

Together for Maturity

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Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 00] Okay, if you've got a Bible, we'll go to Hebrews chapter five, the book of Hebrews chapter five.

We're concluding our series called Together. We've been in this series for the month of May. We've been looking at the importance of our togetherness as a body, what it means to come together as a church.

We've looked at the fact that we are his body. We belong to Jesus. That's where our value is found. We've looked at the fact that Jesus on the cross purchased our unity.

And we are to strive to maintain the unity he bought for us. We've talked about the fact that our priority together is ministry, not our preferences.

It's not to get the kind of church we want. It's to come together for gospel impact. Last week, we talked about the fact that we come together generously and we give and we sacrifice for the work of the ministry.

[1 : 23] And then tonight, as we conclude this series, we're gonna look at together for maturity here in the book of Hebrews. Now, I do wanna remind you, and I have to admit to you, this is difficult for me, but this is the last weekend that I will preach before my sabbatical starts.

So I'll preach this weekend and then come Monday, for those of you that don't know, I'm on a five-week sabbatical. And I'm a little nervous about this. I've never been away for this long. I've never kind of let go of the reins and done that for this long. And so I'm a bit nervous, but at the same time, I know that this is a good thing. And I will check in with you from time to time in terms of sending you maybe some video updates when I'm in Rome or the Areopagus in Athens or where Paul had lunch in Corinth or wherever.

So I'll be sending you updates. And a lot of the portion of my sabbatical, I'm gonna be traveling with some other pastors, touring where the apostles did their ministry.

We'll spend time on the island of Patmos. So I'm really looking forward to that. But I'm honest when I say I'm already missing you and this is gonna be hard.

[2 : 43] So just pray for me. Pray that this will be a great time of refreshing and renewal and just to take a break and then come back with even more zeal and more passion, if that's possible.

I know some of you are like, he doesn't need more passion. He's got plenty of that. And then we're gonna come back and start the book of Acts coming off that journey. And so I think it's gonna be a really awesome blessing for us as a faith family.

But I'm gonna miss you. I hope that you will pray for me while I'm away. Dr. Chad Brand is gonna be the preacher the next five weeks while I'm gone.

Those of you that were a part of our Holy Spirit Conference back in January, he was the speaker for that conference, did a fantastic job. Dr. Brand is a former colleague, a former seminary professor of mine.

And he will do a fantastic job coming to preach. And so don't, this isn't, you're not on sabbatical the next five weeks. I am, all right? You need to be here and I trust that you will be and that you'll be blessed as he brings the word.

[3 : 50] And then our lead team will continue to lead the church and all that while I'm gone. So enough of that. Let's dive into our passage tonight. Hebrews chapter five and beginning at verse 11 as we look at together in maturity.

If you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's word. The author of Hebrews writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, these words, verse 11 of chapter five.

About this, we have much to say, and it's hard to explain since you've become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic

principles of the oracles of God.

You need milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child.

But solid food is for the mature, for those who've had their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity.

[5 : 03] Not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment.

This we will do, that is move on in maturity, if God permits. This is God's word. So pray with me and ask God to teach us tonight. Lord, thank you for this time to gather around your word.

It is, as the book of Hebrews says, sharper than any two-edged sword. So come and cut us by your grace tonight through your word.

I do pray that you would challenge each of us through the work of your spirit to press on towards maturity in the Christian life, to be conformed into the image of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

That's my prayer, and I pray it in his name. And God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated. One of the most joyful, fulfilling, and anticipated moments for me in sports happened this year.

[6 : 14] It was not the Rams winning the Super Bowl back in February. Honestly, I didn't even care who won the Super Bowl. It wasn't Tiger Woods returning in April to the Masters after some serious leg injuries, though that was a little bit impressive.

For me, by far, I mean, it's not even close. The biggest moment in sports that has happened this year had to be the retirement of Duke University's head basketball coach, Coach K.

