

## Adulting Levi Lusko

**It's been said that there are three phases to life. We're talking about kind of the seasons of life and what to do about them in this series, and so I came across this seasons of life, phases of life illustration. I thought it would suit our purposes. So here you have it, the three phases of life. First of all is your 20s. Your 20s is the first phase of life, and during the 20s you care what everybody thinks about you. And then your second phase of life of the three is your 40s. In your 40s you begin a season of life where you don't care what anyone thinks about you. You just kind of like, I made it and I don't even care. I don't even care any more. I don't care what any of you all think about me. I'm 40 and I'm coming through.**

Anybody with me, 40-year-olds? You get to 40. You spend all this time worrying what everyone thought about you, and I don't even care what they think about me. Third, the third season of life is your 60s. And during your 60s you discover no one was thinking about you. And you realize how much time you wasted, because they weren't even thinking about you, because they were thinking about them. Anybody with me in your 60s, can say, that's a little bit true. That's a little bit, that's a little bit true. And any of us in our 40s, and 20s, and 30s, and 10s are like, that's good to know. That's helpful information. Well, we're in a series of messages called once a man twice a child. And we're talking about being young, and we're talking about getting old, and we're talking about what comes in between. And I think it's worthwhile for us to talk about these things, lest we get to seasons and ages that we haven't yet explored. How many of you are with me on the fact that it's a good idea to have a plan for what's to come, and not just to get there and go, dang it?

So that's why I thought we would, because people tell me, that's kind of weird that this would be your topic. Isn't there are a lot of young people at Fresh Life? Well, sure there are. There's all sorts of seasons of people at this church. But we also think that it's a good idea to talk about things that we're not yet dealing with. When's the perfect time to strengthen a marriage, to figure out what a marriage is? Ideally before you're in one. People don't want a parenting seminar until their kids are broken. And then they want it. pastor, call me back. So they want all the information. But it's better to know before you go. It's better to arm yourselves with information and a plan about an area that you're not in yet. And so we're taking some time to talk about what for some of us is something that won't come for many, many years, maybe 50, 60 years, these further away seasons. And for others of us, we're in it right now. But we're believing, no matter what, that God's word, which is living, and active, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, is going to meet us right where we're at and speak a word to us in season.

How many of you have faith to believe that God's word is going to touch you this week? And we're so glad and grateful to have you with us at church online, wherever you are tuned in. So thanks for being with us, people all across the country. If you have a Bible, 1 Corinthians 13 is where we're going to be. I'm going to preach a message to you I'm calling adulting. Adulting is the title of my message, because we're talking once a man, twice a child, and we spent some time talking about how to be born again, how to be a child for the second time. But I think there's an assumption in the title that we've ever become a man in the first place. And so I guess we ought to start there. Once a man, twice a child. Let's make sure that we're all on the same page here and adulting. And 1 Corinthians 13 is a perfect place to explore this because that's what is on Paul's heart here in this most famous of passages. Probably, second to Psalm 23, arguably the most famous chapter in the Bible. How many times have you heard 1 Corinthians 13? I don't know. How many weddings have you been to? Probably that many times. Though certainly there's broader application to a marriage, that's actually not what's on Paul's heart here in this setting, and we'll get to that.

1 Corinthians 13. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have

become sounding brass or a clanging symbol. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail. Whether there are tongues, they will cease. Whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love".

