

Press On to Maturity

Hebrews 6:1 "... press on to maturity..."

It is clear that the message in Hebrews, chapter 6, is that Christians are to move on to maturity. It stresses that what's important is "faith working by love" in times of difficulty and distress. The basic teachings are to spur one on to righteous living, because one may know the basic teachings and yet fall back because of inactivity, pressure from others, or the allure of a former lifestyle.

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.
1 Corinthians 14:20

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:17-18

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15



CHARACTERISTICS OF MATURITY

Fruit of the Spirit Gal.5:22-23

Having listed the deeds of the flesh (the desires and lusts that well up within—5:16-21), there is a list of the "fruit of the Spirit" (the desires of the Spirit that dwells in us):

Love – affection or benevolence

Joy – cheerfulness, i.e. calm delight: gladness

Peace – quietness, rest

Patience – forbearance or fortitude: longsuffering.

Kindness – usefulness, i.e. moral excellence (in character or demeanor: gentleness)

Goodness – virtue or beneficence (state or quality of being charitable or beneficial.)

Faithfulness – constancy in such profession; assurance, belief, fidelity.

Gentleness – humility; meekness.

Self-control – temperance. [Note 5:24-26]

A well-developed faith

Obedient faith Rom. 1:5 – One that doesn't question, argue or gainsay.

Working faith Gal.5:6 – One that is active, dynamic.

Stable faith Col.2:5 – One that is not easy shaken by trial or opposition.

Perfected faith Jam.2:22 – One that is complete because of deeds consistent with profession.

A faith that is well-supported 2 Peter 1:5-7

Having stated that “God has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature”, we are instructed to add to our faith the following:

Moral excellence – manliness (valor), virtue.

Knowledge – knowing (the act)

Self-control – temperance.

Perseverance – cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy:--enduring, patient continuance (waiting).

Godliness – piety; specially the gospel scheme: godliness, holiness.

Kindness – fraternal affection: love of the brethren.

Love – affection or benevolence

EVIDENCE OF MATURITY

Careful when speaking

Doesn't tell all that is known.

“A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaim folly.” Pro.12:23

Isn't hasty with words.

“Do you see a man who is hasty in words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” Pro.29:20

Has learned to control the “door” of the mouth.

“Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.” Psa.141:3

“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.” Jam.1:26

Speaks with grace, kindness.

“Seasoned as with salt.” Col.4:6

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Pro.25:11

“By forbearance a ruler is persuaded, a soft tongue breaks bones.” Pro.25:15

Speaks truth.

“Speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor.” Eph.4:25

Refrains from participating in gossip. Refuses to listen or pass it on.

“He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals the matter.” Pro.11:13

The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body. Pro.26:22

Not overly disturbed by what others say

Realizes that some people will find fault—that there is no stopping them at times.

Understands that fault-finders need no ammunition: they can manufacture their own.

Psa.64:1-6

Knows that it's impossible to escape criticism—even by doing nothing.

Does what is right and lets God judge. 1Co.4:3-4

Gives credit when due

Gives free and impartial in praise. 1Ti.5:21

Appreciates the efforts of others. Phi.4:14ff., 2Co.8:1-4, 9:1-2

Doesn't take credit for another's efforts. Gal.6:4

Not anxious to receive 'due'

Doesn't do good to receive praise. Mat.6:1

Realizes that praise is most uncertain and often given unfairly.

"Much good can be done when no one worries about who gets the credit."

Interested in others, not just self

Sees others more important than oneself. Phi.2:3-4

Understands that greatness is achieved by serving, not being served.

"But through love serve one another." Gal.5:13

Interested in the affairs of others, but not a meddler. (cf. Pro.26:17)

"...attend to your own business..." 1Th.4:11

Is a joy to be around because of a willingness to share others' burdens, grief, and happiness. Rom.12:15, Gal.6:2

A life too small to include others, is too small to include Lord.

Preserves an open mind

Is quick to hear, slow to pass judgment. Jam.1:19

Doesn't condemn, sentence, and execute before hearing.

"He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him." Pro.18:13

Retains an open mind, yet is aware that having an open mind doesn't mean it's never made up.

No one is so ignorant as the one who refuses to be taught.

No one is so blind as one who refuses to see. Joh.9:40

Slow to anger

Has learned to control his temper.

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger pacifies contention. Pro.15:18

Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. Pro.26:21

Content

Has learned that contentment is a necessary ingredient of godliness. 1Ti.6:6-10

Is able to be content in all circumstances. Phi.4:11

Able to admit to own faults

Has learned to be honest with self, as well as others.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Jam.5:16

Knows that in order for sins to be forgiven they must be acknowledged. 1Jo.1:8-10

Understands the characteristics of sin

Realizes that one sins when enticed by lust in the heart. Jam.1:14-16

Understands that no one is exempt from being tempted. 1Co.10:12-13

Knows that "flee" often is the best course of action when tempted.



Mature

“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

Ephesians 4:14-16