

Maturity in Christ Hebrews 5:11-14

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

When we first become Christians, we have a lot of _____ growing to do. What does a spiritually mature Christian _____ like? We want to _____ God in every respect, and the Word of God teaches us how! The Word tells us how to _____ ourselves spiritually and how to treat other people. It sheds light on the _____, so human traditions and sin won't blind us. Because of the Scriptures, we can _____ the pitfalls and _____ the storms. It challenges us to make us brighter and stronger. It gives _____ to stretch our minds and our behaviors. We're blessed beyond measure to possess a copy of God's Holy Word!

All four of our children are now grown. Jackie and I watched them mature into responsible and loving people, and we're proud of them. We raised them to be _____ and to pursue lives of their own. We didn't want them to be childish. We wanted our daughters to be like Jesus, who matured as God desired. Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus kept _____ in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." He grew mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. Loving and godly parents want that for their children. We did our best to meet their needs to _____ them mature properly. We also felt the need to _____ them spiritually.

Likewise, Paul urgently wanted to _____ young Christians grow to spiritual maturity in Christ. He said, "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man _____ in Christ" (Colossians 1:28). We must do _____ than just become Christians; we must become complete in Christ, fully functioning as servants of the Lord.

Our reading today comes from the Epistle to the Hebrews 5:11-14. A worthy exhortation. No one knows for sure who wrote the inspired book of Hebrews, but the book calls itself a "word of exhortation"; it's written to spiritually _____ Christians. The author _____ those to whom he's writing as people drifting from the faith, neglectful, dull of hearing, immature, and sluggish. Some had begun forsaking the assembling of the _____; others were in danger of unbelief. Some who should have become _____ needed training in elementary principles. Like little children, they could only digest the most basic teaching and couldn't handle a more advanced understanding of the _____. He worried that the deceitfulness of _____ had hardened their hearts and caused them to cast away their confidence in Christ. He realized that _____ teaching had led many astray. For these reasons, he worried that they might grow bitter and come short of the _____ of God. The

writer warns that they might miss the eternal _____ in heaven. Sadly, they could not renew some to repentance.

The book of Hebrews could easily _____ many today. People own Bibles, but they don't _____ them carefully. They've become sluggish and dull of hearing. Interestingly, they think they know God's will but they're easily led _____ by pop psychology, human traditions, false prophets, and their own feelings. They're vulnerable to _____, because they are spiritually immature and not grounded in the truth. Millions have stopped attending church, and some have ceased to _____ in Jesus Christ. Because much of Christianity is so weak, people have lost _____ of what is the true faith in Christ, and what it looks like.

I want to _____ the mature Christian. First, mature Christians know God and they take Him seriously. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of _____, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Fearing the Lord means that one has a profound _____ for God, knowing that we will one day face the judgment seat of Christ. Since our _____ is at stake, we take the Lord seriously. We take His commandments seriously and His _____. We respect His _____ and believe what He says is true. We know He is both compassionate to those who love and _____ Him and just in condemning those who _____ Him.

John 1:18 says that Jesus _____ God the Father to us. We know what God is like because we can _____ God the Father in the character and the behavior of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that the Son can do _____ of Himself, unless it's something that He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner" (John 5:19). We know God is holy, loving, and compassionate by _____ at Jesus. We know the Father is firm and just by looking at Jesus. We know God wants us to be _____ because of Jesus on the cross; and we know God's _____ through Jesus being resurrected. We know God keeps His _____ because Jesus kept His. Yes, Jesus explains the Father to us.

Second, mature Christians are not naïve. Many people want to paint Christianity as naïve and gullible, but mature Christians by practice have their "senses _____ to discern good and evil." Mature Christians _____ right from wrong, good from evil, and truth from error. They've seen the destructive _____ of evil and immorality; they know God's Word proves true. Some naïve Christians really don't _____ what God says. Proverbs 14:15 says, "The naïve believes everything, But the sensible man considers his steps." The naïve are presumptuous and willing to act foolishly, but mature Christians are _____. Proverbs 22:3 says, "The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naïve go on, and are punished for it." Mature Christians have taken time to _____ through the moral and spiritual challenges. They see _____ to say no to temptation and sin, while others walk right into trouble. Proverbs 14:18 says, "The naïve inherit foolishness, But the sensible are crowned with knowledge." The difference between being naïve and prudent matter.