**How many of you are blessed just by the reading of God's word? Jesus, speak to us something fresh through it. Help us to come alive through your power. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I don't know if it was three, four, five years ago when I first started noticing this theme, adulting, on social media posts, on tweets, on Instagram posts, on Facebook posts. It's an interesting thing to put something out there and say, look what an adult I am. It's almost like the opposite of being adult, really. If you have to, if you have to... On one hand, I get it. We're all, to some extent, grappling with the increasing responsibilities that are on us as life goes on. It is awkward and clumsy to struggle under the load of them. And almost like the self-deprecating, like, look how hard I am at, but here's a little victory. I paid a bill. Adulting. I registered my car. Adulting. Never mind it was expired for three years. I had toast with peanut butter for breakfast, not cigarettes and Diet Coke. Adulting. Look how mature, I wore clean underwear three times last week. Adulting. Adulting. I remember when I was first out on my own, in an apartment by myself.**

There was so much to figure out, so much to cope with. I never had so little fun spending money in my life as buying that first shower curtain. It was killing me. I bought the cheapest one I could, but still I hated every penny. I thought through. Could I shower in a bathtub without a shower curtain? I contemplated it for a while before I spent that money. Anybody with me? It's like, dang, adulting sucks. You asked for it, and you got it. I want to be out on my own. Oh, man. Oh, man. And whatever you can say about adulting, whether you see it more as like a sign of somebody trying or looking for praise for doing what is the basic human requirement for all life, reward me. Acknowledge me. I'm an adult. Tell me I'm great. Whatever side of the fence you fall on, what is for sure is that this adulting is happening later and later on in life, if at all.

What do you mean by that? I mean this, that 34% of millennials still live at home. Maybe the new hashtag should be failure to launch. 34% of millennials are still living with mom and dad. And you know what? That statistic has gone up 25% in the last 10 years, ironically enough, right around the footprint of Twitter. Last 10 years, it's just skyrocketing, people staying at home, while tweeting about all their big, mature decisions they've made because they bought a toaster. You know what I'm saying? And it's interesting to see our society change and shift. Obviously, I'm not a sociologist. I don't understand all of the factors at play here. But it is interesting to me to look at different things that potentially could be co-related to this, that potentially could be co-related to this. Like it's interesting to me, and I'm not trying to draw a hard line with a pen between these two statistics here. Consider this a dotted line with a pencil and a question mark, OK? So please don't email me?

But in the last 57 years, since 1960, that I would be 58 years. In the last 58 years, there's been a 500% increase in childhood obesity. 500% increase in childhood obesity in the last 58 years. It used to be that 1 out of 20 youth in America were obese. It's now 1 out of 5. So it is skyrocketing, the

amount of kids who are obese. Now, what am I not saying? I'm not saying it's this that leads to that. But I know that bugs can't get sugar you don't leave out. And so if you want Billy to move away, quit feeding him so much sugar. I'm just trying to make sense of all this. And to look at that not being the only difference. Sociologists say there are five milestones that mark whether someone has successfully navigated the transition to adulthood. And, in fact, the US Census Bureau took four of them and studied them over a course of 40 years or so and noticed this. Living on their own is down from 90% to 70%. This is at what age? This is at age 30. This is 30-year-olds in America.

So 70% of 30-year-olds are on their own. 30% still live with mom and dad. 57% percent have been married. Used to be 89%. 47% live with a child: their own, an adopted child, a stepchild. And it used to be 76%. 33% own a home. Used to be 56%, but then the van life thing got really big, and so now what do you need a home for? You really can be in a van down by the river, only it's cool now. And so it's interesting to see these things change. But what's interesting to me is that it's not equal, the playing field is not equal. In these markers and in others, young men are doing far worse than young women in America, far worse than young women. What do you mean? Well, they say that around 50% of 30-year-old women in America have met all five criteria that marked the transition from adolescence to adulthood. 50% of 30-year-old women, but only a third of 30-year-old men. So they're launching later and later and later than their female counterparts are.

