

Faith in S.T.A.G.E.S. – Growing in Numbers (25-49yrs old)

Today we will be talking about another stage in our life and faith...

But let's recap where we've been before we enter into this new stage!

"Starting Out" (0-12yrs old) – Connecting with Christ & the Church!

"Teens & Tweens" (13-17yrs old) – Discovering our identity amidst change!

"Adulthood" (18-24yrs old) – Navigating thru seasons of wandering/disconnection

"Growing in Numbers" (25-49yrs old) – Experiencing additions in our lives!

In this 4th stage of life & faith things are increasing and at a rapid pace!

- We increase in age... At a pace we don't like to admit!
- We increase by +1... **We get married!**
- We increase by another +1, +2, +3... **We have kids!**
- We increase in responsibilities... We are now caring for a family!
- We increase from paying a couple bills to a whole stack every month!
- We increase from part-time jobs to full-time careers!
- We increase from minimum wage incomes to increased salary wages!
- **We increase from needing to be in 1 place at 1 time to 3 places at once!**
- We increase in stress... anxiety... weight... grey hair... hair loss... etc.

How do we have time for faith development & spiritual growth with everything else increasing in our lives exponentially? The same way we have time for anything else... **We prioritize it & use our time more effectively!**

In this stage of increase also comes increased opportunities to make decisions that will have life-long & eternal implications... not only in our own life but in the lives of all those who God brings into our sphere of influence!

Joshua 24:14-15 - "Now therefore fear the LORD & serve him in sincerity & in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River & in Egypt, & serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me & my house, we will serve the LORD."

What does it mean to have a healthy **"fear of the Lord"**? Deut. 10:12-13

What does it mean to **"serve him with sincerity & faithfulness"**? Matt. 6:33

What does it mean to **"put away other gods that your fathers served..."**?

What does it mean to not see it as **"evil in your eyes to serve the Lord"**?

Each one of us has the opportunity to **"choose this day whom we will serve!"**

But will we... do we... especially in this *"Growing in Numbers"* stage of life... Will we say as Joshua did, **"As for me & my house, we will serve the Lord!"**

As we increase in age, will we increase in **"the fear of the Lord"** & serve him with greater faithfulness? **Or does the fear of man & our schedules rule us?**

As we increase in number through marriage, will we grow in the knowledge of, & our engagement in, what it means to love our wives as Christ loves His bride, & serve/submit to our husbands as unto the Lord? **Eph. 5:22-33**

As we increase in number by having kids, how do we steward this growth in our families? **"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!"** Prov. 22:6

As our bills increase will we still honor God with our finances? First fruits...

As our income increases, will our generosity increase as well?

As our jobs grow into careers, and responsibilities & expectations increase at work, will we use these 40+ hours a week to bring glory to God at work?

As commitments increase, & our available time decreases, will we prioritize the things that reflect a family that is focused on Christ/faith? **Deut. 6:6-9**

As stress and anxiety increase in this stage, will we put our hope & trust in a sovereign & loving God who is with us & who will see us through it all?

Again, there is a choice that lies before each one of us... **"Choose this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."**

I am in the midst of this stage of life and faith right now... **It is a daily struggle...** filled with victories and defeats... but I/we are called to persevere!

And may we remember that these choices that I/we make don't just affect me/you... **They have an immediate and long-term effect on our families!**

We only get to raise our kids once... We only get to navigate through this stage of life & faith once... May we make the most of this time!

And let's not lose sight of all the joys/blessings that are experienced in this *"Growing in Numbers"* stage! There's much worth celebrating, & much good fruit that can come from a family walking in the ways of the Lord! **May we be known as a family of families serving Christ with sincerity & faithfulness!**

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What does it mean to have a healthy _____ **of the Lord**? Deut. 10:12-13

What does it mean to **"serve him with _____"** Matt. 6:33

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