I mean, I was singing ding-dong, the witch is dead, the witch is dead. And if you think I'm being a little bit too harsh, I would remind you that Coach K has coached a team whose mascot is the devil. So I'm just saying he might be the Antichrist. I'm just saying he might, might be the Antichrist. You never know, right? Now, as much, and you can likely tell this, as I dislike Duke basketball, there was a Sports Illustrated article a few years ago that did capture my attention.

The article was about the relationship between Coach K and one of his prized recruits, a player by the name of Jabari Parker, who went second in the NBA draft overall in 2014.

[7 : 39] Parker was a major recruit coming into college, and oftentimes those types of basketball players think they know more than they do.

They're often kind of pampered in high school, and this can often create hard conversations with a college coach. The article described one such difficult conversation between Coach K and Jabari. The article stated the following, and I quote, An assistant texted Parker that the coach wanted to see him in the theater where the team studies film.

He entered and found Coach K sitting high above him in the top row. Come in and have a seat, the coach said. You think you're in trouble, don't you?

Yeah, I do. Well, this ain't one of those meetings. Sitting side by side, they watched video of a scrimmage. The coach hit pause.

[8 : 39] Look at your feet. They're in the wrong position. Parker nodded. Then Coach K stood and demonstrated the correct stance. Moments later, he stopped the tape again.

Look at your hands. They're not ready. I got to change that, Parker said. On the next sequence, Coach K zeroed in on Parker's hips.

They're turned in the wrong direction. Listen, this is about precision, about doing things that create better habits. It's what the guys I coach in the summer do.

Kobe, LeBron, Durant, that they are precise. After an hour, Coach K turned off the film.

I never realized I looked that bad, Parker said. And Coach leaned in and looked into Parker's eyes and said, It's not personal.

[9 : 44] It's the truth. It's not personal. It's the truth. Parker left the theater energized.

Have you ever had one of those conversations in life? Faith family, have any of you ever had one of those conversations that helped you grow up, helped you get better, helped change the direction that your life was headed?

Maybe for you, it was a teacher that said, If you don't focus, you're going to fail. Maybe for you, it was a boss that said, If your performance doesn't pick up, you're going to be fired.

Maybe it was a bank that said, If you don't start making the payments, you'll be foreclosed. Maybe it was a coach that said, If you don't get better, you're going to be off the team. Maybe for you, it was a police officer that said, One more time, and you'll be arrested.

Maybe it was a doctor that said, If you don't change your habits, you won't get better. Maybe it was a parent that said, If you don't follow the rules, you'll be asked to move out.

[10:56] Maybe it was a pastor that said, Repent, or you will perish. But whatever the case, my guess is, and I want you to think about those conversations in your life, many of us, most of us, if not all of us, have had conversations, the kind of conversation that wasn't personal, but it was true, and it was meant to help us grow up.

That is exactly what the book of Hebrews is all about. That's exactly why the writer of Hebrews is writing this letter in the first place. Let me give you just a small sample size of what the author is addressing.

Look at Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 1. It says, Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away, lest we go backwards.

Look at chapter 4, verse 11. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Hebrews chapter 6, verse 1. Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity. Let us grow up, not laying on again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.

[12:14] Hebrews chapter 12, verse 1. It says, Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

The author wants these believers to get better, to mature, to grow, to press forward in their faith. Now, why would that be the main point of the whole letter?

Why would the writer write this? Well, this letter was written to Jewish Christians who were living just outside of Jerusalem around 64 to 66 A.D.

And during that time, Christians were facing serious persecution. You even sense in the letter that some of these recipients had friends who had been put in prison for their faith.

And so Christians are facing this persecution, but Jews at this point in history were not being persecuted. So everybody come in here for just a moment and think with me.

[13:25] If you were a Jew who converted to Christianity and now Christians are being persecuted, but Jews are not, what would you be tempted to do?

Go back to Judaism. I'm just going to go back to my former life. I'm just going to go back to the old ways. I'm going to go back to the old habits. I'm going to go back to Judaism so it's safe.

