

Series: The Wealth of Christ & The Walk of the Christian

THE MARKS OF A MATURING CHRISTIAN EPHESIANS 4:11-32

Text:

Introduction:

According to verses 11-13, God gave the church her spiritual leaders for the sole purpose of promoting spiritual growth within the body of Christ. The reason why growth is needed is obvious.

Just as every parent in the world is delighted when they see their children growing and maturing, God is blessed when He sees His children making the transition from babyhood into adulthood in a spiritual sense. God wants us to move from the spiritual nursery to the spiritual battlefield. He wants us to leave the realm of milk, bibles and diapers and He wants us to enter the realm of meat, battles and devotion.

Notice with me as we consider the marks of a maturing Christian.

1. THEY ARE MARKED BY CALM STEADFASTNESS (VS. 14-16)

Ephesians 4:14-16

¹⁴ *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;* ¹⁵ *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:* ¹⁶ *From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

These verses point out three areas where the growing believer is found to be steadfast and stable.

- They Are Steadfast In Doctrine (vs. 14)

They are not constantly being taken in by the false teachings in the world around them.

The maturing believer is one who knows what they believe and why they believe.

They are spending time in the Word of God and are not deceived by the lies, tricks and traps of the enemy.

2 Timothy 2:15

¹⁵ *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:* ¹⁷ *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

- They Are Steadfast In Their Development (vs. 15)

The growing believer has a deep attraction to the truth of God. They are constantly adapting their lives to the teachings of the Bible. They take the time to find out what God wants from their lives and they change whatever it takes to line up with His word and His will.

1 John 2:3-4

³ *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* ⁴ *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

1 John 5:3

³ *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

- They Are Steadfast In Their Devotion (vs.16)

Just as our human bodies are knitted together in a wonderful way, so the body of Christ has been carefully "compacted" together.

The growing believer wants to find his place in the body and fulfill that place to the best of his ability. It is a sign of spiritual maturity when a believer does his/her best to carry out the assignments they have been given by the Lord.

When every person participates and does what they have been assigned to do, things function smoothly when they do not do what they are supposed to do, the whole church suffers as a result!

Note not only are they marked by a calm steadfastness but also:

2. THEY ARE MARKED BY CLEAR SEPARATION (VS. 17-24)

A maturing believer is easily identified because he/she is so different from the world around them. These verses speak to that issue.

- They Are Separated From the Works of Darkness (vs. 17-19)

Ephesians 4:17-19

¹⁷ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸ Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ¹⁹ Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Paul makes a distinction between how the lost man lives and how the saved man lives.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

- They Are Separated From a Walk of Darkness (vs. 20-24)

Ephesians 4:20-24

²⁰ But ye have not so learned Christ; ²¹ If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The believer has received a change of life that results in a change in his walk. We are called upon to "put off", once for all, the ways of the old man who is just growing worse day by day.

God puts a new desire within His children that makes them want to live differently than they used to live! The bottom line is this: the maturing believer looks different, acts different, walks different and thinks different than he did before.

Note not only are they marked by a calm steadfastness and a clear separation but also:

3. THEY ARE MARKED BY CHRISTLIKE STANDARDS (VS. 25-32)

As we enter this section of the passage, Paul begins to talk about the maturing believer's day to day walk. He focuses primarily on how he acts, reacts and interacts with, around and to his fellow believer. What I want you to notice is this: for the maturing believer, the emphasis in life is removed from "self" and is focused on "others".

The single defining trait by which Jesus said His people could be identified was that they would love one another.

John 13:35

³⁵ By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

The maturing believers are:

- Christlike In How They Act (vs. 28)

Ephesians 4:28

²⁸ *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

- Christlike In How They React (vs. 26-27, 31-32)

Ephesians 4:26-27

²⁶ *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:* ²⁷ *Neither give place to the devil.*

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹ *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:* ³² *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

- Christlike In How They Interact (vs. 25, 29-30)

Ephesians 4:25

²⁵ *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

Ephesians 4:29-30

²⁹ *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.* ³⁰ *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

Close:

Everyone in this room who is saved ought to be moving steadily toward maturity in the Lord with each passing day. Are you maturing?

Do you possess the marks of a maturing Christian?