**What could possibly be the contributing factor? I think a huge factor is video games. By the age of 21, young men have, on average, spent 14,000 hours playing video games, most of that time isolated by themselves. No, your buddy in the ear does not count from across the street, helping you blow up people. You're still alone, and there are crumbs on your shirt. I don't know everything about what that does, but I'll tell you, 14,000 hours of anything marks you towards something and moves you. At Harvard, many studies have been done on the effect of that on the brain, especially during those days where there's still a malleability to your brain, which before 21 definitely is the case, as young men don't finish puberty on through their 20s. And so you have that. Then what about pornography? Very real factor that's at play here, with the average boy in America watching 50 pornographic clips a week. 50 clips per week, on average.**

So these are the input, these are the sugar, porn, and video games, among other things. And you know what it's doing? It's digitally rewiring young men in our day, and they are, we are not doing well. Lower rates of grades. Lower rates graduating from school. Lower rates getting into and out of college. Higher rates of depression. Young men are twice as likely as young women to die of opioid overdoses, are three times as likely to take their lives through suicide, and are seven times as likely to be the victims of gun violence as young women. So something is happening, and it's not only delaying manhood, and strength, and adulthood in the true sense, but it's also destroying an entire generation of strong men.

Now, this message isn't my attempt to come in and slap the young men around and slap the guys around and say you're the worst and all this. Why? Because that's not effective. Criticism doesn't help anybody. It's God's loving kindness that leads us to repentance because we were made in the image of God. And what moves the heart of God? Praise. What moves the heart of people? Praise. Let me tell you. I came to praise what God put inside of you. I came to call out what is in there. I came to tell you you have talent, you have strength, you have passion. There's beauty, there's integrity, there's poetry, there's a warrior spirit. There's a heart that the God, who roars like a lion but has compassion like a lamb, has put inside of you. And there is so much there. Just as the prophet Samuel came to call David a king long before he was a king, I believe there's a king inside of you. I believe there's a man inside of the boy. And we have a generation of grown-up boys walking around this world, and I want to call out what God has put inside of you. I came to say this, if I came to say anything. Rise up, o man of God. Rise up into your calling. Rise up into your strength. Rise up as leaders. Rise up to be all that God has called you to be. There's so much more that God has for you

than the enemy.

And that's Paul's heart. The church at Corinth, they needed to be told to grow up. They needed to be told to grow up. And yet Paul didn't do so in a harsh way. He didn't do so in a way that cut them down. He did so in a way that called them out. He called out the man in them if they would put away the childish things. What could this be? And I've boiled down what essentially he was saying to them, and I believe God is saying to you today, to us as the men of this house, to five things. And I hope you'll jot them down. What Paul was telling the Corinthians is he was telling them that time does not guarantee progress. Could you jot that down? Time doesn't guarantee progress. Why is he correcting these things? Because he wants them to understand if they're not addressed, they will not fix themselves. They won't just become men without some action. They won't become men without some event. You physically do not become a man without puberty. Something has to happen. Something, a process, something has to engage. Something at the cellular level has to occur for you to become what you have the capability of being. And that's not just true physically. It's also true emotionally. It's also true spiritually. It's true in the deepest sense of who you are.

Time is not going to cause you to make progress. There has to be an event. There has to be something that is activated, something that kicks in. Now, a little context would help. The church at Corinth was new. They were young. They were newly saved. But it was in a city of movers and shakers. It was in a city full of eloquence. It was in a city full of success. Well, it was city full of pagan ridiculousness as well. But it was also a city where there were many bright people, many articulate people, many intelligent people. And so you have all these people who got saved, and the expectation for many of them was that all those natural gift things, and all the charisma, and all of that would just equate to them doing well in their walks with God. Now, that's not true because you're born again, born on the inside, and when you're born again you're a spiritual baby. And as a spiritual baby, you need to grow, no matter what you have, what acumen you have, what skills you have that is there to be used.

