parents, and they love you no matter what. You help because you're happy to be part of the family.

Paul says the Gospel is a "freely given gift." Sometimes we try to "build" our lives with "wood and straw"—which are things like braggy attitudes or doing chores just so people will say "wow, you're so good." But God wants us to build with "gold"—which is doing things out of a happy, thankful heart. When we know Jesus already gave us everything we need, we don't have to "prove" we are the best. We can just be helpful!

**Questions for Kids:**

- If you knew for 100% certain that God wasn't "grading" you on your chores today, would you still do them? Why or why not?
- What is one "gold" action (something kind that no one else sees) you can do today just to say "thank you" to God?

**DAY 2: Moving Past the "Toddler" Stage****Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:1-9**The Big Idea:** Growing up means learning how to get along.**The Talk:** Have you ever seen a toddler have a meltdown because they didn't get the blue crayon? It's kind of funny because they're little. But if you saw a grown-up screaming about a blue crayon, you'd think, "*Uh oh, something is wrong.*" Paul told the people in the church that they were acting like "spiritual babies." Why? Because they were arguing over who was the coolest or which teacher was the best. In our lives, we act like spiritual babies when we think, "*I'm better than that kid because I'm better at sports,*" or "*I'm not talking to them because they didn't pick me first.*" Growing up spiritually means we stop worrying about "my group vs. your group" and remember that we are all on the same team—God's team.**Questions for Kids:**

- Why is it hard to be happy for a friend when they win something and you don't?
- Paul says God is the one who "makes things grow." How does remembering that God is the "Boss" help us stop fighting with our "teammates" (friends/siblings)?

**DAY 3: The "Me First" Trap****Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 & 2 Peter 1:5-9**The Big Idea:** To be like Jesus, we have to put our ego in the backseat.**The Talk:** The world tells us that to be important, we have to be "first." We want the best seat, the biggest slice of cake, and the last word in an argument. Paul calls this "worldly wisdom," but God says it's actually foolish.Real maturity is a choice. 2 Peter tells us we have to "make every effort" to add things like kindness and patience to our lives. It's like building a Lego set—it doesn't just happen by accident; you have to follow the instructions! Following Jesus means "dying to your ego." That sounds scary, but it just means when your "ego" screams, "*I want to be first!*" you tell it, "*Actually, I'm going to let my sister go first instead.*" That is what a "spiritual grown-up" does.**Questions for Kids:**

- When is it hardest for you to let someone else be "first"? (In a game, in line, etc.?)
- 2 Peter says we should "make every effort" to be kind. What is one way you can "effort" to be kind to someone you usually struggle to get along with this week?