I don't want to go through the persecution of being a Christian, and so I'll just drift back to Judaism. And the author writes these chapters under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to say, no, you're not, for the consequences of such backwardness is devastating.

What you need to do is grow up. What you need to do is mature and keep pressing forward in your faith.

[14:25] The whole book of Hebrews is a grow up conversation. He calls these Christians into the film room of the Christian life and addresses one thing after another to encourage them towards maturity.

Look at verse 12 of our main passage this evening. Hebrews 5 verse 12 says, for though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God.

You need milk, not solid food. This author is concerned, and his concern here is the spiritual immaturity of these Christians.

This is a bit of an intervention, if you will. If you take the analogy that I opened the sermon with, they're called into the film room of the Christian life, and the author starts addressing, look at your hands.

Look at your hips. Look at the way your head is turned. Look at all these aspects of the Christian life and stop and think about it, except it's not hands, head, and hips.

[15:39] It's this. Think about the priesthood. You go back to the Old Testament priesthood, you're going back to something that was temporary. When instead you have a priesthood in Christ, that's eternal.

Okay? At any point you want to say amen and participate, faith family, you are more than welcome to, all right? Because these are fantastic points you are missing. Here we go. And not just the priesthood, but think about the law.

I mean, the Old Testament law, the thing you're wanting to go back to, well, that was delivered by angels. That was delivered through Moses, but Jesus is greater than...

Listen, angels worship Jesus, and Jesus is greater than Moses. So why would you go back to that when you have this? Or not just the priesthood or the law.

Think about the covenants. The Old Covenant didn't remove sin. They had to continually offer sacrifices.

[16:43] And every year on the Day of Atonement, they would offer up a sacrifice for all the sins that were missed throughout the year. And guess what they would do the next year? Insert black eyed peas. And then they'd do it again.

And then they'd do it again. And then they'd do it again because sin wasn't forgiven. But Christ, Christ offered up a once for all final sacrifice for sins.

Or think about the confidence. You know that people under the Old Covenant, they didn't have any confidence to approach God. When they approached God, they were fearful. They were like unhealthily afraid.

But under Christ, you can approach God's throne boldly. You have a great high priest who has already interceded for you.

And so you can come before the throne of God with confidence. You got to grow up. Not go back.

[17:45] Why? Are you thinking? Are you thinking with me? Why would you settle for milk when you could have solid food? Why would you settle for these things when so much more is yours in Christ?

Don't you understand? It's time to mature. It's time to grow up. Now, why is the author so concerned about their maturity? Well, first of all, notice this on the screen.

Well, maturity is normal. Things that do not mature, there's something wrong with them. Amen? Maturity is a normal part of life.

Look again at verse 12 where it says, for though by this time you ought to be teachers. In other words, there's something wrong. There's been plenty of time for you to be further along and you're not there.

You ought to be at this point and you're not there yet. Meaning, there's something wrong here.

There's a concern that ought to get your attention because maturity is a normal thing.

[18:55] Immaturity is abnormal, unnatural. Something's not functioning as it should. Now, it's hard for us to really get our minds around this because I don't know if you agree with me, but we live in a culture that celebrates immaturity.

Amen? Our culture loves immaturity. I mean, take for instance, like the movies where you have grown men that act like giant kids and that's funny.

Or delayed adolescence, as many of you know. 30 is the new 18. Let me say that again. 30 is the new 18. A lot of the life commitments and responsibilities that used to be true of an 18-year-old are now maybe true of a 30-year-old.

Adolescence is delayed. We celebrate youth and do everything we can to avoid getting old. We accept a manhood that is perfectly fine approaching life with no plan.

So Lloyd, you graduated Lakewood, right? Yes, sir. What are you going to do now? Yeah, Lloyd, what are your plans for the future? Spend as much time possible with Diane before she leaves?

[20:13] Seriously, Lloyd? I'm totally and completely serious. Not really. You mean like career? I don't know.

