



## THE MEASURE OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

*"Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..." (Eph 4:13)*

Those who make claim to Jesus as Lord have a standing command from God to become more and more like Christ. That is to say, that the longer we know Him, the more like Him we should be. Our lives as followers of Jesus Christ should be gradually taking on more Christ-likeness in attitudes and actions.

In that passage in Ephesians, Paul has said that God placed leaders in the church for the purpose of teaching and training others to do the work of ministry and to help God's church be united in faith, knowledgeable about Jesus Christ, and to be maturing so as to become more like Christ in every aspect of life.

The word "perfect" is from a Greek word that refers to something that has been brought to completion, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness. It is used of someone or something that is mature or full grown.

It is God's desire that all who belong to Him are in the process of growing up spiritually. Paul wrote in Colossians 2:6-7 that having received Christ Jesus the Lord, we were then to *"walk in Him rooted and built up in Him and [to be] established in the faith."*

The bane of God's church over the centuries has been the overwhelming lack of spiritual maturity among those who claim allegiance to Christ. The old Baptist evangelist Vance Havner was right when he said, "Most Christians are more shaky about what they believe than they are shaken by what they believe."

So many in the church today are not rooted and grounded in the faith. They topple over at the slightest wind of adversity. They bail out at the first difficulty they encounter.

To lament the problem would do no real good. To be a part of the solution is where our focus should be.

The question is, **"How can I mature in Christ?"**  
The answer is both simple and complex.

It's simple in that we can further our maturity by spending time in God's presence in prayer, meditation, and the study of the scriptures. Those are positive things that we can do. They may take some discipline and prioritizing on our part, but essentially, they are simple things that we can do to help us to grow in Christ-likeness.

The complexity of our maturity is found in the long haul. Maturity is a process and it requires God's input. *"It's God who works in you both to will and do His good pleasure" (Ph.2:13).* God works things in (and out) of our lives over a period of time that serve to mature us. Relationships and circumstances, both good and bad, are all used by God to bring us *"to the stature of the fullness of Christ."*

As Paul puts it in Romans 8, God is working all things together for our good. The difficulty, from our perspective, is that we can't see how the painful circumstance could ever turn out for our good. God, through the prophet Isaiah said, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."* (Isa 55:8-9)

Our part in the spiritual maturity process is rather simple... pray, study, just obey God. His part in our maturity is far more wise and intricate than we can imagine.

William Cowper is attributed to have written the familiar phrase, *"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."*

One thing is certain; God is committed to growing us toward the likeness of His Son. Part of that process may, at times, be painful or bewildering, but like the old gospel song says, *"When you don't understand the way of His hand, trust His heart."*

Know this, God is, and always will be, more committed to us than we will ever be to Him. While we have our part to play in the maturing process, ultimately you are God's handiwork. Let Him create in you the image of His Son.

*Just some Food For Thought...*

*~ Pastor Frank*

