

# Marks of Maturity

# A child's greatest desire...

- “Big boy”
- BMOC
- Big Wheel”
- “You are only young once, but you can stay immature indefinitely”
- 1 Co.3:1-9
- After working with the Corinthians for years, Paul still has to talk to them like babies...

# NT speaks fervently about spiritual maturity

- 1 Co.14<sup>20</sup> Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature
- Col.1<sup>22</sup>...(Christ reconciled...) to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight... <sup>28</sup> Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus

# Immaturity at “Corinth” makes us appreciate mature Christians



# The mature. . . (Philippians)

## I. Abound in Whatever They Do, 1:9-11

## 9: love ... more and more abound

- Never satisfied with present level of growth
- Ro.13:10, love is the fulfillment of the law
- Gal.6:10, do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith

The mature don't look for excuses to lose, but for ways to win

## 9: knowledge

- Do we care about spiritual growth?

## 9: discernment

- Insight, judgment
- This is application of truth to life – Lightfoot
- Prov.23:12
  - Commit to Bible . . . .
    - Reading
    - Study
    - Teaching
    - Obedience

## 10-11: results

- Approve things that are excellent (superior to, best)

We need discernment in what we see . . .  
what we hear . . . what we believe

- Sincere: without hidden motives or pretense, pure. Sin-cere –
  - Sine cera – without wax
  - Tested by sunlight. Ep.5:13



## 10-11: results

- Approve things that are excellent
- Sincere
- Without offense: blameless; clear conscience
  - Do not stumble
  - Do not cause others to stumble
- Filled with fruit of righteousness: make full, 22

# The mature. . . (Philippians)

I. Abound in Whatever They Do, 1:9-11

II. They Have a Goal, 1:12-14, 20-21

Ph.1:12-14 ... 20-21 ... 2:1-5 –

## Willing to suffer imprisonment for gospel

- Acts 16, how the church began – Ph.4:22
- Ph.1:15-18, willing to endure mistreatment by envious brothers

## What goal could be worth such a cost?

- 20: magnify [honor, exalt] Christ
  - From Saul the assassin to Paul the apostle
- 21: mimic Christ. Gal.2:20
- 2:1-5: mine the mind of Christ (one mind)

Some have no spiritual goal;  
never reach spiritual maturity

- “For to me to live is money”; to die is what?
- “For to me . . . possessions”; to die is what?
- “For to me . . . fame”; to die is what?

Some have minimal goals;  
do as little as possible...still saved?

- “The best use of your life is to invest it in something that will outlast it” – Henry James

Do we really want to be like Jesus?

1. Lk.4:1-13, He resisted temptation. Do we?
2. Lk.4:15ff, He taught people. Do we?
3. Lk.6:12, He prayed often / fervently. Do we?

“If you don’t know where you’re going,  
any road will take you there”

# The mature. . . (Philippians)

I. Abound in Whatever They Do, 1:9-11

II. They Have a Goal, 1:12-24, 20-21

III. They Are God-Sufficient, 2:12-13

# Determined to obey God whether Paul was there or not

Not just obedience: fear and trembling

Based on . . .

1. What God has done for us in Christ
2. Wholesome dread of displeasing God

Ph.4:13

- Though Philippians is a personal letter of thanks, it contains 72 references to Godhead

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IV. They Are Concerned About Others,  
2:14-18



## Ph.2:14-18

- Set a good example before the world

## Ph.2:19-24

- Timothy had great care for brothers in Christ

## Ph.2:25-30

- Epaphroditus risked life for Paul and brothers in Philippi

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V. They Rejoice in the Lord, 3:1

# What fills you with joy?

- The answer reveals our spiritual maturity
- Lk.22:5-6

Many practice 'if' rejoicing –

- rejoice if outward circumstances please them (ct. 1:12)
- ...or if others show them respect (ct. 2:1-4)
- ...or if others do their duty (ct. 4:2-3)

# What fills you with joy?

- Prodigal son had everything he ever wanted . . . . Lost it
- Older brother had everything . . . .
  - May as well have lost it
  - Miserable in sin, jealousy, self-righteousness as younger brother had been

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IV. They Are Concerned About Others, 2:14-18

V. They Rejoice in the Lord, 23:1

VI. They Never Quit, 3:12-14; 4:13

- Paul never thought of retiring from serving God; never rested on past successes; never let discouragement defeat him
- What he has gained was only a motivation to further progress
  1. God can use a slave-baby to lead Israel out of Egypt...
  2. ...shepherd boy to slay Goliath
  3. ...Saul the persecutor can become an apostle
  4. What about us?

Gal.6:9

- “Maturity comes from obedience, not necessarily from age” – Ravenhill
- “A sign of wisdom and maturity is when you come to terms with the realization that your decisions cause your rewards and consequences. You are responsible for your life, and your ultimate success depends on the choices you make” – Waitley