

Defining Maturity

Our Holy and Loving God desires us to know Him and become like Him (Eph. 4:24; 1 Jn. 3:2; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:1; Phil 3:10). Our journey towards maturity begins the moment we recognize what God has done for us by grasping His incredible love, grace and patience by which He invites us into a closer relationship with Him (1 Jn. 4:19; Rom. 5:8). God sustains a very strong “hands on” approach to Maturity in the lives of those who wish to follow Him. Our response is to place ourselves in an environment where He can transform us. This includes following the commands to love God (our vertical relationship) and love your neighbour (our horizontal relationships) that Christ stated sums up all the Law and the prophets (Mt. 22:37-40). It is a journey filled with encountering God, who powerfully works to move people from infancy to adulthood in their relationship with Him. This definition of the “journey toward Maturity” is simply a baseline to help us discover where we are at in the journey. It is only a beginning, and there is a point at which we can all become Spiritually Mature in Christ. Below are some areas of growth that lead to maturity.

Knowing God

Information about God TO Intimacy with God

Believers are invited by God to encounter Him intellectually and experientially. It requires that they be open to **God’s Word, Prayer** and allowing other mature believers to guide them in ways of having an intimate relationship with God. While understanding God may begin with information, it is necessary to be open to various practices of communicating and experiencing Him. (Mt. 22:37-40; 1 Cor. 3:1-2; 14:20; Eph. 1: 18; 4:12-13; Heb. 5:11-14; Gal. 4:3; 1 Tim. 4:7; Phil. 1:9-11; 3:12-16; Col. 1:28; 3: 16; 1 Jn. 4:6-12).

Transparency (Real/Genuine)

Closed (Individualism) TO Open (Community)

God desires to use believers in the transformation process of other believers to help expose things that hinder them from growing in their relationship with Him. Being open to receive and speak the truth in love is essential to developing healthy relationships. This will also bring about a tangible experience of “being one” together by loving God and one another (Acts 2:42-47; Eph. 4:13-16, 25; Jn. 17; 1 Cor. 14:26; 1 Jn. 1:5-2:11; Zech 8:16; 1 Tim. 3:4, 7; Titus 1:6ff.; 1 Cor. 4:5; Lk. 11:33-36).

Character (Transformation/Restoration)

Self-Serving TO God Honoring

Believers open themselves to God’s transforming power by asking Him to “search them and know them” (Ps. 139:23-24), determining to put off the attitudes and behaviours that lead to death (selfishness) and put on those that lead to life (Gal. 4:19; 5:16-17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10; Mt. 18:3; Rom. 8:1-13; 12:9; 1 Tim. 3:2-10; 4:16). This path helps believers persevere in cultivating the characteristics of God (Gal. 5:22-26; 1 Thess. 5:19-22; Col. 3:12-17; 1 Tim. 4:7; James 1:4; Lk. 1:6).

Purpose

Confusion TO Clarity

Allows believers to more and more **discover and use their God-given abilities and spiritual gifts to serve** God and others as an expression of His enabling love and power. Clarifying and living out this purpose means that we will also be able to **help others become Mature Followers of Jesus** (Rom 12:1-8; James 2:14-17; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; 1 Jn. 3:16-20; 4:18; Jn. 15:8-17; Phil. 1:9-11; 2 Cor. 10:5b; Phil. 3:7)