

Icebreaker: Growing up, what would your parents say was the hardest area for you to mature in?

The kingdom of God is a progression towards maturity and fruitfulness...

“This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.” (Mark 4:26-29)

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Col. 1:28, ESV) – In your view, what does “mature in Christ” look like.

- **Just because you grow old doesn't mean you grow up** - “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly.” (1 Cor. 3:1-3a) **how have you grown old physically but not maturity?**

¶ **The difference between milk and meat is not just doctrine, it's depth** - “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” (Heb. 5:14)

I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. (John 15:1)

Spiritual fruit and maturity are produced as God...

- **Prunes you back** – “He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.” (John 15:2) - **what areas of your life can you easily identify that “bears no fruit?” (see Galatians 5:22-23)**
- **Provides you power** - “No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me...If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4b, 5b) - **in the areas above, have you relied on Jesus Christ for change in that area or do you rely on our own power. What might it look like to rely on Jesus more than yourself?**

¶ **The branch has only one job – stay connected to the vine!** – “Remain in me...it must remain in the vine...remain in me...if a man remains in me...remain in me...remain in my love.” (John 15:4-9) - **Does this seem too simple? How would you rate yourself in staying connected? Another way to ask is this, how much fruit do you bear according to the list in Galatians 5:22-23? The two go hand in hand. For example, if you desire more patience in life, you simply have to stay connected to the vine.**

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:8)

Application from interview with Miguel Castillo:

Read Galatians 4:19. Pray this for yourself and for someone else. How willing are you to listen to others and ask deep questions? Is there any unresolved issues in your life that keep you from growing in maturity? If so, are you willing to forgive it, confess it, etc in order to get it out so you can grow? Why or why not?

Ideas for staying connected; 1) talk with God (frequent, vibrant). 2) be in community (be known and share life). 3) Life of Service (not a lot of time to sin and think about yourself). How are you doing in each of those three areas?