



WORLD
GOSPEL
MISSION

MOVING TO THE ADULT TABLE

J.W. | Missionary in Uganda

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5–11

“Where are all the adults?”

Can you remember the last time you asked that question? We’ve seen such tumultuous times in our world in the past few years and if you’re like me, you’re wondering what happened to maturity.

Where are those with reason? Where are the gracious, courageous, and wise? Where are those who can balance both justice and mercy within our world today?

When I was a child, I didn’t have many of these adult role models. All those whom I sought to pattern myself after also had gaping holes. Eventually, I discovered that I, too, had gaping issues that I couldn’t solve by myself.

As much as I desired maturity, in some real and natural sense, I felt defeated and desired to simply succumb to pursuing the same baseless things that the rest of the world pursues.

Let someone else be the adult, I thought.

From a human perspective, the above account could easily have been the end of an all-too-familiar story. I could have lived into a pre-written epitaph that would have applauded my ability to work at my job before collecting seashells in retirement, a life that featured scant stories about minor moments of kindness that were more like punctuation than a flowing story.

But in the midst of the temptation to be a child my entire life, Jesus saved me. I sought to live my way, and He patiently waited while the edges of that life burst into flames.

Over the past thirty years, He has changed and shaped me into someone that I don’t think I’d recognize if I went back to the old way. And He taught me, through his own example, the path to maturity: submitting to the Father’s authority and putting others above myself.

In Philippians 2:6–7, Paul says the following about Jesus, giving us a tremendous model to follow: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness”.

In my previous, childish ways, I pursued equality with God and sought my own advantage. But thankfully, I discovered as I grew in my love for Him that the thing He seems to love most is a person who will humbly submit to what He wants and then walk with Him in that plan.

These days I find myself working in spiritual triage. I serve as a chaplain at Heritage International School in Kampala, Uganda. I have no doubt that I am exactly where I am called to be. God has given me gifting after gifting and uses those gifts to touch the hearts and lives of students and staff from thirty-nine different countries. I often ask Him the question, “Why are you so kind to let me do this? And how in the world did I get here?”

I’ve found it to be a greater joy to bring Him glory than to glorify myself. Oh, I like the accolades from time to time, but to know that He is truly pleased and that I am doing His will has become my greatest pleasure.

It didn’t matter what my qualifications were, nor my lack of qualifications; He simply loves that I am willing to walk in submission to Him. This reminds me of the disciples, who—just like me—were not necessarily good men, but willing men.

Because these willing men humbly followed Jesus and obeyed Him, they got to see Him walk on water, raise the dead, heal the terminally ill, and so much more. What a beautiful way to live, and what a tremendous gift we’ve been given! The things that He shows us are so far beyond anything that can be purchased in this world.

Some days I still look around and wonder where the adults are. Yet by His grace, He has slowly made me one of those adults. Without any pride in myself I simply say, “Oh what a maker He is.”

I invite you today to respond to His call to humbly submit to His will and His plans, not because it’s compulsory, but because of all the things that He wants to do in and through you. This is the way to true maturity.

GROW IN MATURITY

In what areas is God calling you from immaturity into adulthood? Choose three words that would describe a fully mature version of yourself (gentle, selfless, gracious, generous, etc.) and write them on a piece of paper. Hang that piece of paper on your bathroom mirror, or some other place where you’ll see it as you get ready for the day.

Clothe yourself with Jesus (like Paul said in Galatians 3:27) and grow into the image of the person He created you to be.

CHRISTMAS IN UGANDA

Ugandans will observe the birth of Jesus on the “watch night” which is the evening of December 24. Church bells will often ring around the city of Kampala and throughout the country to signify “peace on Earth and good will towards men.” As large a meal as can be afforded will be eaten by all who are around. People feed their neighbors if they are able in celebration of the newborn King.

ACTIVITY: INTERNATIONAL CAROLING

Get into the Christmas spirit with this playlist featuring Christmas songs from around the world! [Click here](#) to find it on Spotify!