

Biblical Maturity vs Giftedness

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[0:00] Okay, I'm going to preach this morning again. My topic is biblical maturity and giftedness. By way of just framing this, I want to read from Ephesians chapter 4, starting in verse 7.

Ephesians 4, verse 7. And this is going to speak of both. This is going to speak of both maturity and giftedness. Ephesians 4, verse 7.

But to each one of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. Ephesians 4, verse 7. This is why it says, When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train, and he gave gifts to men. I didn't start the recording. When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train, and he gave gifts to men. What does he ascended mean, except that he also descended to the lower earthly regions?

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

[1:40] Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then, when we are mature, we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men and their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

So, you see here, you have this insight into Jesus giving gifts to the body. He ascended to heaven, and he sent the Spirit.

And by the Holy Spirit, coming into the hearts of people who have put their trust in Jesus, in the context of the local church, he gives gifts.

[2:45] For what purpose? To build us up into Christ. To take us from infancy to maturity. That's why. That's the purpose of gifts.

But they're not the same thing. Gifts are God's equipping dispensation of grace to do the work of ministry.

What is the work of ministry? Growing us up into maturity, into becoming like Jesus. That's the endgame. That's the goal. Romans 8 says, Those who he foreknew, he predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son.

That's the endgame. That's the goal. So, you already know your destination. If you're in Christ, what's God's goal for me? Become like Jesus. What is maturity?

Jesus. Jesus is the standard of maturity. And he's bringing us through the work of the Holy Spirit and the administrative gifts, the administration of gifts in the church. He's bringing us into conforming with Jesus.

[3:56] But, anyway, I'm beating a dead horse here. But the point is, the gift itself, though, is not a mark of maturity. It's given for maturity.

So, anyway, why is this meaningful? You can have big gifts from God that are very impactful to other people and still be an immature believer.

It's just true. And the deception comes in where you think, wow, man, I am really good at evangelism. I must be an extra mature believer.

You know? I'm really good at preaching. It must be because I'm mature. I must have matured to the point where God has given me this wonderful gift. And so many people are blessed by it.

Wow. But it's not true. It's not true. It's actually our immaturity that thinks that way. Jesus says, like, in fact, like, getting an awesome gift is not a sign of maturity.

[4:59] You can be an immature believer and have an awesome gift from God. That's for others. That's awesome. You can even be reprobate. And this is crazy. I don't know how this even works.

But all throughout the scripture, you have people who are getting these awesome gifts. And they're not even believers. Jesus says this, actually, in Matthew chapter 7, verse 21 through 23.

He says, many will come to me in that day, meaning the day of judgment. And they'll say, like, in a state of shock, Lord, like, didn't we do miracles in your name?

Didn't we cast out demons in your name? Did not we do many mighty works in your name? Which name? The name of Jesus.

Powerful, impactful, fruitful, visible, tangible fruit ministry. And he said, away from me. I never knew you.

[6:00] So it's a sobering thing. And it's not only applies to us as believers and trying to understand where we're at in our spiritual life. Like, there's this reality that you could actually have gifts.

And in God's mysterious, I don't know how this even works, but at least the appearance of gifts that are very impactful to people. And you yourself aren't even right with God.

And it's important to know this. Because if we're looking at our gifts as a measure of our maturity and the impact we have on other people as a measure of our maturity and maybe even our standing with God, we are way off.

That is not the measure that God is using to judge our maturity. So I think a good example of this is the church in Corinth. So the church in Corinth had this dynamic going on.

So if you turn with me to 1 Corinthians 1, verse 7. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 7. Paul's starting off his introduction.

[7:00] He says, Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. So this church had zero spiritual gifts missing.

They had the whole gamut. All of it. That is pretty wild. I don't think I've ever met a church that has all of it. And they had all of it. That must be a pretty mature, healthy, high-functioning church.

Well, we'll see. We'll see here. We'll go on a little bit further. Tell me what you really think, Paul.

1 Corinthians 3, verse 1. Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly. Mere infants in Christ. All right.

So they have all the gifts, but they're babies. Giftedness does not equal maturity.

[7:59] Giftedness does not equal maturity. You can see this other places. There's actually a lot of examples of this. I think Saul and David are a great example of this. Saul, very gifted. Filled the Holy Spirit.

