

Maturity—2
CBBC
5/18/2025

Introduction—Maturity does not naturally happen.

2 Peter 1:5-11

Spiritual maturity flows exclusively from the Gospel. Peter tells us that every single Christian has been given everything they need for life and godliness. Life refers to eternal life. For those of us who are genuine believers, we are starting to experience part of eternal life right now. We aren't experiencing sinlessness, a perfect body, or no disease or sickness. But we are experiencing the grace that God gives His children as we move through our daily. The more we grow, the more we become aware of it and Him. And then we pass over, when we open our eyes, beholding Him, we will fully embrace that life. We also have access through Him to genuine godliness. We saw this back in Ephesians 4, we see it in verse 6 further down the line.

There are different types of maturity. There is one growing skill in a discipline. Whether it is sports or a job, or a craft or a task, when we practice and are intent on whatever we are doing, we mature in that skill to one level or another. Another type of maturity is common grace maturity. We physically grow and learn to interact with the world around us. We physically and mentally develop. We learn to earn money, to interact with others, to provide shelter and food, and many of our other needs. God gives all of this through His common grace, which He gives to the saved and to the unsaved.

There is a maturity that is exclusively identified by the fact that it looks like God. It looks like Christ. It reminds people of the divine holiness, love, and graciousness that is

found and defined in God Himself. That is never a maturity that can be naturally earned or learned. (Rich man in the eye of the needle—comfort/riches always wins out unless God's power is working) That is why there is this connection between divine power and Godliness. Divine power is exclusively from God, but it exclusively produces godliness.

Through the Gospel, we are able to partake in or benefit from the divine nature. The Gospel is the doorway through which we walk to drink from that fountain. (illustration of a fountain) We come as a leper to that door, we are being devoured inside and out, and the only source of life is to walk through that door and drink from that fountain.

Everything we do that is good, that is growth, that is worthy of being commended, comes from Christ.

Spiritual maturity is all of God, and takes all of our effort. This is not a new thought. Philippians says we are to work out our own salvation, but then it says that God works in us to will and to do.

In verse 5-8, **Spiritual maturity we must labor.** We are told to make every effort to add these disciplines. Make them a priority, and be unsatisfied if we are not putting the effort into it. Once we have made our confession and established our faith, we have to continue. We are told to supplement that faith, virtue, and then knowledge, and then self-control, and then with steadfastness and godliness and brotherly affection, and then with love.

While on one hand, these are not meant to be a hierarchical recipe, that you have to complete one before you complete the next, each one is inherent in its predecessor." They do build upon one another. Don't think you can't love because you

struggle with self-control. So let's move through these, summarizing them. We have our faith in who Christ is and what He has done and is doing. So we add virtue or “moral courage” to that. Another way to look at it is “conviction.” We are driven by what we know to act a certain way. With that, we grow in knowledge or practical application, and discernment. How do we act and live the way we do? How do we apply our faith to this situation or that situation? These are questions we need to keep asking ourselves.

We move on to self-control, which is a fruit of the Spirit. It doesn't rise up naturally within us, but rather it is given to us by God, to those who are believers. Self-control allows us to say “no” to our desires, to not allow them to have authority over us. We are enabled by God to do what we don't want to do but should, and not do what we want to even though we shouldn't. This is so key to our everyday life, even the question of whether we should have daily worship or not. That is not a question of time or resources; it is a question of self-control. God always gives us what we need to do His will.

Added to that is steadfastness or patience; we are consistent with our obedience, regardless of the struggle or how bored we get with it. It is always easy to obey for a short amount of time. It is taking what we know and continuing to follow Christ in spite of distractions and obstacles. If you remember how we saw in Hebrews, and in Timothy and other places, where we are told we are to continue in our faith, over time.

Godliness is that sense of reverence towards God Himself that seeks to please Him in all things. There is that contrast between godliness and ungodliness that contrasts those who will dwell with God forever with those who will be punished forever in 2 Peter 2, and 3:7.

True godliness does not allow us to remain isolated, so we add on kindness towards other believers. It is not just feeling good towards other believers and having a sense of warmth towards them, it is overt acts of kindness. Galatians 6:10 tells us, "Let us do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith."

And we reach the height of course, which is "love," and it seems as if it is not limited to believers, but to all. It does not ignore sin. It does not ignore self-destruction, but it speaks and demonstrates the character and heart of Christ in every situation

If we are trying to grow in these areas, we will be fruitful believers. We will have an effective Christian walk. We will impact those around us, being pleasing to God. What is the secret to Christian growth? To grow as a Christian. To pay attention to what is going on in our lives, and pursue these things. Maturing in Christ is never passive. We need to take responsibility for our own growth.

Maturing tells us who we are. 9-11 What happens when we don't grow in our faith? Well, we are told that if one is not growing, they will forget that they were believers. They cannot see the truth of the Gospel itself; they have blinded themselves to it. They forget that they were believers. God does not let true Christians believe they are secure in their salvation if they are not growing. God wants us to be worried if we are lacking growth.

Peter goes on to say that we should make our calling and election sure and confirm them through our growth. If we are adding to our faith virtue and knowledge, self-control, and so forth, we will be proving to ourselves that God's grace is working inside of us and that we have been changed. That is why Paul says over in Philippians that we are to work out salvation. James says that saving faith produces works. God

doesn't need us to do what He wants. He lays out those works before us to glorify Himself by using such weak vessels as us, but He also does so that we know that we are really His children because we are acting like Him.

God does not want us to be assured by our confession alone. Why does He say over in James that even demons confess God's identity.

Combining last week's message with this one. Its why the local church is so important. Can we easily find knowledge and interaction with other believers anywhere but the church?

We need to take responsibility for our growth. It is God working in us. But we need to be proactive. We need to ask what our spiritual maturity is like, and ask why it is the way it is?