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## "Maturity In Christ"

Series - ONE - How the church can have unity

Review our answers so far: One body, One God, One Faith, One Baptism, One Hope, One Leadership...

Ephesians 4:12-13 (NLT) "12 Their [church leadership] responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ."

How do we become a spiritually mature group of people?

1. You can help keep the unity of the church by growing in spiritual maturity.
  - a. **3 Alignments:**
    - i. By bringing our thoughts into alignment with the truth
    - ii. Then acting in alignment with the truth: truing
    - iii. With actions that align with Jesus's motives: love
2. **Goal:** Spiritual maturity is beginning to think, act, and be motivated more and more like Jesus... He is the model of maturity that we aim to imitate.

Do you want to grow in spiritual maturity?

Ephesians 4:14-15 (NLT) "14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church."

- a. **Watch the progression from immaturity to maturity**
  - i. Believing "every wind of new teaching" (immature believer)
  - ii. Taught the truth (less immature believer)
    1. Bringing our **thoughts into alignment** with the truth
  - iii. Speak the truth (Not yet fully mature believer)
    1. Then **acting in alignment** with the truth: truing
  - iv. Speak the truth in love (mature believer)
    1. With actions that **align with Jesus's motives:** love
3. **God's Part**

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

- a. Every new believer - regardless of age - is born again as a spiritual infant  
Maturity doesn't affect: **love, value, and justification**
- b. **But** maturity doesn't just happen over time:

Hebrews 5:12-14 (NLT) "12 You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. 13 For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. 14 Solid food is for those who are mature, *who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong*" (emphasis mine).

- c. God is the One who transforms us, but - see in this verse - you have a part to play.
4. **Our Part: Where are you being trained to have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong?**
  - a. Paul argues: the church is where this takes place

- i. Teaching, leadership, mentoring, serve team, Life Group

Ephesians 4:16 (NLT) “He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”

- b. Maturity here is each person realizing 1) that they are a part of the church, 2) God has given them a gift, 3) using that gift to help other people grow, 4) and that this using of the gift is motivated by love.

Ephesians 4:17-19 (NLT) 17 With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

- c. This is what **spiritual immaturity** looks like: copying the ways of those spiritually dead... with self-ish motives that look like greed and lust.

## 5. How to Align Your Thoughts with the Truth and Your Motives with Love

Ephesians 4:20-24 (NLT) 20 But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. 21 Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

- a. **Step 1: Throw Off Your Old Sinful Nature**
  - i. Like a coat that carried an old identity you knew
  - ii. “I would lie if it served my purposes... that is who I am.”
    - 1. “That is not who I am because that is not who Christ is and my identity is in Christ.”
- b. **Step 2: Instead... Here is What Spiritual Maturity Looks Like**
  - i. Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes
- c. **Step 3: Put on Your New Nature**
  - i. Like a new coat that represents the new life you have
  - ii. “I will tell the truth because Christ always told the truth and I follow Him.”

## 6. Four Examples of Growing in Spiritual Maturity

- a. **Example #1:** “So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body” (Ephesians 4:25 NLT).
- b. **Example #2** “And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 anger gives a foothold to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:26-27 NLT).
- c. **Example #3:** “If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need” (Ephesians 4:28 NLT).
- d. **Example #4:** “Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them” (Ephesians 4:29 NLT).

### Small Group Discussion Questions:

**Main Passages:** Ephesians 4:11-29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Hebrews 5:12-14

### Questions:

1. What would it look like to be a spiritually mature believer? Describe that person.
2. Read Ephesians 4:11-29. Why does love keep coming up again and again?
3. Read Hebrews 5:12-14. What does this passage teach us about maturing?
4. In light of this sermon, is there any place in your life that you know you need to mature?
5. Part of growing in maturity is using our gift (Eph 4:7) for serving others in the church and helping the church accomplish its mission - to reach the whole world for Jesus. What does this look like in your life?

To watch the Sermon Team on The Overtime Podcast, go to: <https://bit.ly/RLOvertime>



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