Prophecied. Anointed by God. Had the appearance of humility. He actually went and hid from the responsibility that he was called to as a king. And it seemed really humble. He's a humble guy, right?

I don't want to put myself forward. You know, I'm going to go hide over here. And, you know, they'd bring him out. And he eventually is king. But he was a politician. So always trying to figure out, how can I get the most of God's blessing and still have everybody like me?

And that was his downfall. He was not willing to obey God. When the rubber hit the road, he loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. And you see there, I mean, I don't know if he was a believer or not, but it doesn't seem like it how he ended his life.

But he was anointed by God. Filled with the Holy Spirit. Prophesied. Lots of gifting. At minimum, very low matured. And you see David. A man after God's own heart.

[9:06] Gifted. And obviously the guy fell. Okay? He did stuff that was bad. But God restored him and he knew God. And God knew him. He counted David among his friends.

He was a man after God's own heart. And then Satan. So Satan, most gifted angel. I mean, he's almost like a case in point. Gifting and maturity. Okay.

Who was the most gifted angel? Satan. Who's the most immature angel? That's hyperbole. Satan. All right? Again, I didn't keep my point.

So why is this important? Our maturity, there can be an obstacle to our maturity if you think you're more mature than you actually are.

When you don't have self-awareness. And if you're always looking at your gifts and your ministry impact, and you're putting confidence in that, it's like you've got these blinders on.

[10:06] You know? You can't understand. Because you're grading using the wrong criteria. You're trying to judge your maturity on how impactful your ministry and your gifting is. Versus a different set of criteria entirely that the Bible gives us to assess the maturity.

That's what I want to talk about. Romans 12, 3 says, For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment.

Think about ourselves with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. So, this is important.

He says, hey, don't think of yourself highly than you ought to. Think of yourself with sober judgment. You want to mature? You really want to become like Jesus? You want to hear the Spirit causing you to put off the old man and put on the new man and become conformed to the image of my Son, which is my will for you?

Do you really want to participate in that work? Just have some humility. Think of yourself soberly. You know, there's an insecurity. It just likes to think about all the good things in our life.

[11:19] Okay. All of, you know, all my positive attributes. So, when I think about my negative attributes, I can get depressed. Well, that's why we have Jesus. Christ is our righteousness.

Because Jesus stands in my place, I can face my faults head on. I don't have to hide from it anymore. I'm not justified by perfection any longer. Now I'm free just to be honest.

And think of myself with sober judgment. And to not distract myself with this perpetual narrative of, how's God using me? How am I being effective? Because if I am, maybe then God likes me more. You know. We don't need that anymore. So, how do we accurately judge where we're at? We're going to read through a few passages. I'm just going to read these all together. And I'm going to do a little commentary on them. First one is 1 Corinthians 1, verse 10 through 12.

Paul says, My brothers, some from Chloe's household have been before me that there are quarrels among you.

[12:29] What I mean is this. One of you says, I follow Paul. Another, I follow Apollos. Another, I follow Cephas, which means Peter. And still another, I follow Christ.

It's almost like the worst one. You know. Think like, well, all these other people are following men. I follow Christ. You know. That's not like that category is the good category and all the rest of them are bad categories.

I've seen one of these people is immature in their divisive mentality towards other people. And Paul unpacks this a little bit more starting in chapter 3. I started reading this, but I'll read it again.

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly, mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you are still not ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. Worldly equals immature. Same thing. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

[13:29] For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not mere men? What after all is Apollos? And what is Paul?

Only servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed. Apollos watered it. But God made it grow.

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow. Turn to 1 Corinthians 13. Turn to 1 Corinthians 13. Starts off right at the end of chapter 12.

He's talking about gifts. All of chapter 12, he's talking about gifts. And he finishes and says, And now I will show you the most excellent way. Start in verse 1.

Love is patient.

[14:44] Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered.

And it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease. Where there are tongues, they will be stilled. Where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child. I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child. But when I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

Now we see, but a poor reflection is in a mirror. Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part, and then I shall know fully. Even as I am fully known.

[15 : 44] And now these three remain. Faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. So you see Paul here. He doesn't use the word gift, so that's the context. And he contrasts these two things.