I've thought about this quite a bit, sir, and I would have to say, considering what's waiting out there for me, I don't want to sell anything, buy anything, or process anything as a career.

I don't want to sell anything bought or processed or buy anything sold or processed or process anything sold, bought, or processed or repair anything sold, bought, or processed.

You know, as a career, I don't want to do that. So my father's in the army. He wants me to join, but I can't work for that corporation. So what I've been doing lately is kickboxing, which is a new sport, but I think it's got a good future.

As far as career longevity, I don't really know because, you know, you can't really tell. If you're 8 and 6 as a fighter, you know, it's no good. You know, you have to be great, but I can't really tell if I'm

great until I've had a couple of pro fights. But I haven't been that gown yet.

[21 : 23] I don't know, I can't figure it all out tonight, so I'm just going to hang with your daughter. Exactly. That look he gives at the end, like, that's not the answer I was looking for.

Now, that clip, let's be honest, it summarizes a lot of our culture. This kind of like, I have no direction, I really have no idea where I'm going to go, there's no sense of maturity or responsibility or taking ownership of things.

This is something that is celebrated in American culture, but it ought not be. Maturity is a normal thing. Growing up and progressing is something that's a natural part of life.

For example, it's grounded in creation. So for instance, God creates Adam and Eve, he gives them dominion over creation, and what does he tell them to do with it? Work it, keep it, advance it, move it along till you get to Revelation chapter 21, and you have a mature creation that comes down.

The entire created order was made with a plan that would be completed. Think about Christ and his own life and how he matured. Luke chapter 2 says that he increased in wisdom and stature.

[22 : 36] So Jesus, even though he was perfect in his morality, had to mature in his humanity. Let me say that again. Even though he was perfect in his morality, had to mature in his humanity.

He wasn't born 33-year-old Jesus. He was a baby, and he grew and mature and advanced. This is a normal part of what it means to live life.

Think about the expectation of just Christianity. I'll give you several verses here that speak about the idea that we're born again, that is, we come into the faith, and we grow in the faith.

1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 20. Brothers, do not be children in your thinking, but in your thinking be mature. 1 Corinthians 13, 11. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, and I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 14. So that we would no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

[23 : 43] Rather, speaking truth and love, we're to grow up in every way into him that is into Christ who is the head. Philippians chapter 1, verse 6. I'm sure of this, that he that began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3, 18. Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2, verse 1. Put away all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander like newborn infants.

Long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation. In other words, on and on and on, the expectation to be a Christian is that you'll grow, that you will mature.

It's a part of creation. It was a part of Christ's life. It's the expectation of Christianity. And you even know this practically in the very cycle of life you live.

What I mean is, again, it's normal in life for things to mature. You expect a baby to grow up and be an adult. You expect a puppy to grow up and be a dog.

[24 : 56] You expect a kitten, wait for it, to grow up and be useless. Like, you know that. It's an easy expectation.

Like, you just know this is a natural part of life. If you have a baby in the first year, it hasn't grown at all. You're not taking pictures and showing that off like it's cute.

You have a real concern for your child right here. That's exactly why the author of Hebrews is writing this letter. He is concerned with Christians who are willing to slide back and drift back into the old habits rather than mature maturity and the full manhood of being in Christ.

He is deeply, deeply concerned. And why are they immature? What has led to the immaturity of these Christians? Look at verse 11. About this we have much to say and it's hard to explain not because it's hard to explain.

It's hard to explain since you've become dull of hearing. In other words, the issue is actually not the content. The issue is not actually what needs to be addressed.

[26 : 19] The issue is you don't want to hear it. You've become dull in your listening. There are two issues here that the author mentions that has caused their immaturity and the first is their lack of knowledge.

That's what the author means here by the phrase dull of hearing. It doesn't mean they've had hearing loss physically. It just means they, listen, they no longer have a passion and a hunger for the truth of God.

That's a concern. Amen? I want you to think about your life tonight. Do you have that passion for the Word of God? Do you long to learn and be taught and listen and study?

