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How Do We Grow To Maturity In Christ?

David has been a Christian and faithful church attender for 15 years, yet he admits his personal walk with God is shallow and often deeply frustrating. He cannot overcome some negative attitudes toward others and himself. Guilt and shame often dominate his emotions. He is sincere, tries hard, but often feels that God seems distant, often angry and disappointed in him. Why can't He move on in his Christian life?

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Heb 6:1-2

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12

The Bible Indicates That There May Be Five Levels of Spiritual Maturity.

Maturity Levels	Scripture Description	Possible Motivations	Possible Behaviors	Needed Cautions
1 Peter 2:2 Newborn Babes	Like <i>Newborn Babes</i> long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. [i.e.; Abide in Word].	Hungry. Want to know. Filled with questions mixed with joy, some freedom from past lifestyle effects.	Unsure of their faith, easily distracted or deceived. May buy new Bible, start to read it. Seek out and join a Bible study group or church.	Overly dependent on others to understand, easy victim of cult, make messes others must clean up. Need encouragement May be emotionally needy, unstable.
1 John 2:12 Little Children	I am writing to you <i>Little Children</i> because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. [Abide in Word].	Focuses on what are my benefits Christ gives to me, God's promises. Wants to share Christ with family and friends.	May seek variety of experiences that may appear to enhance their faith and spirituality. On fire, enthusiastic.	Its about me, what I receive, need, or experience. Why is God not coming thru for me?
1 John 2:13 Children	I have written to you <i>Children</i> because you know the Father. [i.e.; Abide in Word].	Desires new relationships. Begin to understand God's purposes for them.	Wants to be a part of groups and activities with Christian friends.	May experience loneliness as they lose old non-Christian friends.
1 John 2:13,14 Young Men	I have written to you <i>Young Men</i> because you are <i>strong</i> and the <i>word of God abides IN you</i> , and you have <i>overcome the evil one</i> .	Desires what they can build and accomplish for God's glory. Embrace the Lordship of Christ and His Kingdom principles for life.	Invests in church planting, church growth, missions or build a business. Stable walk in the Spirit and strong faith based spiritual authority	Build empire for their own success and glory. Proudful. Self sufficient. May be judgmental of others spirituality or Bible knowledge.
1 John 2:13,14 Fathers	I have written to you <i>Fathers</i> because you know Him who has been from the beginning. (Stated two times).	Desires others to know and enjoy the deep intimacy they have with God as Father	What they can give, sacrifice to meet needs of their [spiritual] children, grow them to maturity in Christ.	Their spiritual focus turns entirely inward vs giving of self or cultivating relationship with others.

"The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head." Mark 4:26-28

Paul "planted [i.e.; God's Word], Apollos watered [i.e.; with God's Word], but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." 1 Cor 3:6-7

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).
(Scriptures quoted or adapted from NASB).

“Graham Scroggie wrote: "Spiritual renewal is a gradual process. All growth is progressive, and the finer the organism, the longer the process. It is from measure to measure: thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. It is from stage to stage: 'first the blade, then the ear, and after that, the full corn in the ear.' And it is from day to day.

“James McConkey writes ***“Faith is dependency upon God. And this God-dependency only begins when self-dependence ends. Self-dependency ends when life challenges bring us to that place of self-helplessness.*** Graham Scroggie continues: There are great days, days of decisive battles, days of crisis or failure in spiritual history, days of triumph in Christian service, days of the right hand of God upon us. But there are also idle days, stressful days, disappointing days, days apparently useless, when even prayer and holy service seem a burden. How varied these are! Are we, in any sense, renewed in these days? Yes, for any experience which makes us more aware of our need of God must contribute to our spiritual progress.”

“We might consider some familiar names of believers whom God obviously brought to maturity and used for His glory-such as Pierson, Chapman, Tauler, Moody, Goforth, Mueller, Taylor, Watt, Trumbull, Meyer, Murray, Havergal, Guyon, Mabie, Gordon, Hyde, Mantle, McCheyne, McConkey, Deck, Paxson, Stoney, Saphir, Carmichael, and Hopkins. ***The average for these was fifteen years after they entered their life work before they began to know the Lord Jesus as their Life, and ceased trying to work for Him and began allowing Him to be their All in all and do His work through them.*** This is not to discourage us in any way, but to help us to settle down with our sights on eternity, by faith apprehending” and pressing toward maturity.

“Concerning this subject George Goodman writes: "Some have been betrayed into professing perfection or full deliverance because at the time they speak they are happy and confident in the Lord. They forget that it is not a present experience that ensures fruit unto maturity, but a patient continuance in well doing. Certainly this is not to discount a Spirit-fostered experience, blessing, or even a crisis; but it is to be remembered that these simply contribute to the overall, and all-important process. It takes time to get to know oneself; it takes time and eternity to get to know the Infinite Lord Jesus Christ.” (Above quoted/adapted from The Green Letters by Miles J. Stanford, pages 11-17.)

Worship and Prayer: Motivates Us Grow in Christ.

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...” Eph 1:18

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matt 6:33)



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Read; Study God's Word: Holy Spirit's Tool to Renew Our Mind.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16)

“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” (2 Peter 1:4)

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Faithful Obedience: Put Into Practice What You Already Know.

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2)

“For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, ***who because of practice*** have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:11-14)

Remove Distractions: Cultivate a Pure Heart That Is Sensitive to the Holy Spirit

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”
“Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” (1 Tim 1:5 and 2 Tim 2:22).

Ministry Update

David is learning to walk by faith in dependence upon God, not his own efforts. Freed from the performance false guilt he is able to focus on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Growing maturity is the result.

Praise God! We have all of the necessary funds for the El Salvador Pastor Training mission trips. Richard leaves August 17-25. Once again god has proven his faithfulness through everyone who invests in our ministry to the walking wounded. **Thank you so very much for your prayers and financial support of our ministry. God Bless You!!!**

Richard + Conla Polzella