Giftedness, if you have the whole, like all of it. To the ultimate degree. Every spiritual gift in one person. Which has never existed except for Christ, by the way. But it's to say you did. And you didn't have love. Nothing. Zero. It would profit you nothing. Love and maturity are the same thing.

Jesus is love. Okay? When we're talking about maturity, what are we talking about growing up in? Into love. To be the measure of the standard of Christ.

The full measure of Jesus. And what he's saying here at the end of this chapter is, listen, all these spiritual gifts, they're temporary. They're temporary. They're for now.

[16 : 44] Someday they're going to pass away. When are they going to pass away? When we see him. When the perfect comes, Jesus. The imperfect will pass away. And each one of us only can see in part.

Even with like the maximal mass spiritual gifts that someone has, you're only allowed by God a sliver of the necessary knowledge to contribute to the full picture of whatever that gifting is intended. So you know something, you see part of a thing. Like, and that's all you did. There's no single person on the planet. And this is important even for discipleship and for having insight into people's lives and stuff.

You can 100% see something, but you don't get to see all of it. You don't get to. God has not ordained that you get to. We, at best, see in part. You know who sees in full?

Jesus does. He sees it in full. And it starts to speak to our need for each other. He's distributed these gifts in the body so that through the multivariate grace of God, the manifold grace of God, all together we can start to represent Jesus more accurately.

[17 : 56] Right? People with all these gifts, they're going to go away. When Jesus comes back, it's all gone. What do you get at the end? Maturity. Perfect maturity. When we see him, we will be like him.

And then the purpose of the gifts, it won't be needed anymore. What's the purpose? Maturity.

Maturity. Right? Let me digress a little bit. The last one I want to read here is in Hebrews 5.

Hebrews chapter 5. Verse 11 through 14. Hebrews 5, starting in verse 11. We have much to say about this.

Some translations say him. Of him, we have much to say. It's speaking of Jesus. But it's hard to explain because you're slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again.

You need milk, not solid food. Anyone who lives on milk being still an infant is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.

[19 : 01] By constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. So it speaks of another aspect of immaturity, which is you just don't read the Bible. Or you're content with a certain level of Bible understanding.

Maybe you're just content just hearing sermons all the time. I don't know. I don't know. Just a, you know, I don't know. I don't know. But it's a content with immaturity. A contentment with immaturity that's not befitting a child of God.

Okay? Because as we grow in the Lord, we are to be growing such that we can start to help other people. And you don't know God's word yourself.

You can't help other people. Okay? You really can't. Or there's a limit to how helpful you can be. And God cares about this. God cares about this.

And the other thing is, it says about the mature, that they've been able to, by constant use, discern good and evil. I heard an old preacher say one time, if you don't read your Bible, you deserve to be deceived.

[20 : 07] I think it's hard to argue with that. I think probably a more appropriate way of putting it is if you don't read your Bible, you will be deceived. We all deserve to be deceived.

You know? Not a single one of us doesn't deserve to be deceived. We all deserve it. In God's mercy, he's opened our eyes to the truth. And he's helped us escape, to a certain degree,

deception. And he's constantly doing that for all of his children. And he's renewing our minds and bringing us out of a state of just, you know, being deceived, right? But if we don't read our Bibles, like, the entrance of your word gives light, the Bible says. The Bible shines light and shows us God's will for our life. And the Spirit takes that word and he applies it to our heart and he brings conviction. That's how he does it. And over time, we start to be able to discern what's truth and what's a lie. What's good and what's evil. You know, immature people don't, they don't, they don't get all that, right?

[21:05] But we ought to be maturing. So anyway, those are three passages. And I think there's a lot more to be said about immaturity. But I think these, the reason I think these are pertinent is because this speaks to people who have a lot of gifts and have some time under their belt.

And between those two things, they ought to be more mature than they currently are. And when I think of Christchurch, I think of a very gifted bunch of people, okay? I think there's a lot of gifts. I think of it as just like, man, there's a lot of very unique and honestly very impactful gifts represented in our midst. I've been very affected by it. It's been awesome. It's been awesome for our family. I've seen other people's lives transform and stuff. The question is, are we mature? All right? Are our giftings outstripping our maturity? Are we maybe got a little bit of gifting blinders on where we're not able to kind of come to terms with what the Bible says is going on in reality in our lives? And if that's true, the Lord wants to say, you know what?

