

Pastor Jim Lloyd

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Title: WHERE ARE YOU? (A Study in Spiritual Maturity)

Text: 1 Corinthians 2:14-15; 3:1-8

¹⁴*"The NATURAL person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵The SPIRITUAL person judges all things but is himself to be judged by no one.*

Chapter 3

¹*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to CARNAL, as to babes in Christ. ²I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? ⁴For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal? ⁵Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but GOD GAVE THE INCREASE. ⁷So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.*

Audrey Schetrompf gave the intro for my sermon this morning. Thank you! Originally, I thought to title the sermon today - GROW UP, but then thought that might not be too palatable. Then I read Audrey's Facebook post. I like how it says it. It's way better than GROW UP, but the challenge is still there. "Maybe what we REALLY need is for more Christians to talk about HOW HARD spiritual growth is. NO ONE has it ALL together. Letting God change you IS HARD. This dying to yourself is HARD. The staying quiet when you want to speak is HARD. The WAITING FOR HIS BEST, the TRUSTING when you want to freak out, the HOLDING ON when your flesh tells you to run . . . ALL HARD. If you're in this process too, just know IF IT IS HARD, you're NOT doing anything wrong." I want to talk to you about growing up – pushing toward maturity. Coming to church doesn't mean you are mature. Certainly, regular attendance at church can help to mature us, BUT... Not everyone on the road to heaven is mature.

This morning we want to see through Paul's writings WHAT IT TAKES TO GROW. We're exhorted to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let's look back to our text in Chapter 2, verse 14. Note this phrase in verse 14: *"But the NATURAL man..."* Now verse 15: *"He that is SPIRITUAL..."* Then go to chapter 3 verse 1: *"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to CARNAL..."* There you have the three categories of persons – NATURAL, CARNAL, SPIRITUAL. I can safely say that everyone in this building and those listening online are in one of those three categories. We divide people financially – Rich or Poor. Upper class, Middle class, Lower class. We divide them politically: Left and Right. We divide them intellectually: Literate and Illiterate. But... These are the categories that GOD PUTS US IN. We're either SPIRITUAL or we are CARNAL or we are NATURAL. You're in ONE of those categories. I want to help you find out where you are and help you to get to where you need to be.

It's quite important, first, that you find out WHERE YOU ARE. Have you ever had anybody call you and say, "Well, we're in town. We want to come by and see you. How do we get to your house?" What's the first question you ask them? "Where are you now?" Because if you don't know where they are, you can't tell them how to get to where they need to be. Or... If you're in the mall and you're trying to find a particular store. First you locate the store directory or map, and they'll have all the stores pictured there. But... That doesn't do you much good, except for that little red dot or arrow. Remember that little red dot or arrow? It says, "You are here." Now, you can generally figure out how you go from here to get there. But IF YOU DON'T KNOW where you are now, it's rather hard to figure out where you need to go. Right? So, our agenda this morning is to help you find out where you are, to help you to get to where you need to be.

Anyone know the FIRST question in the Bible? (Genesis 3:8,9) The question was asked of Adam. GOD asked Adam, "Adam, where are you?" Not that God didn't know where Adam was, but God wanted Adam to know

where he was. He was hiding. In essence, I want to ask YOU a similar question. Where are you? Are you a natural man or woman? Are you a carnal man or woman? Are you a spiritual man or woman? So, we're going to look at these three as they relate to growth and to help you to grow up because many a church problem is caused by immaturity and pride.

