

I. Childhood

- A. Planting the Word: if properly planted, effortless fruit.
 - 1. The heart: like soil, the fruit-bearing womb of the soul.
 - 2. Righteousness/Law/Word: nature of the seed/plant.

- B. Correction/Chastening: God's cultivation of the soil/heart.
 - 1. The sword of the Word: first/highest level of correction.
 - 2. Because of our goofs: turning guilt into relationship.
 - 3. Even when innocent: the discipline of the cross.

- C. Spirit Revelation: heart transforms Word into Spirit.
 - 1. Spirit/Word/Mind: outer man breaks; inner builds.
 - 2. Security In Christ: knowing Him is the basis of giving.

II. Adolescence

- A. Ministry: spirit man's response to the Spirit's revelation.
 - 1. Ministry of the Word: the Word bearing fruit in others.
 - 2. Spiritual warfare: know and stand in your legal rights.

- B. Persecution/Percussion: reaction of others to ministry.
 - 1. Because of our goofs: weren't we "chosen" in weakness?
 - 2. For His Name: His Name draws enemy fire!
 - 3. "Friendly" fire: why do we wound our brothers?

- C. Fellowship/Zion: beginning of God's ultimate purpose.
 - 1. Relationship: the Body of Christ in harmony/worship.
 - 2. Dominion: the Body of Christ in authority.

III. Adulthood

- A. Intimacy with God: the fruit of ministering with integrity.
 - 1. Revelation: ministry obligates God to reveal Himself.
 - 2. Identity transformation: knowing Him transforms us.

- B. Rejection/Reproach: this affliction develops fathers.
 - 1. For their weaknesses: the limelight reveals every flaw.
 - 2. For correcting others: fathers become scapegoats.
 - 3. Knowing His rejection: the fellowship of HIS sufferings.

- C. Agape Love: love that doesn't take, but lives to give.
 - 1. Intercession: taking responsibility for others.
 - 2. "Dying" for others: the cross daily, so they may live.

Comments on the outline

Affliction is valuable only as it affects the soul, not the body, though affliction of the body usually affects the soul as well. The biblical use of affliction is centered on breaking down the "outer man," the "carnal man," the "soulish man," in order to release the "inner man" or spirit man.

Most affliction has to do with relationships. The stress and pain of relationships can be greatly lessened by allowing the Word to bring correction. But this depends on our receptivity of the Word through relationships, through other members of the Body.

Correction-Persecution-Rejection are 3 stages of affliction, or God's CPR. The 1st stage relates to the heart (cardio); the 2nd relates to the Spirit (pulmonary); the 3rd to resurrection (resuscitation). Affliction (B) develops, matures, and completes A into C in each stage. The type of affliction from one stage continues into the next, being added to the type for that stage.

Escaping from or complaining in affliction deters or retards maturity. Progressing through each stage is to a large extent related to a proper response to affliction. Mature men and women of God live by divine, resurrection Life in the midst of trials and tribulations, till they, as Paul, learn to "glory" in them.

All progress toward maturity depends on responsiveness and faithfulness in the level one is presently at. Lack of progress indicates lack of responsiveness. Furthermore, success in I (the Word) results in II (ministry and fellowship). Success in II results in III (intimacy and agape love).

Spiritual growth is the product of proper nourishment within a prepared heart. Only as we receive of God are we able to minister Him to others. This is how the apostles changed the world. They were fully *nourished in the words of faith, and carefully followed* them (1 Tim 4:6).

The maturing process is the normal growth (with normal pruning) and fruitfulness of healthy branches connected with and abiding in Christ, the Vine. Maturity thus becomes Christ in us doing all the giving and caring for others His Word demands.

Abbreviations:

Ges - Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon

Str - Strong's Exhaustive Concordance (w/ Str. numbering)

TWOT - Laird Harris, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

Vin - Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament.

Wil - Wm Wilson, Old Testament Word Studies

Zod - Spiros Zodiates, Lexicon to the Old and New Testaments.