[22:14] I want you to share my perspective on you so that you can grow. Not for your condemnation, but so you can grow. So towards that end, I want to share 20 points. 20 points.

Let me try to burn through these. I realize I'm going a little long here. 20. 20 points that are 20 evidences of immaturity. These all basically come from the passages I just read, okay?

Number one, jealousy and envy. Jealousy and envy in the life of a believer is evidence of immaturity. You get that from 1 Corinthians 3.3 and 1 Corinthians 13, verse 4. Both those passages just read. Number two, quarreling. 1 Corinthians 3.3. There's quarreling in your life? You're immature. There's jealousy and envy? You're immature. Okay? Divisions. Number three, divisions. 1 Corinthians 3, verse 1 through 4. Paul says, hey, because there's division in your midst, it's proof of something.

[23:11] You're babies. You might think you're so awesome. You got all these awesome gifts. Surely you must be mature. I beg to differ. I beg to differ. You're babies. So, and I think it's important to think about this a little bit.

Division runs on gossip and slander, okay? Division means division. I have a different vision than other people in my midst or than my leaders. That's okay. Like, we can think differently about things, but there's a way to handle it. Where that actually turns into real division in the church is gossip and slander. You do something about it, but it's not what God wants you to do about it. You go start talking to other people, okay? You start saying things that you ought not say to get people on your side to see the error of these ways of these other people, you know?

Proverbs 16, 28 said, That was going on, okay?

[24:13] What's the fruit? Division. How did it get there? Gossip and slander, okay? Titus 3, verse 10 through 11 says, As for a person who stirs up division after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him.

Knowing that such a person is warped and sinful, he is self-condemned. Point being, swift church discipline, okay? There are certain things where we give a lot of rope for, okay? Say, you know, someone's maybe stuck in sexual immorality, they're just having a hard time overcoming lust. We're going to give way more grace and work through that over a longer season of time because their sin is impacting a much smaller circle. It's mainly just them, maybe, you know, spouses and things like that. It doesn't mean we don't need to do church discipline and take it seriously. It's just the blast radius is smaller for that particular sin. For division, it's different, though. The blast radius is very big and it happens really quick. James talks about the tongue, how such a huge fire is set off by a little thing, a little word, a little spark.

[25:20] Well, Paul says basically, listen, man, this was one that you escalate really quick, okay? Two warnings. And I'm not, this is not my, this is not my opinion here.

This is what the Bible says. Don't give this one much room at all. And so we should think about that. You know, we all have a lust to say things we ought not say. So this is, this ought to help us rein our own tongues in.

But even help our brothers and sisters, you see them kind of in frustration. Maybe they see a difference about something. They're just venting, you know? Shut that down. It's like, no, we don't talk like that. There's a way to deal with this and that's not it, okay?

Number four, favoritism and sectarianism. This comes from 1 Corinthians 1 verse 10 through 12 and 3 verse 4. This is the whole I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos deal.

You hear something that's a common thread through all that. There's a word, I. Me, me, me, my, my convictions, my thoughts, me.

[26 : 19] And what you're really saying is, this person, I love me and I love my own thoughts. I love my own convictions about stuff. And this person most aligns with those things. And so I'm going to identify with them.

They're a leader and I'm going to identify with that particular leader and their particular perspective. Which, again, remember, how much does anyone get? A sliver, right?

But I like that one the best. And I don't like all those other ones. And so I'm going to identify with that guy. It's immaturity, okay? This is like, immature people are very individualistic.

We're being saved out of this individualistic mindset, okay? And individualism is self-worship. I love me, okay? And so it's actually a tell.

You get to know where someone's at. You know, and I think, I've talked to elders of Bellicose.

They've dealt with this for years. There's always people who are like, you know, they're Brian and Josh and Kurt. These are elders.

[27 : 17] And Sean, when he was an elder. And people always just had their preferences. And they would want to basically say, this particular elder is the right kind. And these aren't, to some degree.

I'm not saying they shouldn't be elders. But, you know, I wish they were just more like this guy.

You're just immature. You see things through your narrow, you know, little window.

And you love yourself. And you just like people who are like you. It's just the truth. Number five. Big leader, small God worldview. 1 Corinthians 3.21.