1. Now with the NATURAL PERSON growth is IMPOSSIBLE. If you're a natural person, you cannot grow spiritually. WHY? Because the natural person has NO spiritual ACTIVATION. It is the Holy Spirit that activates growth. Without the Spirit of God in your heart, you are SPIRITUALLY DEAD. Dead things just don't grow. Many years ago, at a church in Memphis, Tennessee, the pastor sought to illustrate this truth particularly to the children of the church. He gave each class a single beautiful plant and gave each class DIFFERENT and SPECIFIC instructions. It became their responsibility to nurture their plant following the instructions they were given. One class was instructed to take their plant and give it sunlight, water, and fertilizer. Another class was instructed to give their plant fertilizer and water, but NO sunlight. Then another class was instructed to give their plant sunlight and water but NO fertilizer, etc. Week by week the classes would bring their plants to the church platform for observation. It was rather educational to see the results. The plant that got sunlight, water, and fertilizer grew quite nicely. The plant getting fertilizer and water but NO sunlight was growing, but it was a little yellow. It was discolored. They also took a dead stick and put it in a pot. That class was also instructed to give it water, sunlight, and fertilizer each week. It never grew. The class watered it, fertilized it, and put it in sunlight, BUT... It never grew one inch. It never grew at all. Why? Obvious! It's dead, and dead things don't grow. Without the Lord Jesus Christ, the natural man is dead, and he cannot grow. You can't expect the natural man to grow. He has no spiritual ACTIVATION. The Bible describes him in the book of Jude as sensual. The word sensual means "of the flesh." *"...sensual, having not the spirit."* Paul said in Romans chapter 8, *"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* So, a natural man has no spiritual activation. He does not have the life of God. In contrast, a SPIRITUAL PERSON is a person who HAS God in him to activate and to help him to grow spiritually. A NATURAL MAN has no spiritual activation. As a result, he has no spiritual APPRECIATION. You may know such people. They have no interest in coming to church with you. They have no interest in the Word. The NATURAL man doesn't appreciate spiritual things. Verse 14: *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God..."* Now the word receiveth there is a Greek word which means "to welcome, to appreciate." The natural man does not appreciate the things of God. He just doesn't do it. Now it doesn't mean that he cannot appreciate a lot of things. A natural man might appreciate the song that Bobby sang. (Bobby Jackson sang a special song prior to the message.) He might have some appreciation for the music that the worship team led us in today. I've been told that some unsaved people have played gospel music in bar rooms because they just like gospel music. They may appreciate the music and NOT understand or care to understand the message. It is beyond their understanding. Go to chapter 1, verse 18: *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness..."* Now the song that Bobby sang spoke to my heart. To some, it may have just been music sung by a man who has a good voice. That's because the NATURAL man doesn't understand. Singing about God's grace is foolish to them. You might come in here and appreciate the architecture or the décor. You can appreciate the people around you. One might say, "Well, preacher that was a good talk." You may even get something out of it, but you don't really welcome the things of God. What turns other people on, what excites other people, it just does not excite you BECAUSE you have NO spiritual activation, you have no spiritual appreciation, you receive not, you welcome not the things of God. The natural man also has no spiritual APPROPRIATION. Now here's something that some of you might not understand. The Bible says in verse 14: *"...and neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."* There are certain things you will never know UNTIL you get saved. You say, "Well, I just don't get it." That's right. You just DON'T get it. Now you may know all ABOUT God and not KNOW God. You've not been born of the Spirit, so you don't get what we're talking about. It's foreign to you. The NATURAL man welcomes NOT. He doesn't receive the things of the Spirit of God, and neither can he know them. The reason that you can't know them is that you don't have the spiritual apparatus to know them. There are things that we learn, as we're going to see, from the Holy Spirit of God who is the teacher. Today in this generation we