Do you want to know more about the things of God than you did two years ago? The author says, we should go past these elementary things, but you don't want to.

We shouldn't have to lay down, again, the basic elementary principles of the Word of God, but we have to because you don't want to advance. You don't want to go further in your learning.

[27 : 27] Listen, like a baby longing for milk, like a deer panting for water, like a starving man searching for food in the back alley, mature Christians cannot get enough of the truth of God.

Let me say that again. This time I won't say it as loudly. Like a baby, think about a baby waking up in the middle of the night screaming for milk, that longing, a deer that's panting for water, a starving man searching through the dumpster in the alley because he can't stop his search for food.

That's the kind of imagery mature Christians have when it comes to the truth of God. Dull of hearing is when you get to the point where you're like, yeah, I'm not really hungry anymore.

I don't really want to learn anymore. I put it this way and I've seen a lot of Christians like this. I call them Mr. Practical. Here's what they're like.

They pray every day, which is awesome. They read their devotional with a cup of coffee. He loves his wife, helps others when he can, loves his church, even serves.

[28 : 42] But when it comes to studying the Bible and actually learning the things of God, he would say, you know, I'm not much of a reader. I don't really have enough time.

In other words, he could have a big steak, but he's become happy with the bottle. The baby bottle, not the other kind of bottle, right?

So you don't misinterpret what I'm saying here. In other words, he's become dull of hearing because he doesn't want to learn anymore. He doesn't want to go any deeper. He's fine with the elementary things.

Look at me. When that becomes true of you or I, there's a serious concern. There's no more longing for the truth. Here's the second thing is that is lack of practice because there's another side of this coin that's just as important.

This won't be on the screen, but notice verse 13. And by the way, I'm about to not preach for five weeks, so this might go really long tonight, okay? I may get my five weeks worth tonight.

[29 : 46] Verse 13 says, everyone who lives on milk is, notice, unskilled in the word of righteousness. So it's not just a lack of knowledge, it's a lack of, you could say, obedience or a lack of practice.

Here's the idea. On one hand, there's a problem when you don't want to grow more in your understanding of the truth of God. The other side of the coin is this.

There's a concern when you don't want to apply the things you do know. And the problem is we end up with this dichotomy where we think knowledge is, or a maturity is just Bible knowledge, but we don't use any of it.

Or we're very practical and we serve more than anybody in the church and we love to give money away, but we don't want to grow past the elementary doctrines of the faith.

And what the author is saying is both of those are a problem. It's an unhealthy, it's like one arm is growing and the other one isn't. No, the body needs to grow in a healthy way.

[30 : 49] You need to be balanced. That is, you need to grow in your understanding of the truth of God and you need to use what you have. Both of these things are what the author is saying these Christians are struggling to do.

Faith family, what do you call somebody that you have to tell over and over and over again to do something and yet they don't do it and don't say, my husband. Okay, no. It's a child.

Have you ever experienced that as a parent? They know that they're supposed to clean their room. They know they're supposed to put the dishes away. In other words, they know what they're supposed to do, but they don't ever do it.

That's immaturity. That's what the author is saying here. See, when we think about maturity, we often, again, think this is just Bible knowledge and we kind of have this imagery.

This is kind of the way I viewed it growing up was almost, you got to start with VeggieTales because everybody should eat one and then you move to youth group experience and you'll learn some things there and then you'll probably get into Beth Moore Bible study.

[31 : 53] Eventually, you'll start reading C.S. Lewis. Now you're starting to really get up there. You're in the big boy leagues now and then when you're really mature, you get into prophecy and you become obsessed with end time events and you know every time a red heifer is born in Israel.

I mean, you know every single charted detail and then if you're really spiritual, you learn Greek and Hebrew. That is not at all what the author is talking about here.

It couldn't be further from the truth. What the author is basically saying is like what Jesus said to Nicodemus, which is, you already have knowledge, but you've missed the point.