This is where Paul's saying, you know, the leader's nothing, okay? It's God who's in control of everything. And we have this kind of carnal mindset. We think men are in control of my life in some fashion, okay?

Not God. God's in control. But if that person, you know, is a leader, then I'm going to get my life going to screw it up. And, I mean, anyone who's under authority knows this tension.

[28 : 17] I know it. But, wives especially know it. They have to submit to an imperfect husband. How do you do that? If we're all sinners, no one's perfect.

That means that person is going to make mistakes. And it's going to make my life more difficult than I think it ought to be. What do you do? How do you obey God when he says, wives, submit to your husbands?

Even unbelieving husbands. And not only that, win them without a word. Or, oh my goodness, how do you do that? There's only one way. You've got to see a big God. Big God behind that weak man. My God will not suffer my foot to be moved. You know? He never slumbers or sleeps. But the reverse. We've got to grow in that confidence, right?

We don't start off like that. We see all the people who've hurt us and all the people who've done bad things. And it's just like men are in control of everything, right? That's kind of your baseline starting point as an immature believer. Well, that manifests in kind of some of these behaviors.

[29 : 19] And I've got to go faster. Number six, identity and spiritual gifts. We kind of talked about this already. Just putting your identity in your own spiritual gift. I think a lot of the maybe insecurity, anxiety we get into is like, how am I gifted?

What's God called me to? All this stuff. It's really just an identity thing. For eyes around Jesus, we just want to love people. You know what's going to happen? It'll become clear. We pursue love and we desire gifts, not the other way around.

Number seven, impatience. 1 Corinthians 13.4. I mean, this is so convicting to me. To be honest, I am not free from this shit. Okay?

I'm just not. I still get into it. Got to do it this morning. I just... Love is patient. Love is patient. It's not impulsive.

It's not reactionary. And this is something the Lord has convicted me about. I want to grow in. Number eight, unkind. 1 Corinthians 13.4. Speaking harshly to others. That's an evidence of immaturity.

[30 : 19] Number eight, boasting. 1 Corinthians 13.4. Boasting about gifts, wisdom, insight. Pride. Number 10, pride. 1 Corinthians 13.4.

Again, assumes you know best that you see everything instead of, maybe I know. I see in part.

That's humility. Pride says, no, I know. I know. Not that's the whole thing.

Not true. 11. Rude. 1 Corinthians 13.5. Lacking basic politeness and consideration for other people. Love's not rude. Okay? Number 12, self-seeking.

1 Corinthians 13.5. You're in it for you. An immature person is in it for them. Yeah, I want to serve God, but most importantly, I'm actually in it for me. Okay? Number 13, easily angered.

1 Corinthians 13.5. Number 14, keeps a record of other people's sin. 1 Corinthians 13. Number 15, delights in evil. 1 Corinthians 13. Do you love hearing about other people's sin?

[31 : 16] Do you like that? Do you enjoy that? Do you enjoy finding out about other people's failings? You delight in evil. That's what that means. You delight in evil. It's not only do you like doing things you ought not do, which includes that too.

You get excited when you hear about someone, you know, kind of falling short and got to knock them down a few notches. They needed that. No. At best, you're immature.

Okay? Number 16, doesn't protect. 1 Corinthians 13.7. Immature people don't protect other people. They don't protect people's reputations.

They don't protect people's confidences. Okay? Number 17, immature people don't trust. Okay? They don't trust people's intentions.

They don't trust God's goodness and authority over everything. Distrustful. Number 18, they don't hope. Immature people don't hope. 1 Corinthians 13.7.

[32 : 17] They're cynical. They're pessimistic. They have pessimistic expectations of the future. Immaturity. Okay? Number 19, immature people don't persevere.

They don't persevere. This comes from 1 Corinthians 13.7. There's a lot in 1 Corinthians 13 here. Okay? Immature people give up quickly when things are hard. I know someone's immature.

They give up real quick. And they blame their circumstances. They say, it's impossible. No one can do that. And if someone else is actually persevering, they try to cut them down. Because they're a living testimony that you're not right.

You're actually wrong. There is grace to persevere and be thankful. Number 20, last one. Can't discern good and evil. This comes from that last passage in Hebrews I read.

It means that they're easily tricked and deceived. We should not be easily tricked and deceived.

