

Grow Up

One of Six Decisions that will Change Your Life

June 13 & 14, 2009

Intro:

Have you been following the NBA finals? Tonight is game 5 in a best-of-seven series between the LA Lakers and the Orlando Magic. We don't have any channels on our TV so we have a motto that gets us invited to other people's houses: *Will Cook For Cable. You host the game; we bring the food. Special appetizers included if you have a widescreen!*

Pictures here. There are so many outstanding players, but one athlete from each team gets the lion's share of attention. Kobe Bryant and Dwight Howard are young men with tremendous ability. I say young, but they were really young, 18, when they first made the NBA. These guys were recruited right out of high school and quickly rose to annual incomes in the tens of millions of dollars. But there is a long list of talented players drafted by teams, only to disappoint due to their immaturity. Many a coach has had to tell a young hot shot to *grow up. Immature selfishness* doesn't belong on a championship team. Neither does getting busted for drugs or driving drunk.

Imagine how hard it is to coach these superstars in the early years. Some are known for their childish tantrums. Others get in trouble with ladies or guns. With a lack of discipline, young talent is wasted. I can hear a coach saying, *This is not like the playground where you had your way. It's not all about you now. You've got to grow up to succeed.*

Maybe you've heard the saying that *getting older is inevitable, but growing up is optional.* Well, it's an option I hope you'll choose. To *grow up* is one of six decisions that will change your life.

Whether we're talking about spiritual, emotional, or social growth, a significant key seems to be the realization: *It's not about me!* This saying is beautifully supported by the

opening words of the Lord's Prayer: [Matt 6:9,10](#) *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

1. Maturity means you realize you are one of many, not the only one. Don't skip over the way Jesus taught us to address God: *Our Father...* The pronoun is plural. What a simple reminder: God does not just exist for you alone. This whole thing wasn't set up for just your benefit. He is *our* Father. You're one of many.

Any coach, NBA or otherwise, wants a young player to learn *he's not the only one*. No prima donna personalities are allowed on great teams. You can imagine the coach saying, *"Play like a team member. No showboating. Don't hog the ball."*

The men who represented the US in the 2004 Olympics were called the *Dream Team*. They were the most talented players in the NBA, but this team lost to Argentina. Why? Because they *weren't a team*, these *superstar individuals* played *as individuals*. A simple shift in approach led the 2008 *Redeem Team* to victory. They didn't think: *this is all about me, but how can I contribute to this team?*

Here's a quote from 7'1" NBA hall of famer and MVP, David Robinson: *"Players who seek their own glory at the expense of the team... drive the team away from success. So it is with life. The goal is not our own glory. In fact, trying to make life all about us pushes happiness further out of reach."*

Christ's attitude is summarized in [Phil 2:3-5](#). What great verses for a family! It's funny; we tell our kids they are special. And that is good. But none of us are *special* in the sense that the rest of the world exists for *our* pleasure. The truth is that the people around you are not so different. They have hopes and dreams, fears and regrets, just like you. They don't like waiting in lines either. What makes you the exception to the rules? Jesus said we're to **love our neighbors as ourselves**. Maturity means recognizing that *you're one of many*, and *not* privileged and unique with no

peers. We address the God of us *all*. He's *Our Father*, so *we need to learn; It's not all about me*.

2. Maturity means you accept and submit to authority over you. It is *Our Father in heaven....* What a simple reminder that there is a God over us, transcendent and sovereign. *He is in authority, above us, where we aren't. He is able to see what we can't. He knows what we don't.*

On a team, the authority over you is the coach. The player's job is to play winning basketball. Winning teams draw crowds. Crowds generate the revenue that pays the bills, including salaries. The players must submit to the coaches and to the officials and, of course, to the rules. But all of this is *just a game*. In *real life*, we all answer to God and the stakes are much higher than mere fortune and fame.

Jesus wants you to know that God resides in heaven on high. That means you are not autonomous.

Rom 13:1-Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ²Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. (Picture a cop in your rear view mirror.) ⁵Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. ⁶This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Sounds like a drag, but to grow up is to take responsibility, to be

faithful to commitments. It means you honor contracts and fulfill promises. Maturity means you accept and submit to authority over you.

To rebel against *legitimate authority* leads to bad things. Many people refuse to yield and end up paying a high price for their rebellion. This doesn't just mean just losing jobs, ending relationships, paying fines, and failing in school, but *missing out on an eternity with God*.

I asked the staff when you hear someone say *grow up*, what is going on? *Means someone is not living up to potential. Don't miss out. Come to say, It's not all about me*.

3. Maturity means you allow the focus to shift off yourself. Our example, again, is from Christ's model prayer: *...hallowed be your name...* *Whose name is to be regarded so highly? God's name. We're to give God rightful recognition, to hold him in the highest esteem.*

The individual is not the focal point. *It's not about me; the spotlight belongs elsewhere*. It belongs on God. Sometimes the shift goes the other way: Think of the band: *The Police*. Soon they became known as *The Police with Sting*. Then, *Sting and the Police*. Finally it became just *Sting*. *Didn't he once have a back up band?* Same thing can happen with Christian bands: *Third Day*, then *Third Day with Mac Powell*. Then, *Mac Powell with Third Day*. I'm not saying those guys wanted the focus to shift off the others to themselves, but a lot of people do. It is human nature to compete with others and even with God. But he says he **will not share his glory (Is 42:8)**.

