



SPIRITUAL MATURATION.

Spiritual Growth Growing In Christ

Congress of Christian Education

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Lesson Aims:

1. How to recognize the Spirit presence in our Lives.
2. How the Spirit shapes the lives of believers through various Life experiences

Spiritual maturity is something that should be a priority for every Christian. It's important in our lives for how we serve God, interact with other people, and take care of our families.

As we get into our topic, I invite you to take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to open your understanding of His word and will. It is the Holy Spirit that reveals the word of God to us.

1. You are motivated to seek God without prompting

Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me. Let them lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live. There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy. I will praise you with my harp, O God, my God!

Psalm 43:3-4

Spiritually mature people believe that God is the source of all their joy, and they turn to God without prompting from other people. How much do you need others to push you to pray daily, pray often, or pray more honestly about what you are feeling and thinking? While help from spiritual friends is always something we need, we will stay immature if our **Relationship** with God relies on other people's convictions more than our own.

2. You should be are more concerned about the inside than the outside.

So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. "Everything they do is done for people to see..." **Matthew 23:3-5**

The scripture above talks about those who do not practice what they preach; they take the easy road and compromise regularly instead of doing the hard spiritual work of living out their faith. As a result, their entire effort becomes focused on looking good on the outside and desiring people's attention, instead of desiring to please God.

Spiritually mature people know that if they make the effort to care for their insides (their heart, their emotions, their guilt, their faith) then their outward actions will be right too (**Matthew 23:25-26**).

Spiritual growth is a journey with many twists and turns. But there are clear stages we can recognize on our path to spiritual wholeness.

Spiritual growth can be achieved in many ways. There is no prescribed path that leads to enlightenment. In addition, the journey can sometimes feel like two steps forward followed by three steps backward. The stage you are at is not necessarily that important. However, it is nice to check where you are on your journey to **see how far you have come and what might be round the next corner.**

3. Search for the Truth

Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"
The blind man said, "Teacher, I want to see again." **Mark 10:51**

Do you *want* to see the truth? In many areas of our lives it seems easier to be in denial; have you ever wanted to ignore how you really feel about your job, your relationships, your health, or your marriage?

We can be passionate about a lot of things but we are not always passionate about wanting to see the truth. Why? Because sometimes it feels stressful to admit the truth, or we feel life is so busy we don't have time to face difficult truths. But biblically, truth is freeing (**John 8:31-32**) and we will actually be stronger internally and spiritually when we don't have to hide what we really think and feel (**Psalms 32:1-6**).

What truths in your life is God trying to help you face?

4. Then admit truth to others

So own up to your sins to one another and pray for one another. In the end, you may be healed. Your prayers are powerful when they are rooted in a righteous life. **James 5:16**

After admitting truth to God, spiritually mature people own up to their sins with others. They are not consumed by how they look and how people think of them, nor are they looking for relief from their guilt. Rather, they have the humility to admit their mistakes and understand that they need other people's help and prayers in order to change.

When was the last time you initiated admitting a sin to a spiritual friend and asking for their help to change?

5. They train themselves daily

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. **Hebrews 5:14**

Spiritual maturity takes constant training. Our daily decisions may not seem like a big deal, but they are – every time we decide to hide our real thoughts because we are afraid of the consequences we become a little more immature.

Likewise, every time we make a small decision to be honest – even when it hurts – we grow a little more mature. We may not see the effects of our decisions until much later, but the Bible promises that those who constantly work at being righteous and honest will reap the benefits of spiritual maturity. Make a practical decision that will help train you daily to be honest, like memorizing a scripture about honesty or deciding to have at least one vulnerable conversation about your heart each day with your spouse, roommates or spiritual friends.

What Is Spiritual Maturity According to the Bible?

Many people claim to be Christians, but there is a difference between being a fan of Jesus and a follower of Jesus.

Our spiritual maturity can define what side of the fence we are on. To be a follower of Jesus is to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him. “Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me’” (**Mark 8:34**).