**And so they needed to grow, and it's very evident in what Paul says to them, because if you look at verses 1 through 3, you find out what they were. They were smart. They could prophesy. They had understanding. They had faith. They had all these wonderful things that were just a part of them, the daring spirit of entrepreneurs. So you see what they were in the first few verses, but then you see what they weren't in verses 4 through 7. These are the things he... he's so smart. He's buttering them up. This is really great. This is really great. But you're nothing. So here's what really you need to, here's what you really need to do. And so we get a picture of what they were and also what they weren't. But you see the step that needed was the putting away of childish things and becoming a man so that they would continue to do the things they were already doing but they would become powerful and eternally significant because of the things where they were missing. But those things wouldn't fix themselves, and the same is true for you. Time spent doing something does not guarantee progress in it. Just because you're a male, that doesn't mean that you're a man. Just because you do adult things doesn't mean that you're an adult.**

I have a kid. You can have a kid and be a kid at the same time. And many people do that. Babies having babies having babies. And maybe for many of us in this day, and I think God's heart is so broken for many who never knew how to be a father because they never had a father, and they didn't get to see what the heart and the strength of a man looks like. And so they're abandoning their families, just like their father abandoned them. And so you can't just continue the cycle or nothing will change. Albert Einstein said insanity is doing the same thing again and again, thinking that you're going to get different results. So there has to be something that will occur.

One of my favorite leadership authors is Stephen Covey, a Montana resident till he died. And Stephen Covey once said that having experiences is overrated potentially, because you might be in

business 20 years and think I've got 20 years experience. But he said you actually might only have one year of experience you just repeated 20 times if you didn't keep learning, didn't keep innovating, didn't keep pioneering, didn't keep discovering new things and blazing new trails. You see, you could be 60 but actually be 20 and just have repeated that 20 years you lived 40 more times. So just because you arrived at a place where you are old biologically doesn't mean there's wisdom spiritually, it doesn't mean you're actually making progress in the race of faith. It's not about how long you've been running. It's actually how many miles you've actually covered. Isn't that the theme of Hebrews chapter 5, where there's a chastisement given in verse 12 and following? Where the author says, you should be teaching others, but you need teachers yourselves to repeat to you the ABCs of God's revelation to man. "You've become people who need a milk diet and cannot face solid food. For anyone who continues to live on only milk is obviously immature. He has simply not grown up. Solid food is for those who are adults, the man who has developed by experience his power to discriminate between what is good and what is bad for him".

What he's saying is you're not grown up because you've been a Christian 30 years if you keep touching the stove and burning yourself, and touching the stove and burning yourself, and touching the stove and burning yourself. It doesn't matter what you know. It matters what you're doing, how you're applying that in your day life. Let me tell you something. God is not impressed by how much Bible you know. He's not impressed by how much spiritual you accumulate. He's impressed solid food kicks in, we actually walk it out. It's the bottles. It's I know this. I know this. Are you doing it? Well no. But I know this. Look at my Bible verse. Here's how many things I know. Is it working its way into your daily life? If it doesn't, it's not significant. God doesn't just care about what you know but who you are. Second takeaway truth: success without love is failure. Success in any endeavor without love is failure. The Corinthians, man, the faith, and the leadership, and the wisdom. My god, all these phenomenal people with all this coming into the church. But Paul says, yes, but it's nothing because you're missing the most important thing, love. The heart of the matter is this love for each other. You're all angling, and you're wanting attention, and you're wanting this, and there's factions, and there's fighting. There's not that love.

How can you test the love? You look at the unity. Unity reveals love. And what he was saying is there's not a unity. It's all me first. It's all me first, which is, it's a baby. I have a baby. Lennox doesn't care what anyone else is doing. He's just curious about him. He's so selfish. He just wants food, and he needs to be held. He wants a toy. He gets tired of the toy. His birthday, I bought him a little food truck, a Fisher-Price food truck. It has a window with a little bell. You can ring the bell and order food. There's a menu. You could prepare the food. He doesn't care about any of it. He just throws it all around. He doesn't care about us. He doesn't care about me. He doesn't care about my needs. He doesn't care about if I've had a good day. Because he's selfish because he's a baby. And it's the height of spiritual immaturity to only care about yourself. Me and my needs and what I'm going to buy. That's selfish. And you can bring that into walking with Jesus. You can bring that into the church. You can bring that into a marriage. So what he says is you need to love.