Nicodemus, you know Ezekiel and yet you've missed salvation. There is a real concern for many of us to have knowledge of the truth, but no obedience to Christ.

knowledge of the truth, but no obedience to Christ. It's like a man with a garage full of tools that doesn't know how to use any of them.

[33 : 06] Don't point. All right? Or like a lady who has a closet full of shoes and doesn't wear any of them. The question is, what?

I got a little too close to home, I think, over here. What's the point of having all those tools if you don't use it? Of having all those shoes if you don't wear them? Why have all this knowledge if you're not going to obey Jesus?

Notice this on the screen. Maturity is more than being schooled in the Word. It's being skilled with the Word. It's learning it and learning how to use it.

Learning it, I want to know more. I can't get enough. I want to understand the things of God and then, Lord, help me use it. And I want to know more. I want to grow. I don't want to be dull of hearing.

I don't want to get to the point where I'm just settling for elementary things and I want to use it.

That's what maturity looks like. Maturity is more than just being schooled.

[34 : 08] It's being skilled in the Word of God. Notice this on the screen. Spiritual immaturity can have strong convictions about the time of Jesus' return while not living like He will.

And I know a lot of Christians, I pray I'm not one of them, that has really strong, I mean, they will fight you over when Jesus is going to return but aren't concerned about actually living like He will return.

You see, a mature Christian wants to study the Word of God, not be dull of hearing, but also use the Word of God. I gotta, I gotta, I'm not even, I'm not even to my main point.

You better get comfortable. Alright, so, I'll make this next one quick. Number three is notice the consequences. Look at verse four of chapter six. Verse four of chapter six.

I'm not going to say a lot on this. He says, it's impossible in the case of those who have been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift, have shared the Holy Spirit, tasted the goodness of the Word of God, the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away to restore them to repentance since they were crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding Him into contempt.

[35 : 27] So, there's a lot of debate around this as one of the most controversial passages in the book of Hebrews. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it. I've actually preached on this with a lot of detail, and so if you're interested in a more thorough explanation of what I think verses four through six talk about, let me know.

I'd be happy to email you that manuscript or send you the sermon so you can get more information there. All I'm going to do tonight is say this. First of all, I'm a hundred percent, a hundred percent convinced after studying this, he is not describing a Christian that can lose their salvation.

For those of you that don't know me, you should know this about me. I am absolutely convinced biblically that a genuine Christian will persevere to the end. There is no such thing biblically as someone losing their salvation.

And if you want to talk about that, I'm happy to talk about that, but I am convinced the Bible teaches that. So that's not the point here. The point is simply this. If there's no growth, eventually there becomes a concern that there isn't life.

If there's no growth, there eventually becomes a real biblical concern that there's no life.

[36 : 51] The author is essentially saying, Christians, if you go back to Judaism and you slide back into those old ways, you may very well demonstrate that you were never truly in Christ.

Because true faith perseveres. It moves forward. And so again, think of 1 Timothy. This won't be on the screen. Train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way. Listen, as it holds the promise for the present life and the life to come. In other words, how do I know that I'm in the vine? I'm bearing fruit. If there's no fruit bearing in my life, there's a real concern that I'm not connected to the vine. Do you see? This isn't a having salvation and losing it.

It's that if there's no growth or maturity at all, there's really not any life of which to have confidence in. That is his concern. So, the consequences of immaturity are very serious.

[38 : 05] So what's the solution? Now we're to the main point. Yes. All that was introduction. Now it's to the main point. Here it is. Verse 12. I'm kidding. I don't like much more as far as you know.

Verse 12. Verse 5. Or chapter 5. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God.

So now we see the cure for spiritual immaturity which is this. You ready? Here it is. We need other people to help us mature.

The author is saying here to these Christians, you need someone else to teach you. You're not going to get out of your immaturity by yourself.

And this is a theme in the book of Hebrews. Let me give you just one example. This is Hebrews 10. Verse 24. And let's say it. Us. That is together.

[39 : 07] Let us consider how to stir one another to love and good works. Not neglecting to meet. There's our word. Together.