And, again, if we don't have a hunger for God's word, if we're not growing in God's word, we will be.

[33 : 22] It's just easy. We'll see people who are really gifted and assume they're mature. That's not good either. Okay? That's not good. We'll see our own gifting and how people are impacted positively.

We'll start drinking our own Kool-Aid. Okay? Start smoking a little of our stuff and start to get kind of full of ourselves. And what's the corrective? Read the Bible.

It's very humbling. If the spirit is in us and we're reading God's word, he takes that word and he convicts. And he knocks us down some notches. You know? And he uses the body, too. But this is important.

And then we can be a little bit more discerning about our own temptations, our own weaknesses.

And, you know what? We can have a healthy grain of salt with other people, too. And say, yeah, but, like, are you walking with Christ?

You know? So, when you hear a baby's cry from the other room, you know it's a baby. It's not an adult. Okay? You hear those cries out there?

[34 : 24] I'm not tempted to think that that's an adult in the other room. So, in the same way, the presence of unrepentant envy-fighting divisiveness and favoritism or any of these other things that is read here in the life of a believer is an indication of spiritual infancy.

Okay? If I hear these things in my life and in other people's lives, if this is the pattern, guess what?

Baby. They're so gifted, though. They've been so powerful. They're using my life. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Baby. Okay? And don't, like, apply this to other people. Just think of yourself. Just let's have a little bit of that humility, like, Lord, you search me. Okay? Okay? And this is why this is so serious. It could also mean you're not saved.

Okay? A very immature Christian and an unbeliever are a lot of times real close. Okay? I mean, the Lord knows.

[35 : 28] But if we stay in that state, it's very dangerous. It's very dangerous. The warnings in Hebrew, that's the context. And so, anyway, that's why it's important.

But it is important to recognize, if we're babies, Hebrews says, you're not ready to be teachers. Okay? You won't do ministry stuff. You won't be used in people's life.

Guess what? Don't pass go. You're not ready. You ought to be ready, given the amount of time, and given the amount of ministry and things that have been poured into you. But you're not yet. You're still a baby. You're not ready for strong food. You need milk. You need to be taught. And I think the real danger is, if we don't get these categories right, our self-image will be so inflated that we'll outstrip our maturity.

And it probably comes before a fall. You know? The Lord loves us too much for that. He's not going to let us get away with that. But we have an opportunity now to have a little bit of self-awareness. Okay. So, that's on the negative end of things.

[36 : 36] I'm just going to read through these. Try to go a little faster here. There are counterpoints. Okay? What are the evidences of maturity? All right? Basically, just the opposite of all the other stuff.

Okay? I'm going to read them. Evidence of maturity. Isn't jealous or envious? Same passages. That means you're excited when other people are honored. Do you get excited when other people are honored?

Or does it frustrate you? If you get excited, guess what? Good news. You're matured. Number two. Sees other parts of the body as indispensable. Number three.

Honors others with their speech. Number four. Big God. Small leader worldview. Okay? The servant is nothing. God is everything. A mature believer sees that.

That's why they're relaxed. Okay? Number five. No favoritism and equal concern for each member of the body. That means they recognize the body. Number six.

[37 : 36] Their identity is in Christ, not their spiritual gifts. They see that the end goal is the gifts are going to go away. But Christ won't. Forever. I'll be with him. Number seven.

They're patient. They know people take time to change. Okay? So they're ready to go at God's pace. They're patient people. Number eight. It's kind. You know? If you don't have patience for people, it's hard to be kind to people.

Like, come on. Change already. Right? But they are kind. A mature person is kind. Kindness. Kindness is the evidence of a mature believer.

They're consistently kind. They can say really hard things, but they're so kind. You know? Number nine. Man, they don't boast. They realize all gifts are gifts. They're gifts.

Like, what do you? You can't boast about something that somebody else gave you. It just shows we really think we did it. Right? We boast about it. Number ten. They aren't proud. They don't assume you know the best.

[38 : 35] You don't discount God's wisdom and how God's leading you. But there's kind of this, like, humility asterisk that says, you know what? I see you in part. You know? I'm going to run this around a little bit. Get some feedback from some other godly people and pray, you know?

Number eleven. Is it rude? Number twelve. Isn't self-seeking? Number thirteen. Isn't easily angered? Number fourteen. Doesn't keep a record of wrongs?

