

It Is Time to Grow Up!

In Ephesians 4:14-15, the Apostle Paul tells us, "We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." Over and over in the Bible we are told that God wants us to grow up. "We are to grow up in every way unto Him who is the head, into Christ. (Ephesians 4:15) "So let us stop going over the basics of Christianity again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature." (Hebrews 6:1) "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, of the Word of God that by it you may grow up to salvation." (I Peter 2:2) Not only does God want us to grow, but we must want to grow. It is important to understand that spiritual maturity is a process, not a destination. It is a never-ending journey that won't be totally completed until you get to heaven. There is a process that you must follow that takes you from being a selfish demanding baby to a young person to a mature adult. Spiritual maturity and spiritual growth are not automatic. If you are going to grow, you have got to want to grow. You must decide to grow. You have got to try to grow, and you've got to continue to grow.

If spiritual maturity is going to be a priority in your life, reading your Bible and having a quiet time must become a priority in your life. The Bible is God's manual for maturity. II Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness." (II Timothy 3:16) Each one of those purposes is very important. The Bible gives us Doctrine that tells us what is right. It then gives us Reproof so we can know what is not right. It then gives us Correction to tell us how to get right. It then gives us Instruction so we can know how to stay right.

Ultimately, spiritual maturity is demonstrated more by how you apply what you have learned than it is by what you say you believe. In fact, what you believe or say you believe doesn't matter if you do not behave like you believe or what you say you believe. James, the Lord's half-brother said, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show it by his good behavior." (James 3:13) That is why the real mark of spiritual maturity is simply obeying God. James said once again, "Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to His word; instead put it into practice." (James 1:21) Real maturity is not just learning what the Bible says, but practically applying it in the different circumstances that come up in your life. As you spiritually mature, you grow closer to God, you grow deeper in your faith, and you grow stronger in difficulties. The more spiritually mature you are the better person you will be in all areas of your life. When you are spiritually mature God can do more in you, with you and through you. You can have a greater impact on the lives of other people.

God is so determined to get you on the road to spiritual maturity that everything that He allows to happen in your life, either good or bad, is for your spiritual growth. To quote James just one more time, he said, "Whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything." (James 1:2-4, NLT)