

The Life Core

The Source of Life & You

#15

The Child–Stage #1

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- The hidden clues for spiritual life are found in the physical analogy.
- Each of us has started his or her life as a baby.
- Birth is the first clear marker. Spiritual life is that way too.
- Becoming a father is the second and so is it spiritually!

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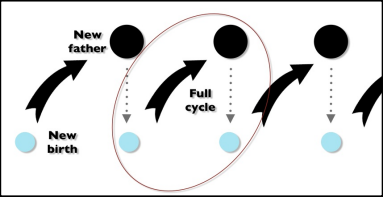
The Little Child



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A Complete Cycle

- A complete cycle occurs when the baby grows and has his own babe.



The diagram illustrates a cycle of life. It starts with a blue dot labeled 'New birth'. An arrow points to a black dot labeled 'New father'. From there, an arrow points to another blue dot, which is part of a larger cycle labeled 'Full cycle'. This cycle continues with another black dot and another blue dot, showing the progression of life and reproduction.

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The Baby Grows

- Steps of physical development—crawling, sitting, etc..
- Also true for the new believer during this first stage of spiritual development.
- Signs of maturity: "I guess we are too old for the park, now."

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Caring for New Believers

- When you first became a believer, were you personally cared for?
- Note the special attention that the baby gains after birth.
- What happens when the baby is scared and starts crying?

"All is well. Don't cry. Mommy has you."

- The child receives physical food, attention and emotional love. This is the ideal situation.
- If the mother is absent or aloof, the result will be a scared child who feels unloved.

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Lots to Learn!

- The new believer has many things to learn.
- He uses the newborn's desires to help us understand how the new believer loves to acquire the Word of God—likened to the believers' milk.
- Growth occurs when the believer acquires God's Word, just like when an infant receives nutrition.

"Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Pet 2:2).

- Why do we so emphasize saving people but spend so little effort on caring for them. Does growth come by no care?

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Training the Church to Care

- (1) Convince God's people of the importance and need to train new believers,
- (2) Equip them how to train new believers,
- (3) Supply suggested materials they can use to train new believers, and

- (4) Challenge them to train new believers with the whole birth-to-serving process in mind.

New Believer Development



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Our Lessons

- The new follower of Jesus is likened to a little child, a baby, because he (or she) has similar needs that only can be provided by a caregiver.
- God wants us to care for new believers as a Mom gently and patiently cares for her little baby.
- God teaches new believers basic truths from God's Word during this early stage, bringing growth.

Application

- How do you respond to new believers around you? Do you disciple them? Why or why not?
- If you were not disciplined early on, what do you feel that you missed out on?