



Measuring Spiritual Maturity Sunday September 03, 2006

What is spiritual maturity? What does it mean to be spiritually mature? How do we assess if we are truly maturing spiritually?

What Spiritual Maturity is NOT:

As we look into God's Word we will discover the following:

1. **Making a lot of noise**, being loud, being brash, aggressive, vociferous about your faith is NOT the same as being spiritually mature. 1 Kings 19:11,12 – God was not in the loud wind, earthquake or fire. He was in the still small voice!
2. **Manifesting spiritual gifts** is NOT the same as being spiritually mature. The Corinthian church were babies and carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1-3), but did not lack in the manifestations of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 1:7, 14:26)
3. **Ministry activity** is NOT the same as maturing – you could be doing a lot of busy ministry activity, but not necessarily maturing spiritually.

Quick Word Study

Three Greek words are used often in the New Testament in the context of spiritual maturity:

'teleios' = Complete—of full-age, mature, a perfect man.

It literally means full-age or to grow up, to be an adult. It is used often in the context of maturity. A person of full-age or perfect or complete man. It refers to grow in both mental and moral character.

'pleero' = to fill up, to be full off, diffuse, to be under the influence of.

It is also translated as complete but it literally means to fill up.

'katartizo' = to complete thoroughly, thorough equipping, thoroughly trained.

It is often translated as complete but its literal meaning is thoroughly equipped.

Matthew 5:48

⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect (*teleios*), just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Jesus challenges us to be full-grown people, people who are mature and of full-age (adults) because that is how God is! God is not childish!

Colossians 1:28,29

²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect (*teleios*) in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.



Our goal is to present every person perfect (“teleios”) of full-age.

Seven characteristics of spiritual maturity

(1) Christ-likeness

Ephesians 4:13

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

We must grow up into Him in all things (Ephesians 4:15).

This is the goal of Christian Ministry—to present each person of full-age (mature, adult) in Christ.

(2) Being perfect and complete in all the will of God for your life

In every area you are fully aligned to the will of God.

Colossians 4:12

¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect (*teleios*) and complete (*pleero*) in all the will of God.

(3) You are thoroughly equipped for every good work to do what God has ordained for your life

2 Corinthians 13:9,11

⁹ For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete (*katartizo*).

¹¹ Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete (*katartizo*). Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Hebrews 13:20, 21

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ make you complete (*katartizo*) in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Luke 6:40

⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained (*katartizo*) will be like his teacher.

Ephesians 4:11,12

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

¹² for the equipping (*katartismos*) of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

(4) You are able to receive solid meat

Hebrews 5:11–14

¹¹ Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (*teleios*), that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.



Hebrews 6:1–3

¹ Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection (*teleiotes*), not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do if God permits.

1 Corinthians 2:6,7

⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature (*teleios*), yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.

You need to be part of a good strong local church that is able to educate, expand, extend, equip, and empower you. If all you have is spiritual excitement and spiritual entertainment you are not going to mature spiritually.

(5) Your senses have been trained to discern good and evil

Hebrews 5:14

¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (*teleios*), that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

(6) You are putting away childish behavior

You put away childish way of understanding thinking and speaking.

1 Corinthians 13:11

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

1 Corinthians 3:1–4

¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;

³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

We cannot remain childish in our thoughts, understanding and words.

Self-centeredness is a mark of childishness. A child can only think of itself "me and mine". When you whole world is wrapped around "my needs", "my feelings", etc.-you are still a child.

To be carnal is being childish. Envy, division, strife, competition and selfish-ambition are all various forms of childish behavior.

Childish leaders! There are a lot of Christian leaders who are leadership positions because of a variety of reasons, and are yet "childish" – because of walking in envy, strife, competition, etc.

(7) You have your whole body and tongue in control

James 3:2

² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (*teleios*) man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Spiritual maturity is a process. It does not happen instantly.



It takes time. However, we have to do our part, it does not happen automatically.

Constantly progress in spiritual maturity!

Acts 20:32

Inheritance is never given to little children, but to adults. It is only when believers are built up by the Word (i.e. come to a place of maturity), that they can walk in their God-given inheritance.

Three areas in which we need to be established in the Word, in this order:

1. **Christian Faith:** Devotion to God, God's Word, Prayer, Faith, Who I am in Christ, baptism in the Holy Spirit, Confession of God's Word, etc.
2. **Life Skills:** Walking in love, obedience to parents/authority, decision making, marriage, etc.
3. **Equipping for Ministry:** Ministering to people, Exercising authority, ministering healing and deliverance, etc.



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