

MATURITY IN CHRIST

Heb 5:12-14

INTRODUCTION:

- A. This passage and others (1Pet 2:2) show that we enter God's family as babies and are expected to grow to maturity
- B. A failure to grow is sinful 1Cor 3:1-3
- C. Our purpose is to point out some marks of spiritual maturity and to examine ourselves with reference to their development within ourselves

DISCUSSION:

I. REPRODUCTIVE CAPACITY 2Tim 2:2

- A. Here we mean the ability to teach others the gospel
 - 1. The Hebrews had failed here Heb 5:12
 - 2. We must be "apt" to teach 2Tim 2:24
- B. The apostles to teach others all things that had been commanded them Matt 28:19,20
 - 1. Yet reproductive capacity alone no proof of maturity
 - 2. Many examples of people able to teach the truth but who refuse to live it

II. UNDERSTANDING 1Cor 14:20

- A. Toward the alien
 - 1. Understand he has not obeyed for some reason
 - 2. Either has not been taught or been taught error and is confused
 - 3. We must understand him, grasp his reasoning and show its unsoundness while at the same time holding out the Truth to him
 - 4. To say "my church is better than yours, just because!" is childish
- B. Toward fellow-Christians
 - 1. Division often a result of a lack of understanding of the difference between faith and opinion
 - 2. As children we are prone to "hero worship". Paul, Apollos 1Cor 3:5 understand their role as servants and our allegiance must be to Christ.
 - 3. Children (siblings) do not understand one another - reason for parents (and elders in the church)
 - 4. Attempts to restore the erring must be with understanding of his problem and love for his soul as well as understand our own weaknesses Gal 6:1

III. SEEING CONSEQUENCES Gal 6:7

- A. Little children hate to take medicine but love to play with knives or other dangerous objects
 - 1. Both grow from inability to see consequences
 - 2. The desire of the moment takes precedence over the ultimate good.

- B. Mature Christians try to think a course of actions through to its conclusion
 - 1. Moses had respect unto the reward Heb 11:26
 - 2. Christians try to "nip sin in the bud."

IV. STEADFASTNESS 1Cor 15:58; 16:13

- A. Changeableness is a mark of immaturity
 - 1. Think how many clubs you help start as a youngster, and how many lasted
 - 2. Think how fads change: Tops, Yo-Yos, Hula-Hoops, (these dates me)
- B. Spiritual maturity requires one to determine what is really important then stay with it to the end
 - 1. Kingdom of God has priority Matt 6:33
 - 2. We must be able to decide this is right and stick with it - however this is not bullheadedness

V. LOVE Jhn 13:34,35

- A. A child's love is the possessive kind - my mother, etc
- B. Adolescent love - puppy love - is intense but temporary
 - 1. Infatuation - thinks outwardly
 - 2. Based on glamour - what a hero - how handsome - how beautiful - how rich - etc
 - 3. It seldom lasts very long
- C. Mature love is giving and forgiving love. It is not blind to fault or hardship but gives of itself to help overcome
 - 1. It is in this sense that we must love one another Jhn 13:34,35
 - 2. In this sense we must love the souls of the lost and seek to win them Jhn 4:34-38
 - 3. Mature love is able to look upon enemies saying
 - a. Lay not this sin to their charge Acts 7:60
 - b. Father forgive them Lk 23:34
 - c. Love your enemies Matt 5:44

CONCLUSION:

- A. We must grow in Christ or else remain babes in Christ
- B. Paul said the Corinthians were still carnal because they had remained babes in Christ 1Cor 3:1-3
- C. When we become mature Christians we put away childish things 1Cor 13:11
- D. Have you put away childish things and begun to grow to maturity spiritually?