



COVENANT CHURCH

Adulthood: Learning How to Grow Up

Part 2 - Believing

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Main Idea – A mature Christian is continually trying to understand God’s perspective. Understanding God’s perspective will enable you to believe the correct things about yourself, about others, and about God Himself.

Christian maturity

- Christian adulthood involves thinking, believing, speaking, and acting in a mature, Biblically-inspired way.
- You want to grow to be the person God intended you to become.
- **1 Corinthians 13:11 - When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. (NIV)**
- Your actions are evidence of your faith, and will come from your thoughts.
- The first step to adjusting a lifestyle is to first adjust your “thought-style.”
- Your thoughts as an adult should have grown far beyond what they were when you were a child. The ideas in your life should be growing, developing, and maturing. Many of your childhood thoughts should be left behind as you grow.

The new adulthood reality

- As you mature, your ideas are constantly in a state of forming and reforming. What you believe about things determines your reality at a given point in time.
- In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, recorded in **Matthew 5-7**, Jesus taught the crowd some of the ways it should reform its thinking to become more mature and accurate according to God’s thinking. Here are a few examples:
 - **Matthew 5:21-22a** – “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” (NKJV)
 - **Matthew 5:27-28** – “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (NKJV)
 - **Matthew 5:31-32** – “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife,

let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”
(NKJV)

- God’s thoughts will not always be comfortable for you. You will not always be happy with the way God thinks. Your “happiness” will not always be consistent with what is good or right.
- However, remarkably, accepting God’s thoughts (whether you are happy with them or not) will make you more mature and healthy.
- When your life on earth is finished, you and Jesus will take a look at how you did at accepting His way of thinking while you were here.
 - **Romans 14:12 – So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.”**
(NIV)
 - **Romans 14:12 – So tend to your knitting. You’ve got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God. (Message)**
- Do not worry about this meeting with Jesus. Your salvation does not depend on the account you will give of yourself. If you have accepted Jesus as your savior, you are saved and will have eternal life in Heaven regardless of how you acted here on earth. Knowing you will have this meeting with Jesus is simply an incentive to live the best life you can while you are here.

What a mature believer believes about himself or herself

- If you are a mature believer you will take responsibility for your own spiritual health.

What a mature believer believes about others

- A mature believer realizes everyone has a unique story, and does not look only on surface appearances to draw conclusions.
- God has never used outward appearances to identify inward potential. Rather, God looks at the intentions and motivations of one’s heart. **1 Samuel 16: 1-13** describes how God chose David to be King of Israel. God told Samuel the choice would not be made based on visible appearances. **1 Samuel 16:7 – But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”** (NIV)
- Knowing that God looks at the heart, mature Christians take time to learn about those with whom they come in contact.

What a mature believer believes about God

- A mature Christian believes God has given each person gifts that can be used for the good of everyone. Jesus sacrificed Himself for everyone.
- **2 Peter 1:3 – His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (NIV)**
- God has chosen to give gifts to every person He created. Each person has the opportunity to use those gifts for the greater good of the creation as a whole.
- Take what God has given you – what He has made available to you – to accomplish all He has intended to accomplish through you. This is a destiny God has established for you. You did not earn this destiny; God gave it to you as a gift.
- **Exodus 3-4** describes the events of how God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery. Based on his own self-evaluation, Moses felt ill equipped to answer God's call. However, God was patient to explain how He would supply the power, and that He would use whatever simple resources Moses had at his disposal to make everything happen. **Exodus 4:1-5 – Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’” So the Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A rod.” And He said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail” (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” (NKJV)**

In summary, what mature Christians believe

- Mature Christians believe God is love, and that He gave His life for all of us – regardless of where we've been or what we've experienced.
- Each of us is uniquely equipped to help the common good of all of us.
- In order to be prepared to serve the common good:
 - Adjust your thought-style according to the teaching of this sermon message.
 - Take responsibility for your actions in life.
 - Pray that your mind will be renewed so you will see things as God sees them.
 - Celebrate the uniqueness of everyone's storyline in life.
 - Ask God to use you to be an instrument to help others.
 - Ask God to help you identify the tools He has given you to accomplish your purpose.
- Recognizing Jesus as the Lord of your life is necessary to make your purpose on earth

happen. Fully surrender to Jesus: give up your will, your ideas, and your agendas. Replace them with Jesus' purposes for your life.

Reflective Questions for Adulting – Part 2

1. In **Matthew 5-7** Jesus introduced many simple ideas that were intended to help people understand God and how He wants us to live with each other. Quickly scan those chapters and identify one or two ideas you think may have been new ideas to those who were listening to him on that occasion.
2. Why, do you suppose, God chose David to be King of Israel even though he was (apparently) not an impressive looking young man at that time? (see **1 Samuel 16**)
3. God also chose Moses for great things despite his own self-perceived shortcomings at the time (see **Exodus 4**). What is the problem with focusing on your own self-perceived shortcomings? Why is that a sign of a lack of faith? Why are your shortcomings not relevant to what God intends to do through you?
4. Do you have a story about a time God did a miraculous thing in your life using a common object or person?