Galatians 6:7-8 warns, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man _____, this will he also _____. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that sin will not _____ you. It always does. The naïve or simple-minded person thinks he can sin and get away with it.

Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs to his son to _____ him grow wise and avoid the traps of life. In the first chapter, Solomon has wisdom crying out in the street! **Read Proverbs 1:22-33.**

How much better it would be for us to _____ our hearts and follow God’s teaching rather than thinking that we can do as we please! Sin has consequences; and that’s why God teaches us to _____ to sin. God is a loving Father who wants to _____ us from evil.

Third, mature Christians fix their eyes on Jesus Christ. Hebrews 12:1-3 says, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the _____ that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the _____ that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow _____ and lose heart.” They know the _____ of their blessings and hope; they realize that the way is often difficult and can be hostile. In spite of all, they serve with joy looking to the _____. Just as Jesus died for sinners, so the Lord _____ us to love our enemies and to do good to those who persecute us. Mature Christians follow Christ.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus means standing _____ in His teaching, His commands, and His promises. It means taking Him and His Word seriously. Colossians 2:6-7 says, “Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so _____ in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.”

Fourth, mature Christians show _____ when they face difficult days. Christians show their maturity by how they _____ to troubles and heartaches. Immature people get _____ and rant about their problems. Immature people _____ correction. Immature people _____ others for their faults and fail to learn from their mistakes. They don’t realize that the struggles of life may be the _____ to their growth and blessing.

The apostle Paul opened his life to us, and he helped us to understand a valuable _____. **Read what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.** God’s grace is sufficient for us, _____ when we suffer and struggle. It’s a great moment in life when we _____ how dependent we are on God! It’s a great moment in life when we see how His grace _____ us through our weaknesses.

Mature Christians keep a check on their _____. They find the silver lining in the

_____. They see _____ the present! James 1:2-4 says, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the _____ of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” God allows us to be tested to _____ us grow and develop spiritually. The test of our faith produces the _____ to endure, and endurance helps us to become complete. Without the testing, we wouldn’t grow _____ in faith.

Fifth, mature Christians _____ the Lord. They obey out of _____ and _____ for God. First John 2:3-6 says, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we _____ his commandments. Whoever says ‘I know him’ but doesn’t keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. And by this we know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the _____ _____ in which he walked.” Many people _____ about loving God, but those who genuinely love God keep his Word! They live up to their _____. Love is perfected, matured, by obeying the will of God.

I’ve known folks who will _____ of their faith and love but live like the world. You cannot find them when you need them. **Read what James said in James 2:20-23.** Abraham didn’t have a _____ faith. Faith that will not obey is _____. Faith is perfected and matured by obeying the will of God.

Why does this matter? It matters because God _____ His people to mature and to grow to be like Jesus. The Lord Jesus commands us to _____ holy lives, to _____ to the truth, and to _____ others the way that He has loved us. How would you describe yourself? Are you a mature Christian who loves and serves the Lord with _____ your heart and soul? We are all a _____ in progress! Hopefully, we’re growing _____ in faith and love each day. Philippians 2:12-13 reminds us, “So then, my beloved, just as you have always _____, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” God will _____ us mature; and He’s at work in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure. The apostle Paul _____ to be right with God and to attain the resurrection; that is, to go to heaven and live with God eternally.

Read what Paul said in Philippians 3:11-15. Are you _____ on to that high calling?

You can become a Christian by placing your _____ in the Lord Jesus, repenting of your _____, confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and by being _____ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. God expects _____ than merely becoming a Christian! He expects you to _____ Him lovingly and faithfully for the rest of your life. He wants you to _____ Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. That’s the ultimate goal of every Christian!