

# Battle for Growth 2

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Spiritual growth is defined by the process of having the “inward man” gain the ascendancy over the “outward man.”

Our culture develops the “outer man” and neglects the “inward man.”

Who have we empowered in our lives to rule and reign?

I Corinthians 9:27 - I keep under **my** body, and bring **it** into subjection and like a boxer, I buffet my body [handle it roughly, discipline it by hardships] and subdue it, to keep myself from being disqualified after having called others to the contest.

We are called to “buffet” our bodies, when we have been more likely to “buffet” our bodies.

Romans 7:21-23 - I love to do God's will and delight in God's law so far as my **new nature** is concerned, according to the **inward man**.

II Corinthians 4:16 - Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our **outward man** is perishing or declining to its end, yet the **inward man** is being renewed day by day.

Spiritual growth and maturity is defined by when we empower the part of our makeup that is renewed everyday, to overcome the part of our makeup that is declining to its end.

### 4 Stages of Spiritual Growth

1. Babyhood
2. Childhood
3. Adolescence
4. Adulthood

### BABYHOOD STAGE

- Something is wrong when a person doesn't move beyond the babyhood stage of life.

I Corinthians 3:1-2 – <sup>1</sup> However brethren, I could not talk to you as to spiritual [men], but as to nonspiritual [men of the flesh, in whom the carnal nature predominates], as to **mere infants** [in the new life] in Christ [unable to talk yet!] <sup>2</sup> I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not yet strong enough [to be ready for it]; but even yet you are not strong enough [to be ready for it],

I Peter 2:2 – As newborn babes, **desire** the sincere milk of the word, that you may **grow thereby**.

Babies are utterly dependent upon their parents.

We either or die!

What diet is appropriate for a “baby Christian”?

Hebrews 5:11-14 – <sup>11</sup> We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. <sup>12</sup> 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! <sup>13</sup> **Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** <sup>14</sup> But **solid food is for the mature**, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Understanding righteousness is the baby food that will cause a Christian to grow up healthy and strong.