It's funny that the NBA guys and other celebrities are called *stars*. Even the *real stars in the sky* exist for God's glory (Ps. 19:1). They are spectacular, but they know their place in the universe. If stars could talk, they'd say, *it's not all about me*. That should be our mentality: Ps. 115:1 **Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory....**

I was talking with my boy: *You're so disciplined and you're becoming a great basketball player. What are you going to*

do with this talent? (You'd expect he'd say, *Be a star! Play in the NBA. Make tons of money and buy you an avocado grove!*) But, being an unusual boy, and of few words, he simply said, *I want to shine for God.* In **Matt 5:14-16**, Jesus said, *You are the light of the world... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.* (Matt 5:16). We're like the moon. It doesn't generate any light of its own but reflects the sun's light. That's our role (**2 Cor 3:18** - we are to **reflect God's glory.**)

Earlier, I quoted David Robinson, who was also the only player in NBA history to win the rebounding, blocked shots, and scoring titles and Rookie of the year, defensive player of the year and MVP. With the championship trophy in hand, a mic was shoved in his face and he said, *All glory to God.* This was Christ's motto as well: **John 5:30 - I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.** **8:50 - I am not seeking glory for myself...** **12:28 - Father, glorify your name!** That's where the focus belongs.

*We need to learn to say, **It's not all about me.***

4. Maturity means you long for the fulfillment of a goal bigger than your petty desires. What's the big goal: *... your kingdom come...* *Not mine. You are king, not me.*

There were lots of misunderstanding in Christ's day as to the nature of the promised kingdom. Many people thought he would set it up after overthrowing Roman rule. There are misunderstandings in our day as well. Some teach that all believers have a divine right to royal riches. Others teach that we usher in Christ's kingdom through legislation. *What Jesus meant* was for us to anticipate the ultimate triumph of God's rule. When we grow up we begin to value substance, not superficiality. True maturity is shown in caring about things that are eternal. *To grow up is to plan and pray and work for the fulfillment of God's kingdom.* This begins with a reorientation of our self-centricity, saying, *you have the right to rule over all, even me.*

Our petty preoccupations fade before the majesty of God. **Is: 46:9,10 - I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.**

In 1543, Copernicus noticed that things don't revolve around the earth and dared to suggest that we are not at the center of it all. Not long after him, Galileo said the same thing and the pope and the king tried to silence him. People resist the *disgrace of demotion*. From the womb on, the default setting is selfishness. We tend to think we are the center of the universe. But to grow up is to be devoted to something bigger than me, and that is the glory of God.

In **2 Cor 4:17** Paul contrasts **our momentary affliction** with **the eternal weight of glory**. That is to say that what is to come is much bigger than anything you're experiencing. You can live for God's kingdom right now. Will you be self-centered or Son centered? Say it: *It's not all about me.*

5. Maturity means you demonstrate sacrificial commitment. *... your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

What a sentiment. What a prayer. To actually yearn for *God's will* to be done, knowing full well that it often conflicts with *our will* in painful ways. To pray for *God's will* to be done is to pledge obedience to it ourselves, and this is costly. In a way, growing up is all about being willing to sacrifice, putting God and others first. Parenting requires this. That's one more reason why it is so important to *grow up* before having kids. When kids have kids, it ushers them into an adult role they are not ready to play.

It takes mature sacrificial commitment to do the will of God. And to what extent is it to be done? ...on earth as it is in heaven *How well do they do his bidding up there?* I can't imagine the angels squabbling. Does Gabriel say, "No, I don't want to do go down to earth with your message; can't Michael do it this time?" I don't think so. It's done perfectly.

When we grow up, we grow increasingly willing to suspend our own will and prefer the will of God. John the Baptist got it: John 3:30 He must become greater; I must become less. Jesus set the perfect example: Not my will but yours be done... (Luke 22:42). This is a costly thing to say. It is the ultimate way of expressing what we've been repeating. I trust that the point of this message is very clear: we need to grow up and say *It's not all about me*.

Concl:

We all have an inner need to be special. While *we're not more valuable than others*, we are amazingly valuable. What is that based on? God created in his image to experience him as Father. Nothing is better. 1 John 3:1 - How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And how do we become his children? As Jesus said, you've been born physically, but you must be born again. The new birth is by faith. In 1:12.

More Meat:

Phil. 3:12 I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. So why did He take hold of you? For no mundane reason, but to live a life that glorifies God!

I see selflessness as the main mark of maturity.

Satan wants us to manage our image He whispers, "what do people think about you?"

Our need to grow up is often displayed in how we take criticism. Don't take anything personally. You're wrecking relationships by being so self-focused.

2 Cor 10:17 Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.

To be stuck in the adolescent syndrome is to believe it is all about me.

Is 43:21.

Jesus said if you do what you do for applause, that is all you get.

John 12:27,28; 17:4;

The Lord's Prayer was not given to be recited mindlessly, over and over. It's a blueprint, a pattern. This is *how*, not *what* you should pray. *In this manner*. Not as a substitute for our own prayers, but a guide.