Let’s take a moment to reflect on the past. Do you remember where the Lord met you? More than likely, he met you in your mess. God is so good that he pushes beyond the barriers of the world’s rejection to meet his lost sheep.

Here is one thing we must understand. Though God meets us in our mess and accepts us as we are, he does not want us to stay that way.

*Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God (**Hebrews 6:1**).*

God's plan is for us to move beyond the elementary teachings and to grow more into the image of Jesus Christ. This is what spiritual maturity is — for all our characteristics to be more like Jesus in every way.

Why Is Spiritual Maturity Important?

The Bible describes new believers as feeding on "milk." We need to come to a point where we are no longer "spiritual babies" but mature into "spiritual adults" (**1 Corinthians 3:2**).

We need to grow into eating "solid food" and not only feed ourselves but feed others as well. The most important reason to mature would be for our lives to reflect the nature of Jesus Christ.

There are also many other reasons for maturing such as:

- Being able to lead our families like Jesus
- Disciple other believers
- Being equipped for every good work

Let's look at what the Bible says.

*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (**Ephesians 5:21-25**).*

Only a person who is constantly matured by God can effectively lead and serve the family in this way.

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (**Matthew 28:16-20**).*

So that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:17).

To be equipped for every good work and make disciples, we need to have knowledge of God's Word, how to apply it and teach it. This is something that comes as a result of us growing in the Lord.

*Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are **born again**" (John 3:3).*

Spiritual maturity is an expected result when we are born again. It is important because we are not called to remain the same person we once were.

If we compare this scripture along with **Mark 8:34** from earlier, we will see that in order for us to see the kingdom of God, we will need to do two things: Be born again and carry our cross and follow Jesus.

What this combination does is lead us into a new Christ-centered life. When you are born again, the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling in you and changes you to be more like Jesus.

It is a process known as **Regeneration**. The Holy Spirit is removing the residue of the world and sin and making you new in Christ.

Carrying our cross to follow Jesus is putting away the old self with its sinful desires and being obedient to him. Spiritual maturity puts importance on living holy.

It is important to maintain this lifestyle because Jesus says without being born again, we will not see the kingdom of God. This is the beginning of spiritual maturity.

Our maturity is a reflection of our Relationship with God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).

If we are not maturing in our relationship with God, we cannot bear fruit of the Spirit. Our maturity also helps us grow in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

How to Achieve Spiritual Maturity

I want to leave you with steps you can take to mature spiritually. These very steps will guarantee spiritual growth when applied.

First, we must build a life of prayer and worship. Intimacy is what God is looking for and this is how the Holy Spirit will fill you.

“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always”

(1 Chronicles 16:11).

We also must be reading our Bibles and applying it to our everyday lives.

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it — not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do (**James 1:22-25**).*

Last, we need to also congregate with a spirit-filled church family. *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching (**Hebrews 10:24-25**).*

Growing spiritually requires growing in prayer, worship, and knowledge of the Bible. Most importantly, to mature spiritually means to grow in faith and repentance.

I want to make it a point that spiritual maturity is a process.

The **grace** of the Lord Jesus allows us to grow in our faith and the **more we do, the more we will look like Jesus.**

Marks of Spiritual Maturity

1. A Mature Christian Is Marked by Abounding Love
2. A Mature Christian Is Marked by Growing Knowledge
3. A Mature Christian Is Marked by Spiritual Discernment

1. A Mature Christian is Marked by Abounding Love.

Read: Philippians 1:9 - Matthew 22: 37-40 – John 13:35

Question: In what ways has God called you to demonstrate Love towards someone when you didn't feel like Loving him or her?

2. A Mature Christian is Marked by Growing Knowledge.

Read: Philippians 1:9 & 10 – Psalm 119:105 – I Cor. 2:15

Question: What type of Knowledge is Paul praying for this Church to grow in?

3. A Mature Christian is Marked by Spiritual Discernment.

A person who possesses love but lacks discernment may reveal a great deal of eagerness and enthusiasm. The word "discern" can be translated "approve" or "examine".

Question: What type of Knowledge is Paul praying for this Church to grow in?