**Success: whatever you're doing in business, whatever you're doing here, whatever you're doing here, if there's not that love, it's a failure. God doesn't just see what you do. He sees who you are. He cares more about the fruit of the Spirit than the gifts of the Spirit. This, I think, is something that's so important. They're just really wrestling me to the ground with it. Because a gift, you can't take credit for. You can hone a gift. You can learn to weaponize a gift better, and you should. But a gift came from God, so you're supposed to use the gift, we all are. And I don't believe we get credit, necessarily, just for using a gift. But I believe when we choose to develop the fruit of the Spirit, that God sees and that produces a return on investment. So what's the fruit of the Spirit? Well, the fruit of Spirit is love. What does that look like? Joy, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, all these things against such there is no law.**

So God wants us to use the gifts of the Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit. If we're using our gifts that he gave us in a me first way and pushing others out of the way to do it, that's not love. And so it's success in man's sight. It's a failure in God's sight. Heaven's kingdom is upside-down. God said greatness isn't me first. It's bending the knee. It's others first. It's caring and lifting up other people. So Paul wanted them to know their idea of masculinity, and greatness, and strength, and it was actually, in God's sight, a poopy diaper and crying for a bottle, and throwing the food truck toys in the ground, hurting his dad's feelings. So what do we have to understand? We have to understand the mechanism by which God put in place to get us to that unity. It's caring about the body. It's caring about others more than ourselves. Is not all of God's law hanging on one thing? It's love? First for God, then for other people? And isn't that the height of maturity? Love expressed through unity. Or as Ephesians 4, I mean, look at it with me.

This is Paul speaking, same heart to a different church. He said, "The goal should be that we would all come to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man". Isn't that what you want? Man to be a perfect man? That should be your goal. You can amen that. Yes, I want that. You don't want to be the worst man ever. We want to be a perfect man. That's what God has for us in his sight "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men and the cunning of craftiness of deceitful plotting". So how are we going to get there? "Speaking the truth in love, that we may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in", say the last word out loud with me. Love.

So it's recognizing we all have a part to play. It's caring more for the connective tissue next to you, the organ next to you, the body part next to you, than you care for your own needs. It's serving the body, lifting up the head, Jesus Christ, and using our gifts with the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, and succeeding in the ways that God counts greatness, not just how it's counted here on earth, which will be reduced to dust and ash eventually anyway. Because what do we praise? It's conquering, it's crushing, it's winning, it's accomplishment. But all of those things are going to be reduced to rubble under the sands of time. But when we lose ourself in love, and serving, and building up, and walking in God's plan for us, we're a part of and attached to something that goes on forever. Come on, let's live for God's applause. Let's live for God's praise. So unity expressed with love. And know this. You can't get to maturity without community. You can't get to maturity without community. That's why it's a body. That's why there's the each other. I got to thinking this week, how could I possibly heavily load this message with male illustrations? So my mind immediately went to knives. I knew if I told a story about a knife every guy would wake up.

**So look at what Proverbs 27 says about metal, against metal. Look at this. Iron sharpening iron, "so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend". God intends for you to get sharp. Let me tell you something. Immaturity is dull. Being a child is dull. How could you possibly put away childish things, not talking like a child, understanding like a child, speaking like a child, if all you're hanging out with is people who speak and talk and understand like children? You can't be a man if all you do is surround yourself with boys. And so you need to be around men of God. And that's why Psalm 1 talks about how are you going to get that step. I'll use it all I want. I don't care if it's a woman's verse. Flourishing, this idea of flourishing in Psalm 1 being a tree and leaves not withering but being strong. All of us want that. All of us seek after that. Well, how are you going to get there? It's not standing in the path of sinners. It's not sitting in the seat of the scornful. And it's not walking in the way of the wicked.**

That's why we put such an emphasis not only on just our weekend gatherings but small groups, small Fresh Life groups, where people can get together and married people, get in a married group.

