

Developing Spiritual Maturity

Today's world is characterized by many inventions which meet people's needs quickly and easily: instant foods, instant electronic communication and instant information over the internet. Christians must remember, however, that there is no such thing as "instant maturity" in the Christian experience. Becoming a Christian begins a lifelong adventure of knowing God better and loving him more. *(Adapted from Book 3 DFD, NAVPRESS)*

Romans 12:1–2 (NASB95)

Dedicated Service

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1–2 (NIV)

Living Sacrifices

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1–2 (The Message)

Place Your Life Before God

¹⁻² **12** So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Moving Toward Maturity

1. Read Ephesians 4:11-16

- a) What is God's desire for you? *Verses 13,15*

- b) What are some characteristics of immature Christians? *Verse 14*

- c) According to this passage, what characterizes a spiritually mature person?

2. Contrast man's old nature with the Christian's new nature. Ephesians 4:22-24

Old Nature

New Nature

3. Think carefully about Colossians 3:2-4. How do these verses relate to the chart below?

Justification	Past tense - I have been saved ... from the penalty of sin.	My position is in Christ
Sanctification	Present tense - I am being saved ... from the power of sin.	My condition is becoming like Christ.
Glorification	Future tense - I will be saved ... from the presence of sin.	My expectation is to be like Christ.

Your Starting Point

4. Examine Colossians 2:6-7.

a) How did you begin your life in Christ?

b) How should you continue to grow?

5. Consider Romans 5:1-5.

a) Because of your justification by faith in Christ, what practical benefits are yours to experience?

6. Read Ephesians chapter 1 and list several things which you have "in Christ".

- Verse _____, _____
- Verse _____, _____
- Verse _____, _____
- Verse _____, _____
- Verse _____, _____
- Verse _____, _____

The Process of Growth

7. A revealing parallel exists between physical life and spiritual life. What can you learn about this parallel from the following references?

1 Thessalonians 2:11

1 Timothy 4:8

Hebrews 5:13-14

1 Peter 2:2-3

How to Walk

8. What do the following scriptural guidelines tell you about your walk as a Christian?

Romans 8:4

2 Corinthians 5:7

Ephesians 5:7

1 John 2:6

The Mature Life

9. What attitude should a mature Christian possess? Philippians 3:13-15

10. What are some areas in which you can experience spiritual growth?

2 Peter 3:18

1 John 4:16-17

Summary

Moving Toward Maturity

God intends Christians to mature and become like Jesus Christ. God has saved Christians from the penalty of sin. They are presently engaged in a conflict with sin, but can anticipate a future with Christ free from sin.

Your Starting Point

Faith in Jesus Christ marks the beginning of Christian growth. The believer has God's resources available to him to help him grow.

The Process of Growth

Spiritual growth is similar to physical growth. It takes time as God works in the believer's life. Christians should reign in life, recognize that God is bringing to fulfillment the work which He began in them.

How to Walk

Growing in Christ is similar to walking. Following Christ's example and led by the Spirit, Christians are to walk in fellowship with Christ in faith and love.

The Mature Life

A mature Christian is one who continues to follow Christ, abounding in His work and experiencing His grace and love. God does not forget the work of the believer and will one day reward him.

(Adapted from Book 3 DFD, NAVPRESS)