Number fifteen. Mature people don't delight in evil, but rejoice with the truth. You don't like hearing about other people's sin. It bums you out. Number sixteen.

Always protects. It always protects. It protects other people's best interests. It protects confidences. Number seventeen. You always trust. And the mature person always trusts God's goodness.

Are you required to trust every single person? No. You trust God. And you know what happens? You start to trust people more. It's a virtuous cycle. It's one who's just super distrustful to all people.

[39 : 37] I don't know whether you trust God. We already talked about that. Number eighteen.

Always hopes. They're optimistic. They have optimistic expectations of the future.

They have optimistic expectations of people's intentions. You start off with a basic, I think, I'm just going to assume it's good. This one's really convicting me. Number nineteen.

Always perseveres. They don't give up when things are hard. That's a mature believer. Number twenty. They can discern good and evil. They're not easily tricked and deceived. This is an inheritance for those who are mature.

Been around the block a few times. They've read God's word. Someone starts saying something. You remember, there's a verse about that. You know? You don't have, like, you need a repository of, like, there's a verse about that to be able to understand and recognize false teaching. You need that. Okay? The Holy Spirit's not, it's not like, you know, the force. Where it's just like, because the Holy Spirit lives inside of me, I'm immune. Like, no. The Holy Spirit applies God's word. [40 : 40] All right? In other words, number twenty-one, there's one more positive point than there are negatives. Number twenty-one. In other words, maturity is Christ's character.

It's love. Remember, at the end of 1 Corinthians 13, Paul ties those two together. When the perfect comes, love. Together. Christ's love.

That we would know the love of Christ. Christ's love made perfect. That is maturity. So, in conclusion, 1 Corinthians 3.18 says, Let no one deceive himself.

If any among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a fool, that he may truly become wise. I put the truly in there. Okay?

I'm being upfront about that. Paraphrasing. Let him become a fool, that he may become wise. If anyone thinks he's wise, it speaks to this inflated view.

[41 : 43] I'm so gifted. Man. Okay. Uh, you need to become a fool. There's a big mismatch between where you think you're at and maybe other people think you're at and where you're actually at.

Do you really want to become wise? Eat some humble pie. Alright? Don't confuse giftedness and maturity. Be self-aware. That's essentially what that's saying. Does your opinion of yourself and God's opinion of you match up?

That's a question we just got to ask ourselves. If I've listed those things, like basically it's character. It's not gifting. It's not ministry impact. It's character.

Most of that stuff is actually in the secret place. You know? Where only God sees. First Peter 2, verse 1 through 3. What do we do?

We're immature. What do we do? If I'm guilty of these sins. He says it. Sounds like a definition of immaturity there.

[42 : 51] Like newborn babies long for the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

So what do we do? We just need to admit where we're really at. If we're guilty of that stuff, I need to come to God and I need to say just in real simple terms, I'm immature, God. I'm immature. I need to call it sin.

I need to confess it. I need to be specific about it. We should not have general confessions of sin. If I'm a slanderer, I need to say I slandered. You know?

If I'm harsh and unkind with people, I need to say I'm harsh and unkind. If I'm a quarrelsome person, if I'm constantly fighting and I can't stop, call it that thing. The Bible uses very specific language to address our sin.

To test our humility. We don't like to say the yucky one. You know, we want to say, general, I'm just not trusting God. Going, come on. It's like everybody, right? But in what specific way?

[43 : 56] I keep speaking to you little people behind your back. That's gossip. Call it that. Confess that to the Lord. That's why he's really specific. Putting aside malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

Set it aside. Confess it to God. Repent. And then drink this pure milk of the word. That you might grow. He says that you may grow in respect to salvation.

This is not justification we're talking about. Which it might be, though. If you're an unbeliever, yes. This is the start. You repent of sin. You put your trust in Jesus. And you grow in salvation.

But it's speaking to believers here. Immature infant believers. Receive. Receive. Long for the pure milk of the word. You think your Bible is, this is a chore?

Ask God to change your heart. You know? The word of God is effective in maturing us. And softening our hearts. And breaking these hard hearts.

[44 : 57] So that we grow in sanctification. So we grow in maturity. You know? So that's essentially it. That's all I got.