have a lot of illustrations that people in Bible times did not have. For example, in this room right now there is news, sports, weather, music. It's all here. You say, "Well, why don't I see it or hear it?" Because you don't have a television tuner with you right now to tune it in, but it's here. Or you don't have a cell phone or a Wi-Fi connection. We'd be foolish to say it's not in this room. It's here, but in order to receive it, you have to have a receiver or a phone with internet connection. You must have the apparatus to receive it. The truth of the matter is, you could even HAVE a receiver, but if it's not plugged in or if it's broken, you still can't get it even though you have the receiver. That's a picture of the natural person without God's Spirit – he or she is DEAD! The tuner is broken. The receiver is broken. Do you know why God's people understand things that other people don't understand? Their antenna is up. Their power is on. They are tuned in to Station W-O-R-D! They are getting things that other people are not getting. So don't scold an unsaved man when he says, "I don't see it." He's not lying. He DOESN'T see it. Jesus told Nicodemus, who was a brilliant man, a religious man, a cultured man, *"Except a man be born again, WHAT? He cannot see the kingdom of God."* He's not lying. You might as well scold a blind man for not seeing a sunset. You see, the apparatus is just not working. *"The natural man receiveth NOT the things of the Spirit of God... neither can he know them, for they are SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED."* So, that's the natural man. He has no spiritual ACTIVATION. He has no spiritual APPRECIATION. He has no spiritual APPROPRIATION. Now that doesn't mean he's dumb or stupid. He may be very wise in the things of this world. In the first five verses of this chapter, we see something about the wisdom of this world. A lot of people have this kind of wisdom. Paul said, *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God."* Now what did he mean by that? He meant, *"That when I came preaching, I did not come depending upon oratory and philosophy. For I determined not to know anything among you, except [or save] Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."* Does that mean he was afraid of them? No. He was afraid of human wisdom. You see, Paul may have had a tendency to rely upon his learning or his scholarship. Some scholar indicated that Paul had the equivalency of a triple Ph.D. He was a brilliant man. He was a world traveler. He is said to have had the best education that money could afford. He studied at the feet of Gamaliel. So, Paul always had to keep away from depending upon that. He said, *"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."* Paul was saying, "I don't want to just mesmerize you. I don't want to just logically talk you into something. I don't merely want you to intellectually comprehend something. I want the Holy Spirit to make Himself real to you and to teach you." We have churches today that are filled with people who have believed propositions and who have joined organizations, who have never had a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. Some think they know it all. That's a DANGEROUS place to be. I'll tell you what else it is. It's DECEPTIVE. Notice in verse 6: *"Howbeit we speak wisdom among you that are perfect..."* Now look at the word perfect. That word perfect does NOT mean sinless; it means MATURE. It has come to perfection, maturity. You look at a rose and you say, "That's a perfect rose." You don't mean that it is sinless. You mean that it has fulfilled its purpose. The Bible says, *"Jesus, the captain of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering."* Does that imply that He'd been imperfect before He suffered? Had He been sinful? No! It just means that He had come to the maturity of His purpose. He had followed His Father's plan to perfection. He walked in perfect obedience. So, what he's saying is, *"We speak wisdom among you that are perfect, mature. Yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to naught."* Now what is he talking about – the princes of this world? He's talking about the movers, the shakers, the intellectuals, the people who think that they know everything. These would be the thinkers, the scientists, the educators of the day. He says it all comes to naught. That is, IT ALL COMES TO NOTHING. Question: If we're so smart, why are we in the mess we're in? Are we making progress? The technology of our day was the science fiction of yesterday. I get in my car, and it's all computerized. The dashboard talks to me. "Shut the door, Stupid." (It doesn't call me Stupid.) It's bad enough having a wife tell you how to drive; now you've got a dashboard who tells you how to drive! My car slows down and will brake if I get too close to a car. You drive up to your house and the garage door opens. You go into the house and heat your tea in a microwave. You can watch the news on a phone or tablet. You can see things happening overseas

instantaneously. It's usually only minutes before we are aware of the next world tragedy. It's an incredible age in which we are living, but it appears that we are sinking lower and lower and lower. I'm talking about the quality of life. I'm not talking about creature possessions. I'm not talking about pleasures and fun. I'm talking about the things that really count. Are we making progress? I'll let you make that decision! Look at the political scene. Look at some of those who are supposed to be leading us. Where are all the promises made to us? Are we better off today than we were a year or two ago? For sure all the worldly wisdom hasn't eliminated our problems. In verse 7, Paul says, *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom..."* Now what does he mean, a mystery? That's not like a murder mystery, something you could figure out if you were Sherlock Holmes. It is a sacred secret that you can ONLY UNDERSTAND by the Holy Spirit, *"...which God ordained before the world unto our glory."* Human wisdom can be dangerous. It is deceptive. It is demonic. Look at verse 8. Here's the classic proof. *"Which none of the princes of this world knew [talking about the hidden wisdom]: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."* Now he doesn't say that the ignorant crucified the Lord of glory. He said, *"the princes of this world."* Again, he's talking about the movers, the shakers, the thinkers, the intellectuals. They were the ones that were behind the crucifixion of Jesus. Do you know who crucified Jesus? Some of the best minds of that day crucified Jesus. We are talking about Roman leadership. You don't get to be a Roman general or a Roman governor without some lofty credentials. You don't get in the Sanhedrin of the Jewish council by being naive or ignorant. These were the intellectual elite. These were the princes of this world. Mind you – they didn't do it casually. The Bible says, *"They took counsel."* Not a few of them, but many of them, and they nailed the Son of God to a cross. That's the wisdom of this world. That's the natural man. That's demonic. The wisdom that descends from beneath is sensual, devilish. That's what the Bible says. So, the natural man is a sinner. The Bible says in Ephesians 2, verse 3: *"We are by nature the children of wrath."* He has no spiritual activation. He has no spiritual appreciation. He has no spiritual appropriation. He cannot know the things of God. If you're a NATURAL man or woman, YOU NEED TO GET SAVED! Now here's the point. Get the point. With the NATURAL MAN growth is IMPOSSIBLE. That's the point.

