

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The following table is compiled from information about the stages of life a person goes through as they develop and mature. The best treatment of this information, and the source for this table, is found in *Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You*.¹

Format

The rows are separated into five sections or stages. The listed items in each section represent actions or accomplishments that must be completed for a person to mature into the subsequent stage. Even though a physical body grows with passing years, a personality may not progress at the same rate. For example, a person that fails to mature beyond the stage of child will still have the body of an adult in time. We combine the emotional and physical maturities with a hyphenated term, such as “child-adult.”

The first column lists the responsibilities of the person according to stage. For instance, an infant must learn to develop trust. The second column lists the responsibilities of the community (family) that helps the person accomplish that thing. For instance, a family must build bonds of unconditional love with the infant so they are able to develop trust. The third column lists the symptoms that are evident at any age when this step in maturity has not been completed.

Utilization

Use the table as a tool to familiarize yourself with the maturity process, and it will help you anticipate orderly growth from stage to stage. For instance, as you raise a child you can track your performance while watching for signals that your child is developing the corresponding piece.

Alternatively, you can focus on the Failure Signs to discover areas of weakness or voids that need to be addressed when development is incomplete, especially when working with an infant-adult, child-parent, and so on. For example, an adult with addictive behavior is most likely a child-adult that still needs to learn personal satisfaction. As a family, or community, they need opportunities to experience consequences and learn how to make wise choices.

Prayer Strategies

The Spirit may call attention to a conflict, need, or pain represented in any of the stages of development. Expect the root or source of a false belief to have occurred in that stage, and allow mind renewing truth to be given there. Ask God to fill in the void left by the family or community that opened the door to the conflict, need, or pain.

Emotional and spiritual maturities are not bound to linear time and can be applied retroactively. Progression through the stages of development can be instantaneous.

¹ Friesen, Wilder, Bierling, et al, *The Life Model: Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You*, Shepherd's House, Inc., 2000

Stages of Development

Personal	Community	Failure Signs
Infant (Birth – age 3)		
Lives in joy	Delight in uniqueness	Weak ID, fear and coldness
Develops trust	Bonds of unconditional love	Bonding problems, isolated, manipulation, self-centered
Learns to receive	Gives care without asking	Withdrawn, disengaged, self-stimulating
Begins relationships, differentiates self	Discovers uniqueness through attention	Inability to regulate emotions
Return to joy from unpleasantness	Safety so infant can return to joy	Outbursts, worry, depression, avoidance
Child (age 4 – 12)		
Ask for what's needed, express ideas and emotions	Teaches appropriate communication	Passive-aggressive, trouble communicating
Learn personal satisfaction	Consequences, wise choices	Addictive behavior
Persistence to do hard things	Build courage through challenges and success	Failure, undependable, fantasy life
Personal resources, gifts	Opportunities to develop	Unproductive busy-ness
Know self, differentiates	Guides heart development	Conformed ID, codependency
Relates to big-picture	Relatedness to family God	Generational curses
Adult (age 13 – 1 st child)		
Cares for self and others	Opportunity for group life	Self-centered
Stable in difficulties	Affirms stability	Peer pressure
Relationships with peers, teamwork	Provides environment	Loner, isolation, self-importance
Responsibility for choices and impact on others	Teaches impact on others and history	Controlling, harmful, blaming, selfish
Contributes to community	Oppty for involvement	Self-absorbed, user
Expresses personal style	Accountability and affirmation	Seeking approval
Parent (until youngest becomes adult)		
Protects, serves, enjoys fam.	Oppty to sacrifice for family	Family members at risk
Care for children	Promotes parenting	Parented by children
Bring children through hardships back to joy	Supporting holistic parenting	Hopelessness, depression, broken family units
Elder (able to care for a community)		
Accurate comm. ID	Recognize, respect elders	Disorder, disintegration
Spiritual adoption	High value on community	Poverty, crime, mental illness