

19. GENERATIONS

Spiritual Growth, Formation and Maturity

What was in God's mind when he originally made us, redeemed and carried us through sin and time? It was always to have a family of his own, children who looked and thought like him, working in and carrying on the family business – a people, a legacy of his own. He explains heaven's plans using earthly metaphors – how humans develop, how a plant grows, how a building is constructed. He starts at the beginning, and works through the steps/stages, calls out the needs, risks, hindrances; that growth is not instant – but worked out over time, pivoting in and through Jesus, using us. As human parents set out to protect, teach and raise a child to reproducing adulthood using age-appropriate nourishment/content and techniques, so God assigns us as spiritual parents to do the same. That is his choice, his design, to accomplish his purpose.

Consider the scriptures below – see the great arc of his hope, and what he made us to do in the here and now on earth: to help others grow to maturity and be transformed to Christ's image. What an adventure, responsibility, utter fulfillment of our own identifies/self, to do this. It is what we are made for and called to – help grow people to become like Jesus.

God's intention, design, purpose – *It is God who has set out his purpose with a plan to achieve it. What is his goal and his process? How does that affect your willingness or understanding to make disciples?*

Genesis 1:26-27

1 Corinthians 15:49

Romans 8:29

Galatians 4:19

How God Causes the Growth – *Think about the life stages of humans, a plant, building construction. What are the critical components or hindrances of the growth or building steps for spiritual growth, maturity/spiritual formation?*

Foundations

Matthew 7:24-27

1 Corinthians 3:6-15

Philippians 1:6

Process of growth, needs & hindrances – what can you use to help someone to grow?

John 15:1-2, 5-16

Ephesians 4:11-16

Philippians 3:12-16

Hebrews 5:11-14

James 1:2-4

Maturity

1 Corinthians 14:20

Galatians 5:22-24

2 Timothy 2:1-7

2 Timothy 4: 7-8

Outcomes – *what are the outcomes towards which God is causing the growth? How can you tell?*

2 Corinthians 3:18

Psalms 92:12-15

Psalms 71: 17-18

APPLICATION: Helping someone grow to spiritual maturity requires understanding the growth process, stages, and needs. Think of someone you are helping or might help – where are they in their growth, what do they need to grow there, and what scriptures speak into this? How can you help with this, and when will you do it?