

Spiritual Maturity: How Does It Happen? (1 Thes 4:1-3)

1 Thessalonians 3:8-13 – Spiritual Maturity: What Does It Look Like?

1. That you would **remain standing** in the Lord (8)
2. That you would get **repaired** what is missing in your faith (9-10)
3. That you would increase and abound in **sacrificial care** toward each other (11-12)
4. That God would solidify your heart blameless in **active holiness** at the presence of God at the return of the Lord Jesus (13)

How does Christian maturity happen? Do we grow up automatically? Do we grow up accidentally? Do we grow up arbitrarily? NO. Spiritual growth is a purposeful, ongoing process.

(NKJ) ¹ Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ² for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

(BGT) Λοιπὸν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα καθὼς παρελάβετε παρ’ ἡμῶν τὸ πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀρέσκειν θεῷ, καθὼς καὶ περιπατεῖτε, ἵνα περισσεύητε μᾶλλον. ² οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ. ³ Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἁγιασμὸς ὑμῶν, ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας,

(KES) Finally therefore, brethren, we entreat you and exhort by the Lord Jesus, that just as you received from us how it is necessary for you to be walking and to be pleasing God, just as also you are walking, in order that you might be increasing more. For you have come to know what commands we gave to you through the Lord Jesus. For this is will of the God, the sanctification of you, that you abstain from the sexual immorality,

(NAU) Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority* of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

1. The Process of Maturity

1a – Progression – “*Finally, therefore*” – builds on previous – one truth leads to another; teaching → practice; one step → another

1b – Pleading – “*we urge and exhort*”

1c – Authority – “*in the Lord Jesus*”

1d – Instruction – “*just as you received from us*”

Eph 2:20; 4:11-12 → We are being **equipped** for service,

not entertained for fun. 2 Tim 2:19; James 2:18-26

Northridge Baptist Church – Pastor Kevin Subra – November 23, 2014

2. The Activity of Maturity

To be walking – my ongoing practice – lifestyle

My conduct – what I do

Many descriptions in the Bible...

To be pleasing God – my ongoing purpose

My motivation – why I do it

Either we please God, ourselves, or other people

3. The Expansion of Maturity

Current Practice – “*just as you are walking*” (NASB)

Assumes some type of Christian walk

Continual Progress – “*that you might abound more and more*”

Don’t stop! There’s much room to grow! You can ABOUND! Never think that you have arrived! Never become satisfied with where you are at spiritually!

4. The Necessity of Maturity

“*how you ought*” – dei – “must”

“You **must** be born again”

“A bishop **must** ... be blameless”

“*for you know*” – You have come to know

“*commandments*” – military term – Yes, we’ve been told what to do and why to do it.

“*by [the authority] of the Lord Jesus*” – we’re not making this up ourselves – the Commander-in-Chief has spoken!

“*will of God*” – not something hidden, but something very, very clearly stated!

5. The Elements of Maturity (more on this next week)

Maturity involves stopping some practices

Maturity involves starting some practices

Maturity involves avoiding some practices