2. With the CARNAL MAN growth is IMPAIRED. Chapter 3, verse 1: *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto CARNAL..."* The word carnal means "fleshly." Paul says, "You're just fleshly." *"I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."* Now here's another category of people. Mind you – Paul calls them *"brothers."* He calls them *"in Christ."* But... They are BABES in Christ. Well, there's nothing wrong with being a baby – FOR A WHILE. Let me give you three marks of a carnal Christian. There is DELAYED development. These have been babies TOO LONG. It's wonderful to have a little baby. Babies are cute. Babies are beautiful. There IS legitimate babyhood. That's wonderful. Oh, but the tragedy of gray-haired babies. Oh, the tragedy when babies stay babies for TOO long. Sometimes parents have children who don't develop physically, and that's a grief to the parents' hearts. Sometimes parents have children who don't develop mentally. Some of the sweetest little children are children who haven't developed mentally. They're precious children and precious to the parents, but that's a grief to the parent's hearts. What a grief it must be to God's heart when HIS children have delayed development when they COULD do something about it if they WOULD. Delayed development. They just don't grow. It was a grand moment some 30 plus years ago when my daughter said, "Da-da" for the first time. It was music to my ears. BUT... This past Father's Day weekend when Jess was here, she never once called me "Da-da." AND... I'm glad! As one of a baby's first words, it is grand. As an adult, that would mean trouble. You don't want a person just to stay in that place. We have people in churches today who have ceased to grow. They are delayed in their development. Paul calls them CARNAL Christians. To be a carnal Christian is an abomination. Carnal and Christian are oxymorons. Carnal and Christian are opposite terms. Those words were never meant to go together. In the scheme of things, a Christian isn't carnal, AND... If you are carnal or fleshly, you aren't a Christian. It would be like talking about a heavenly devil. There's nothing heavenly about a devil. There's nothing devilish about heaven. It's a contradiction in terms. We need to note the difference between a spiritual Christian and a carnal Christian. Scripture paints the spiritual man as the normal Christian. EVERY

Christian should be named spiritual. The spiritual man is normal. The carnal man is abnormal. The natural man is natural. There's the spiritual man. He's supernatural. There's the carnal man. He's unnatural. There's something wrong. He has delayed development. It's a grief to the heavenly Father. But... Not only does he have a delayed development; he has a RESTRICTED DIET. In verse 2 he says, *"I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."* The carnal person has to be spoon-fed. Did you know that about ALL THE CARNAL CHRISTIAN GETS is what he gets on Sunday morning? (You still love me?) If he even makes it on Sunday and listens to pastor preach, he thinks he's done God a big favor? Do you know what a sermon is? Paul's sermon to the Corinthians here is just milk. It's just pre-digested food. It's pretty much something you don't even have to chew. In many a church, about all a preacher can deliver is pablum, baby food, and a little milk. One of the many challenges of being a pastor is you must try and feed the natural, the carnal AND the spiritual. That's a challenge because they are NOT on the same page. They aren't on the same level of understanding. We take the spoon and say, "Open the hatch so we can put it in there and then burp them on the way out of church because they're babies. They have a restricted diet. They do not understand the DEEPER things of God. Paul said, "I had to give you milk, not meat. You were not able to bear it. You have not grown enough. Your digestive tract is not developed enough." If he gave you a steak, you couldn't chew it. If you could chew it, you couldn't swallow it. If you could swallow it, you couldn't digest it. So, there you have it – baby food and milk. Delayed development. Restricted diet. And then... Repeated Divisions. Verse 3: *"For are ye yet carnal: whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"* O God, deliver us from the pettiness that comes when little children get in squabbles and fights. Have you ever noticed the things that upset little children? Have you ever noticed how easily little children will get into fights and divisions? Sometimes BIG children – ADULT children – do the same thing – pettiness, squabbles, divisions, outbursts of selfishness. That's a mark of carnality. A CARNAL Christian is little more than a BIG OLD BABY. Anyone remember the 1982 song *Fat Baby* by Amy Grant (41 years ago)?