If you're single, get in a single group. If you're a student, get in a student group. Whatever the case, get into a group. I can't find the perfect group. Get in any one. It will suffice for right now. Just get where people are going to be praying for you, encouraging you, kayaking with you, talking about the Bible study with you, calling you out on being silly, calling you out on being rude. We all need that in our lives. Let me tell you something. You can't get to maturity without community. And if you don't lean into that, you're only hurting yourself. Why? Because the reward for immaturity is poverty. Oh, I don't know about that, pastor. I'm immature by your definition but I'm doing pretty good. Let me tell you something. There's a whole lot more when it comes to wealth than just finances.

There's a whole lot of people with money in the bank but no peace in their soul. And you can be rich by a lot of standards but still be impoverished where it counts. And that's why Galatians 4:1 talks about this, and this has everything to do with being a kid and being a man. It says, as long as an heir is a child, he might as well be a slave. As long as an heir is still a minor, he might as well be a slave. It doesn't matter even if he's master of all if he's not of age to appropriate it. I wish I had time to talk to you about what he's saying there. Back in the day, all the laws on what you could own, you couldn't own until you became a man. So it doesn't matter what's yours in Christ. It doesn't matter the blessing that God has for. It doesn't matter because there's so much more for you. So long as you stay a child, you might as well be a slave, because even though you're a master of all, your childish ways are keeping you back from the wealth of spiritual riches that God intends to course through your accounts. He wants you to be walking in a way of prosperity, and strength, and integrity, and character, and all of these things that God has for you. And he sees in your future, he sees generations of impact, and blessing, and righteousness, and power. But you might as well be a slave so long as you stay a child.

So how are we going to get there? How are we, as the men and the women of this house, going to rise up and be the adults that God has called us to be and to do the adulting that God has called us to do? I was playing with this at the beginning. I kind of do like that adult has become a verb a little bit. I got to adult today a little. I can't play. I got to adult today. I do like that, even though Merriam-Webster, I checked, has not embraced it yet. It's getting pretty mainstream. They're going to pull that sucker in there eventually. But because the truth is it's not just what you are. It's also what you choose to do. You can choose to do it. And when we think of it, this is what we are, when we don't feel like it, we don't do it. But when you remember it's a verb and I can choose to do what's right even when I don't feel it's right, there's a power in there. So how are we going to start adulting like a verb? I think it's through knowing that love is not just something. It's also someone.

And that explains why Paul personifies love halfway through the passage. Have you noticed as you read it? He gets all eloquent? Love is, and it almost sounds like, and maybe that's why it's so regal sounding and we like it at weddings, because it shifts into this real Shakespearean quality. Oh wow, he's speaking about love as though it were a person. He's giving a non-human human attributes. But that's intentional, and it's not just poetic, because love is someone and not just something. You see, there's a real intentional reason behind why Paul, after telling them what they're doing is great but it's missing the most important thing, he does not just then turn and say, as his application, well then be more loving. Well then don't boast. Don't puff yourself up. Well then don't da da da. Because here the problem was this is a group of people who prided themselves on what they could do. They can move mountains through their faith. They can understand mysteries.

**So had he given them something else to do, they would've said, great, add it to the list. It would have appealed to their ego. We'll just go be more loving then. So instead, he chose to personify love and speak about the perfection of love. Why? Because what they needed to become a man was to be in awe of the Son of Man. For God, 1 John 4:8, is love. The reason he speaks about love as though it were a person is because love became a person. And that person walked among us. And that person died on the cross for us and as us, then rose from the dead to pave a way for us, and now stands at the right hand of the Father, interceding on**

our behalf, praying that we would adult, praying that we would be strong. And the key to love, the secret to love in your life is letting that love in your heart. If you let that love in your heart, it will lead to, it will spill over to love in your life. So your goal this week isn't love more, love better. It's love His love in, and that love will come out. And until love is someone you know, it will never be something you do.