

## WHAT IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY?

Ephesians 4:14-15 ... “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ”

We often mention “spiritual maturity,” in these devotionals. But you may be confused about what it is. Many things on earth mature or grow over a period of time. The seed of a tree is nearly worthless for any purpose other than being planted. You cannot make furniture, a house, or a boat with it. If you eat the seed, it will not nourish you for more than a moment. A tree seed is not helpful for making charcoal or starting a fire to cook your food. A tree seed is not pretty or inspiring. However, the wood that comes from a mature tree that started many years earlier as a humble seed, can satisfy many needs and desires, and a mature tree is wonderful to look at.

Spiritual maturity is like the seed of a tree. When you are born again the Holy Spirit enters your life and begins to plant seeds of faith, perseverance, love, forgiveness toward others, truthfulness, hope, charity and more. Over a period of time and in submission to Christ, those seeds will sprout and begin to grow into real acts that God desires of you; acts that also give you a strong sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. For most of us, spiritual maturity does not happen instantly; it takes time, even years; it is a process, not an event. Sadly, many Christians never allow those seeds to sprout and grow. They remain unchanged and immature. That can even lead some to become depressed and to give up on God. They then look to other people, their jobs, recreation or gadgets for their joy. When people talk about self-image and self-confidence as what they need to be successful and happy, it is a sign that they have simply skipped over the primary source of happiness and success: An empowered relationship with Jesus.

None of us will become fully mature before we die. We are still subject to temptation and sin, even if we are serving God in a very committed manner. However, if we confess our sins and submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our lives can be full of good deeds, Godly ambition and intentions, loving relationships, the trust of others, and opportunities to serve God. If you are awaiting spiritual graduation day, you will become frustrated because complete spiritual maturity cannot occur until you arrive in heaven. Until then, focus on honoring God to the best of your ability, allow the Holy Spirit to guide and convict you of your sins, seek God's forgiveness for your mistakes as you forgive others for their mistakes. If you do these things, you will grow as God wants you, and you will experience the peace that only he can provide.

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