I know a man, maybe you know him too.
You never can tell; he might even be you.
He knelt at the altar, and that was the end.
He's saved and that's all that matters to him.

His spiritual tummy, it can't take too much.
One day a week he gets a spiritual lunch.
On Sunday, he puts on his spiritual best,
And gives his language a spiritual rest.

He's just a fat little baby!
He wants his bottle and he don't mean maybe.
He sampled solid foods once or twice,
But he says doctrine leaves him cold as ice.

He's been baptized, sanctified, redeemed by the blood,
But his daily devotions are stuck in the mud.
He knows the books of the Bible and John 3:16.
He's got the biggest King James you've ever seen!

I've always wondered if he'll grow up someday.
He's mamma's boy, and he likes it that way.
If you happen to see him, tell him I said,
"He'll never grow, if he never gets fed."

He's just a fat, fat, fat, fat baby...

That song has way more theology than it's given credit for. If you are a big old fat baby, you are carnal. You

haven't grown up. Delayed development. Restricted diet. Repeated divisions. Now, with the natural man growth is what? IMPOSSIBLE. With the carnal man growth is IMPAIRED.

3. Now, with the SPIRITUAL MAN growth is EMPOWERED. Now I want us to see what the spiritual man is. Back to chapter 2 – FIRST OF ALL, he lives by the Spirit. Verse 11: *“For what man knoweth the things of man, save [or except] the spirit of man, which is in him?”* In a manner of speaking – apart from God – no one knows Jim Lloyd like Jim Lloyd. *“What man knows the things of man except the spirit of man that’s in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”* Only God knows God. And... The only way the finite can understand the infinite would be for the infinite to disclose Himself to the finite. Scripture puts it this way: *“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God.”* A spiritual man has received the spirit – the Spirit of God. You receive the Spirit at the new birth. AND... When you receive the Spirit, you have spiritual life. You see, Jesus said to people whose hearts were already beating, *“I’ve come that you might have life, and have it abundantly.”* Christians are new creatures. They are born from above. It’s miraculous. There’s a transformation. They become brand-new creatures. So, they live from the Spirit. Paul says we have received the Spirit. Now watch. He lives by the Spirit and, therefore, he learned from the Spirit. Look again in verse 12: *“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God [now watch this], that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”* The ONLY way that you can know these things is for God to give them to you. Jesus said in John 3:27, *“A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven...”* That’s part of the reason I pray before I preach. I can preach truth; only GOD can impart truth. Remember when Jesus asked Simon Peter, *“Whom do men say that I am?”* Simon Peter said, *“You’re the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Remember what Jesus told him? Jesus said, *“Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.”* So, Peter gets an A+ for answering the question to perfection, but he has no reason to get puffed up. He didn’t figure it out; it was GIVEN to him. You see, a man can receive nothing except it be given him of God. That’s the reason when you come to the Bible, you must lay your intellectual pride aside. As you know your own mind, the Spirit knows the mind of God. So, you can have an inspired Bible in your hand and not understand it apart from spiritual illumination. That’s the reason you need to pray as in Psalm 119:18 – *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.”* When you seek God with all your heart and pray to mature in Christ, don’t be surprised if you see things that you never knew before. LET ME ADD that learning from the Spirit does NOT mean that you’ll know EVERYTHING about God. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God.”* Other things that He reveals belong to His prophets. You’ll never know all about God. You couldn’t. I wouldn’t have any confidence in a God that you or I could fully understand. You can know some things about God. You can go down to the Atlantic Ocean with a bucket and dip out a bucketful of water. Everything in that bucket may be ocean, but all the ocean won’t be in that bucket, right? There’s an ocean out there. So, you can learn and learn and learn and learn, etc. You’ll never go BEYOND Jesus, but you CAN always go DEEPER IN JESUS. It also doesn’t mean that when you learn from the Spirit that He’s going to zap you with knowledge. Paul told Timothy, *“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing [that means, “cutting it straight”] the word of truth.”* If you want the Holy Spirit to teach you, He’ll likely teach you through the Word. The Bible says we’re to love the Lord our God with all of our mind, right? A believer has the mind of Christ, right? To think with. I’ll tell you something else it doesn’t mean. It doesn’t mean that you’re going to have knowledge in every area. Just because you learn from the Spirit, you’re still going to have to study for a math test. What it does mean, however, is that the average Christian who doesn’t know Greek, who doesn’t know Hebrew, but WHO KNOWS GOD can pick up this book and God through the Holy Spirit will reveal Himself and teach you. Chapter 1, verse 26 says: *“For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God has chosen the foolish things of this world...”* That means ordinary people can learn from the Spirit. He lives by the Spirit. He’s born again. He’s become a partaker of divine nature. God the Holy Spirit comes into him, and the Holy Spirit begins to illumine his mind. Verse 15: *“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things...”* Now the word JUDGE is the same word translated DISCERN in this passage and other places. It means that a