As is the habit of some. But encouraging one another. And all the more as you see the day drawing near.

In other words, faith family, notice this on the screen. Christian maturity is a community project. You can't grow up without one another.

I am all for fishing. But there is no growing in maturity all by yourself in the fishing boat on the weekend.

You need one another. I need you. You need me. We need one another. Because there's only so much growth.

[40 : 01] Somebody just say preach preacher. There is only so much growth that will happen in your life by yourself. Yes, can you study the Bible by yourself? Sure. Can you pray by yourself? Absolutely.

But that growth isn't full, whole, and complete growth. The kind of growth that we need is a growth that can only happen together.

You need someone to teach you. You need someone to what? Stir you up to love and good works. so don't neglect to meet together.

Because sometimes you have those conversations that aren't personal but they're true. And they're meant to say, Wes, look at your hands.

They're out of place. Hey, look at your attitude. It really isn't what it should be. man, your approach to that sister, your approach to that brother, not the best approach.

[41 : 08] We need that together. I need that. You need that. Because Christian maturity is a community project. We can't grow alone.

The reason why we need each other is because we can't grow without each other. Can I just read that again? The reason why we need each other is because we can't grow without each other.

Dr. Henry Cloud writes the following, I'm almost done, hang with me, about the formative connection between parents and infants.

Listen to this. This is really, really well written and also has great implications for how we think about our togetherness. He says this, quote, if you feed babies but deprive them of meaningful relational connections, an attachment or bond, they will not grow as they should.

They will have lower body weights, experience more illness, and will not reach their physical potential. The damage done from lack of connection goes even deeper.

[42 : 21] If you look at their brains brains, by brain scan, you'll see black holes, spaces where the neurons did not form. The physical hard wiring of their brains is incomplete.

Children who have experienced these deprivations often have smaller brains. That is why we see behavior defects and performance problems later.

And the reason they have these issues is the lack of human connection. That is really, really good. Not just about the forming of a baby through the connection with the parent, but the implications of that is true based on what the author of Hebrews is saying about our togetherness.

Our togetherness matters because without that connection with one another, we will not form, we will not grow, we will not be conformed into the image of Christ as we should.

Faith family, we are his body, bought for unity, for the sake of ministry, to do so generously that we would mature in Christ.

[43 : 38] Life is full of grow up conversations. We've all experienced them in one way or the other. When we're called into the game room of life and we're given instruction that helps us be a better follower of Jesus Christ.

In fact, think about all the times that Jesus had to call his star players into the film room. Remember when he addressed Peter's self confidence?

Remember when he addressed James and John's pride? Remember when he had to address Judas' doubt? It wasn't personal, but it was true because they needed to grow up.

And Jesus was not only doing that for them, he is doing the same thing for us now. He is conforming us into his image, the image of a savior who through suffering grew in wisdom and learned obedience.

obedience. And while I know personally that our maturity often seems like it's never going to happen, let me tell you this tonight.

[44 : 52] Christ will finish the work he began in you. He will finish it and he will do it through our being together.

And all God's people said, amen. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this message tonight. I 100% needed it.

There's, I can't imagine any of us in this room that being challenged towards maturity would be something we would leave saying, yeah, I didn't really need that. All of us have areas where we need to grow up.

For some of us, we're just content with elementary things and we've become dull of hearing and we need that passion to know your word, to grow stronger.

Others, it's we know a lot but we don't practice hardly any of it. And we need to become skilled in the word of righteousness so that we might be a mature adulthood.

[45 : 54] That is to grow in conformity of Jesus. And that happens and it's just so clear from your word. That happens through being together. It doesn't happen in isolation. It doesn't happen in loneliness.

It happens through relationships where we stir one another up to love and good works. So thank you for this faith family. Thank you for our togetherness.

Thank you for what we've learned these past few weeks about the importance of our being together. And Lord, I pray that you would keep us together and keep us growing into the image of your son, Jesus Christ.

And I pray it in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.