

Pressing On to Maturity

Hebrews 6:1 “... *press on to maturity...*”



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

INTRODUCTION

The clear 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 teachings of Christ are to spur one on to righteous living. It is possible for one to know the teachings and yet not mature due to inactivity, pressure from others, or the allure of a former or alternate lifestyle.

ADMONITIONS

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

THE GOAL

"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

**Disciples are to grow up spiritually: Growing in knowledge and in application.
Growth is to continue as long as there is life.**

Note: **mature** (Greek: *teleiotes*): full growth or development; fulfillment, completion; stressing the actual accomplishment of the end in view.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MATURITY

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Following a list of the deeds of the flesh (the desires and lusts that well up within), there is a list of the “fruit of the Spirit” (the desires of the Spirit) that dwells in us in Galatians 5:22-23:

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.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Galatians 5:24-25

A WELL-DEVELOPED FAITH

Obedient faith – One that doesn’t question, argue, or gainsay.

Through whom [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name’s sake. Romans 1:5

Working faith – One that is active, dynamic.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. Galatians 5:6

Stable faith – One that is not easily shaken by trial or opposition.

For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. Colossians 2:5

Perfected faith – One that is complete because actions are consistent with what is professed.

You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected. James 2:22

A FAITH THAT IS WELL-SUPPORTED

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 the following qualities to our faith in 2 Peter 1:5-7:

Moral excellence – manliness (valor), virtue.

Knowledge – knowing, comprehending.

Self-control – temperance, moderation.

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

Godliness – piety; especially 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.” Proverbs 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.” Proverbs 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.” Psalm 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.” James 1:26

Speaks with grace, kindness.

“Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Colossians 4:6

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

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

Speaks truth.

“Speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor.” Ephesians 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.” Proverbs 11:13

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

NOT OVERLY DISTURBED BY WHAT OTHERS SAY

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

Understands that fault-finders will fabricate their own.

Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; Preserve my life from dread of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of evildoers, From the tumult of those who do iniquity, Who have sharpened their tongue like a sword. They aimed bitter speech as their arrow, To shoot from concealment at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him, and do not fear. They hold fast to themselves an evil purpose; They talk of laying snares secretly; They say, "Who can see them?" They devise injustices, saying, "We are ready with a well-conceived plot"; For the inward thought and the heart of a man are deep. Psalm 64:1-6

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

Does what is right and lets God judge.

But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. 1 Corinthians 4:3-4

Gives credit when credit is due.

Gives praise freely and impartially.

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. 1 Timothy 5:21

Appreciates the efforts of others.

For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 2 Corinthians 9:1-2

Doesn't take credit for another's efforts.

But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. Galatians 6:4

NOT ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE PRAISE

Doesn't do good to receive praise.

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 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.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

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

“But through love serve one another.” Galatians 5:13

Interested in the affairs of others, but is not a meddler.

“... attend to your own business ...” 1 Thessalonians 4:11

Make sure that none of you suffers as a ... troublesome meddler. 1 Peter 4:15

Is a joy to be around because of a willingness to share others' burdens, grief, sorrow, or happiness.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Romans 12:15

Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

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

PRESERVES AN OPEN MIND

Is quick to hear, slow to pass judgment.

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20

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

“He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.” Proverbs 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.

SLOW TO ANGER

Has learned to control emotions.

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

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

CONTENTMENT

Has learned that contentment is a necessary ingredient of godliness.

But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 1 Timothy 6:6-8

Is able to be content in any and all circumstances.

Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. Philippians 4:11

ABLE TO ADMIT 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. James 5:16

Knows that in order for sins to be forgiven they must be acknowledged.

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:8-10

UNDERSTANDS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SIN

Realizes that one sins when enticed by lust in the heart.

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. James 1:14-15

Understands that no one is exempt from being tempted.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Knows that “flee” often is the best or only course of action when tempted.

Press On!