spiritual person can discern. He's able to make a proper evaluation. The word here is a legal word. It means "to study and to look into and to evaluate and to choose." A spiritual person can do that. A spiritual person discerns all things. But notice, "...yet he himself is judged of no man." What does that mean? It means that we understand them; they don't understand us (that's right). We see right through them, but they don't understand us. Some think we're crazy. Sometimes the natural man will call us fools, nuts, freaks, fanatics. We might be nuts, but we're fastened to the RIGHT BOLT. It would blow their mind to know the sacrifices that the spiritual person makes for the work of Jesus. The natural man sees it as a waste. The spiritual man knows it's an investment. Basically, the things we take to heaven are what we've given away. But... They don't understand that. They don't understand how we enjoy what we enjoy. *"He that is spiritual judges all things, but he himself is judged of no man."* What does that mean that you're liberated by the Spirit? It means that this world is not able to squeeze you into its mold. You are marching to the beat of a different drummer. You see things that other people don't see. You know things that other people don't know. You love things that other people don't love. You have an insight that sets you free in the Lord Jesus Christ because you are a spiritual person. Let me ask you a question. Which of these 3 might you find at a prayer meeting? The Natural man, the Carnal man, or the Spiritual man? The natural man isn't there as he has no interest in the things of God. The carnal man is rarely there for a variety of reasons. They think they have something better to do. It's the spiritual man or woman that makes the prayer meeting.

CONCLUSION. Now, with the natural man growth is IMPOSSIBLE. With the carnal man, growth is IMPAIRED. With the spiritual man, growth is EMPOWERED because it is the Holy Spirit of God that empowers that growth and helps you to grow. So, if you're a natural man, what do you need to do? You need to get born again. You need to be saved because the natural man is a child of wrath. You're going to die. Really, Paul said you're already dead because there is no life in you. Worse, hell will be your forever home. Until you are born of the Spirit, you can never know the things of God. You can never enjoy spiritual things. If you're a carnal man, what do you need to do? Repent of your carnality. Yield to the Holy Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit have His way to bring you to maturity. If you are a spiritual man, what do you do? Say, "Well, I've got it made. I have arrived." Of course not! The most spiritual person in this building today has room to grow. The Apostle Paul, who was one of the most spiritual persons that ever lived, at the end of his ministry said, "O, that I may know Him." He died climbing, wanting to know more and more about the Lord Jesus. Someone said it this way – If you don't love Jesus more than you did yesterday, you're backslidden. We must continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Spiritual maturity positions us to serve. Paul said, *"I had to feed you with milk and not with meat."* You see, there are some people who have to be fed. There are some people who can eventually feed themselves, BUT... Thank God, there are others who begin to feed others. Church – God wants you to be His servants. Our calling is not a calling to BE served, but TO serve. We are called to be servants that can break the bread of life and share the love of Jesus. So, WHERE ARE YOU on this journey? Are you NATURAL, CARNAL or SPIRITUAL? If you are a NATURAL man or woman, call out to God. I think of the prodigal son. He came to the point where he had NO LOVE for his father, BUT... Know that the Father NEVER stopped loving him. The Father's ear is inclined in YOUR direction. If you ever want to discern spiritual things, you MUST be born of the Spirit. If you ever want to make heaven your home, you MUST be born of the Spirit. If you are a spiritual BABY – a fat, fat Christian – isn't it time you say, "By the grace of God, today I'm going to grow up. I'm going to be spiritual. I'm going to live by the Spirit. I'm going to learn from the Spirit. I'm going to be liberated through the Spirit of God." It's a process, but there's no better day to begin the process than TODAY! If you are a SPIRITUAL man or woman, maybe there's someone here today that you can encourage to take a step forward – even an itty-bitty step toward Jesus. I would love to meet you at the altar.