

# YOU MIGHT BE A SPIRITUAL BABY IF . . .

## You Find Yourself Often Fighting with Other Christians

Babies will fight about anything and everything. Left to themselves, young siblings will slap, pull hair, kick, poke, punch, argue and scream. They haven't really learned that they aren't enemies, so they live as though there were. As a Christian, your enemies are the world, the flesh, and the Devil (**Ephesians 6:12**).

Are you presently "mad" and fighting with another Christian about something? Is the cause of your fight something that Jesus would also fight about?

•••••

## You Enjoy Being the Center of Attention

A baby delights in being the center of attention. If someone else is receiving attention, then a baby will do or say something to put himself in the spotlight. Paul said, in **3 John 1:9**, "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us." Diotrephes was a spiritual baby, so he misbehaved by rejecting Paul. Paul would have received too much attention, so the spotlight baby turned him away.

Are you such a baby? Do you push for attention, or do you wait upon the Lord?

•••••

## You Are Shallow in Your Knowledge of the Scriptures

Babies have very little knowledge and understanding, so they will drink poison, eat insects, play in the streets, and even jump into water far over their heads. They have a great lack of knowledge and understanding, so they must rely on others to teach them.

If you are rather shallow in your knowledge of the Scriptures, then you are just as shallow about applying the Scriptures to your own life. You can't possibly be obeying the Bible if you aren't faithfully reading it. This makes you a spiritual baby. God wants you to GROW UP to be a good soldier for Christ.

## You Are Easily Offended

Babies are very sensitive, and their feelings are easily hurt. When things don't go their way, they will whine, cry, pout, sulk, and even throw tantrums. They haven't learned to endure affliction, so they only know to be offended when trouble comes.

Are YOU such a person?

•••••

## You Are Never Satisfied

A baby never ceases to whimper and cry for things. He's hungry, so you feed him. Then he's tired, so you give him a nap. He then wakes up with a wet diaper. You change the diaper, then he wants to play. You refuse to play, so he cries. Then he's hot. Then he's cold. Then he bumps his head. A baby is just never satisfied. The Bible says in **Numbers 11:1**, "And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD . . ." God is DISPLEASED with your constant murmuring, and He will judge you for it if it doesn't stop. You, as a born-again child of God, are expected to be CONTENT, THANKFUL and REJOICING in the Lord (**Philip. 4:4; 4:11; I Thes. 5:18**). Anything less is SIN.

•••••

## You Have Trouble Staying Clean

A baby simply cannot stay clean. You can give him a bath and powder him real nice, but, if you aren't careful, he'll be in a mess before you can drain the bath water. He will play in the flower pot. He will play in the toilet. He will play in the cat litter. Then he will spill the apple juice all over himself. A baby will not stay clean. Jesus said, " You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you," (**John 15:3**)

*Are you like this? Do you walk a straight and clean path for the Lord Jesus Christ, or do you find yourself playing with sin? Do you peep at the dirty magazines as you walk by the display? What about those steamy "love scenes" on television? Young person, what happened on your date last week? Dad, how many dirty jokes did you laugh at? Mom, how much gossip did you help to spread?*

All of this is Gold.

But with the need for constant correction goes the need for constant encouragement. Babies get discouraged quickly and need the encouragement to keep going or they will get embittered and leave quickly.

# THE INFANT STAGE



"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

**Ephesians 4:14-16**



## THE INFANT STAGE

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation," - 1 Peter 2:2

0-2 years

"Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly -- mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?"- 1 Corinthians 3:1-15



**Spiritual Infancy:** When we are born into the kingdom of God by repentance, water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-7), we are not automatically mature Christians. We are "babes in Christ."

It would not be normal for a baby to be born, and the same day begin to walk and talk. He must go through many stages of development before he is physically and mentally able to do these things. But a baby is expected to grow and develop. For instance, if a two-year-old child is still not walking, there is cause for concern.

