



Growing IN CHRIST

Enfolded in love, let us grow up in every way and in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ, our Messiah... (Ephesians 4:15)

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MATURITY MATTERS *Grounded and Growing in Truth*

Read Ephesians 4:11-16 *...From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

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

Spiritual growth is not measured only by what we do, but by who we are becoming in Christ. Who we are is expressed in what we do. Jesus made it clear that staying in Him produces fruit (John 15:5). The following questions help us to examine whether our lives are aligned with His heart and maybe areas in which we have not grown as we have wanted.

1. **Our intimacy with God** (UpReach)

Psalms 42:1-2 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

John 14:21...Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.

Revelation 2:4-5 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.

- Is my relationship with God alive and personal, or routine and dry/shallow?
- Do I still have my first love for Jesus, and a desire for His presence... daily?
- Do I spend time with Him because I *want to*, or because I *should*?
- Am I sensitive to the voice *and* leading of the Holy Spirit?

2. **Our life within the Body** (InReach)

Ephesians 4:15-16 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Key thought | We don't grow in isolation, we grow in relationship with Christ *and* other believers. It is here where our weaknesses are exposed (Proverbs 27:6, 17), our spiritual gifts are developed (1 Corinthians 12:1, 12-31), and our faith is strengthened (Romans 1:11-12). Left alone, it's easy to drift, but in the Body, we are accountable.

A growing believer doesn't just receive, they reproduce.

- Am I connected to the body of Christ, or just attending church?
- Am I being mentored or disciplined by someone more mature?

- Am I actively mentoring or investing time in others?

3. Our heart for the lost (OutReach)

God's heart is not only for those IN the Kingdom but for those outside the Kingdom as well.

Matthew 9:36 *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Luke 19:10)*

Matthew 9:37-38 *Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

Matthew 28:19 *Go and make disciples of all nations...*

- Do I regularly pray beyond my own life and for the church and our city?
- Do I have a vision that mirrors Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8... from local to global?



A FRAMEWORK FOR MATURITY

Spiritual maturity is the continuing development of a believer whose life is marked by consistent obedience, discernment, and Spirit-led living, regardless of circumstances (Proverbs 4:18).

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

- **Solid food** | This is weighty, truth-filled teaching that moves beyond the basics and presses the believer *into* spiritual maturity. It is not just more information, it demands transformation.
- **Mature** | Complete, whole, they are the same with people and by themselves. They are not sinless, but spiritually developed, responsible believers. Scripture never presents experiences as the power behind growth (2 Corinthians 5:7). Experiences are sight (what you feel, see, sense), maturity is built on faithful obedience even when you don't see it!
- **Constant use** | Spiritual maturity doesn't come from encounters with God alone. Those moments initiate growth, but it is continual practice and consistent walking with God that develops and sustains it.
- **Trained** | (*Gymnazō*) We develop spiritual strength by exercising our spiritual "muscles" through discipline, resistance to the flesh, the world's pattern, and demonic temptations (Galatians 5:17). Solitude is one of the great disciplines, stepping away from the personal, social, demonic noise to hear God clearly.
- **Distinguish** | Discernment, critical in spiritual warfare, is knowing what is from God and what is not. Satan comes as good and as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) to distract and wear out the warriors with activity. Victorious warfare begins with recognizing that not everything spiritual is from God. 1 John 4:1 *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God...*
- **Good from evil** | A mature believer possesses moral and spiritual clarity in a deceptive age. It is the idea of separating, judging, and exposing whether it is true or false. A few examples in our daily walk include truth vs. deception, God's voice vs. counterfeit voices, being Spirit-led vs. flesh-driven.

Next week: Part 2 - The New Birth | Bring a friend!