

Grow Forward

Spiritual Maturity

*"From Stagnation to Strength:
Growing into Full Maturity in Christ"*

Hebrews 5:12-14 & 6:1-3 NLT

FTMA

Sept. 2026

Bible Study Series

Pastors E & J Ruffin

Week 1

Realign with God's

Truth

9/15/2026

*"From Stagnation to Strength:
Growing into Full Maturity in Christ"*

Spiritual Maturity – Realigning with God's Truth

Focus Verse:

Hebrews 5:12-14 & 6:1-3

Question to the group:

What happens to our spiritual life when we stop growing?

Answer:

*When we stop growing spiritually, our faith becomes **stagnant**, leading to **spiritual dullness**, a **loss of fruitfulness**, and a **gradual drifting away** from God.*

Grow Up!

- ✓ Realign with God's truth.
- ✓ Press on to Maturity.

Spiritual Maturity

Realigning with God's Truth

Spiritual Maturity:

means recognizing that feelings and cultural trends are **unreliable**. You intentionally submit your thoughts and worldview to the objective, timeless **truth of Scripture**.

Spiritual Maturity
Realigning with God's Truth

Discerning the Noise:

- The mature mind
 - The shift

Spiritual Maturity
Realigning with God's Truth

Living in Active Alignment:

- Mindset Alignment
- Heart Alignment
- Behavioral Alignment

Spiritual Maturity
Realigning with God's Truth

A Continuous Course Correction:

- Not a one-time event
- The mature response

Hebrews 5:12

¹² You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word.^[a] You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food.

Focus Verse Breakdown

Hebrews 5:13

¹³ For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right.

Focus Verse Breakdown

Hebrews 5:14

¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are **mature**, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Focus Verse Breakdown

Hebrews 6:1

6 So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds^[b] and placing our faith in God.

Focus Verse Breakdown

Hebrews 6:2

² You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

The Foundational List – (v.2)

- Repentance from dead works – Turning away from empty religious rituals or sinful actions that lack true spiritual life.
- Faith toward God – Trusting God completely for salvation.
- Instruction about baptisms – Washings or purification rites, including Christian baptism.
- Laying on of hands – A symbolic act used for blessing, healing, or appointing leaders.
- Resurrection of the dead – The future raising of believers and unbelievers to life.
- Eternal judgment – The final judgment by God.

Focus Verse Breakdown

Hebrews 6:3

³ And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.

Spiritual Pettiness

- It is carnal, self-centered behavior dressed up in church clothes. Rather than producing humility, patience, and love, spiritual pettiness takes secondary issues, personal preferences, or bruised egos and elevates them to the level of spiritual warfare or moral superiority.

Spiritual Pettiness Core Points:

Majoring on the Minors (Straining at Gnats):

- Obsessing over non-essential details-such as service formats, precise wording of a prayer, seat preferences, clothing choices, or minor theological differences-while neglecting primary virtues like mercy, justice, and kindness (Matthew 23:23-24).

Sanctified Gossip:

- Disguising slander or relational frustration as “spiritual concern” or “prayer requests” (e.g., “We just really need to pray for brother X; he seems to be struggling so much with pride lately”).

Spiritual Pettiness Core Points:

Spiritualized Passive-Aggression:

- Dropping Bible verses, posting cryptic scriptures on social media, or quoting religious sayings specifically targeted at people who have offended you, rather than practicing direct, humble peacemaking (Matthew 18:15).

Turf Guarding and Gatekeeping:

- Feeling threatened when newer or younger individuals step into roles of influence, leading to quiet sabotage, withholding encouragement, or claiming “they don’t understand how things are done here” to protect personal status.

Spiritual Pettiness Core Points:

Keeping a Sacred Scorecard:

- Silently cataloging past slights, missed acknowledgments, or perceived disrespect under the guise of “maintaining standards” or “exercising discernment”-in direct violation of 1 Corinthians 13:5 (“love keeps no record of wrongs”).

Hyper-Sensibility Over Rights and Respect:

- Demanding the deference, title, or honor one feels entitled to because of years of service or spiritual knowledge, reacting with sullen withdrawal or sharp critique when overlooked.

Maturity and Spiritual Discernment When Faced with Distractions

Casting Down imaginations and thoughts

2 Corinthians 10:5

Spiritual Warfare of the Mind

Pettiness vs. True Conviction

Pettiness vs. True Conviction

True Spiritual Conviction

Trait

- **Primary Motivation**
 - Love for God, defense of the gospel, restoration of others
- **Focus**
 - Weighty, essential matters (faith, character, justice)
- **Posture**
 - Direct, gentle, grieving over sin, slow to anger
- **Fruit**
 - Unity, endurance, clarity, peace

Spiritual Pettiness

Trait

- **Primary Motivation**
 - Protecting personal pride, control, or wounded feelings
- **Focus**
 - Peripheral issues, formatting, recognition, procedural slights
- **Posture**
 - Passive-aggressive, irritable, vindictive, defensive
- **Fruit**
 - Division, factionalism, coldness, relational tension

Maturity and Spiritual Discernment When Faced with Distractions

Casting Down imaginations and thoughts

2 Corinthians 10:5

Spiritual Warfare of the Mind:

**Poor advice or heresy rarely seem
bad or evil**

- Listening to others...talk that is targeted against another person
- Do you listen, do you respond, how do you respond

**You are feeling unappreciated,
unnoticed, replaced by other newer
members**

- You are busy
- We pray for help
- When they begin using others

Maturity and Spiritual Discernment When Faced with Distractions

Casting Down imaginations and thoughts

2 Corinthians 10:5

Spiritual Warfare of the Mind:

The Private Drift

- When things aren't going your way
- It feels easier to stay away

Know when to speak and when to stay silent

Maturity and Spiritual Discernment When Faced with Distractions

Casting Down imaginations and thoughts

2 Corinthians 10:5

Spiritual Warfare of the Mind:

Holding On when it's time to let go

- Disagreement with another member
- Have you really let go after reconciliation meeting

The Misinterpretation of Words

- Discernment will test the message against scripture. Best to have the Word written in your heart.

Pettiness vs. True Conviction

In short, spiritual pettiness is using the things of God to serve the self. The antidote is mature agape love, which deliberately chooses to let minor offenses go, elevates others above oneself, and measures spiritual success by personal character rather than control.

Practical Application

- **Perseverance and growth:** Spiritual maturity comes through endurance, obedience, and reliance on God's grace (James 1:4; 2 Peter 1:5-8)
- **Love as the foundation:** Love binds all virtues together, leading to unity and completeness (Colossians 3:14)
- **Grace over self-effort:** True perfection is not self-earned; it is God's work in us, perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- **Ongoing process:** The Christian life is a journey — we “press on” toward the goal, trusting God's power to complete what we start