As it is with the natural world, so is it with the spiritual world. When we come into the church of Jesus Christ, most of us have much to learn. We are not yet ready for the "meat" of God's Word. We must stick to our "milk bottle" for a while.

In fact, consider what being a baby is like and you see what this level of maturity is like. A baby cannot articulate her needs. A baby can simply scream when he needs or wants something. The parents must guess at his needs. Granted, good parents learn to guess well. They respond to the baby's needs, nurturing it, feeding it, diapering it, holding it, comforting it.

If an infant is not provided the unconditional love, care, and nurturing, he will be wounded. He will get stuck in the infant stage. If he learns that he can't trust others, he'll always live in fear and distrust, wanting someone to take care of him but certain no one ever will.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUAL INFANT

Ignorance • Confusion • Dependence



### A Spiritual Infant's Thinking

- Belief that Christians make no mistakes; unrealistic
- Worldly perspective about life with some truth mixed in
- Ignorance to what they need spiritually
- Don't know much biblical truth

**Need consistent and regular discipling**

### A Spiritual Infant's Relationships

- Can get frustrated about their lack of depth in relationships that they see others have
- Very needy and depend on spiritual parents
- Still have relationships in the world that can influence them in an unhealthy way (2 Cor. 6:14)
- Cannot accomplish growth alone any more than a baby can feed and care for itself.

**Need a lot of one on one attention**

### A Spiritual Infant's Speech

- Hard to articulate their needs
- Speak of spiritual things in worldly terms (1 Cor. 3:1)
- Jealousy and quarreling in this stage (1 Cor. 3:3)

**Needs to experience patience, joy and frequent Correction**

### A Spiritual Infant's Actions

- Excited about new life in Christ
- Mimic the behaviors of other disciples
- Can be easily tossed in their faith
- Share testimony with joy yet not able to share biblically

**Needs a lot of the bible to build convictions**

### A Spiritual Infant's Attitudes

- Frustrated with world's lack of urgency in repentance.
- Feelings can be easily hurt
- Confusion: Don't know how to replace old, familiar habits with the habits and attitudes of a disciple.
- Looks to people and human resources rather than Christ

**Need to pointed to Jesus in discipling**

## Teaching Topics



New Life in Christ • Obedience to God • Relationships in the Body of Christ • Knowing Jesus • Grace • Faith and Works • How to have a Quiet Time • How to Pray • Confessing Sins • Tithing • The Plan of Salvation • Living in the Light • Fighting Temptation • The Word of God • Loving God • Forgiving Others • The Elementary Teachings ( Faith, the Resurrection, Baptism, etc) •

## Infant's Responsibilities



Devoted to the fellowship, prayer , the word of God and the breaking of bread • Finish Follow-up Studies • Share their new life in Christ • Have daily Quiet times • Regular discipling times

## Characteristics to Study



Love vs. Selfishness • Joyfulness vs. Self-pity • Gratefulness vs. Unthankfulness • Obedience vs. Willfulness • Virtue vs. Impurity Endurance vs. Giving up

## Books to Study



Read the Gospels • The Book of Acts • Deep Convictions • Reading The New Testament • Cross-Bearers • True and Reasonable by Doug Jacoby • The Lion Never Sleeps by Mike Taliaferro •

### Things to do with infants

- ⇒ Print out the 40 Day Quiet Time Packet for them
- ⇒ Give them a journal for their personal study
- ⇒ Continue regular times for at least 2-3 months
- ⇒ Explain Cross-bearers and the need for completion
- ⇒ Have others in the group invest in time with infant
- ⇒ Pray with them. Share with them. Love them
- ⇒ Be open with your infant struggles

### The Spiritual Infant's Needs

- ⇒ The personal attention of a disciple-maker
- ⇒ Care and protection during this vulnerable stage
- ⇒ Teaching and modeling the new truths of the faith
- ⇒ Developing new habits that become the rhythms they will live by as disciples

## THE INFANT STAGES