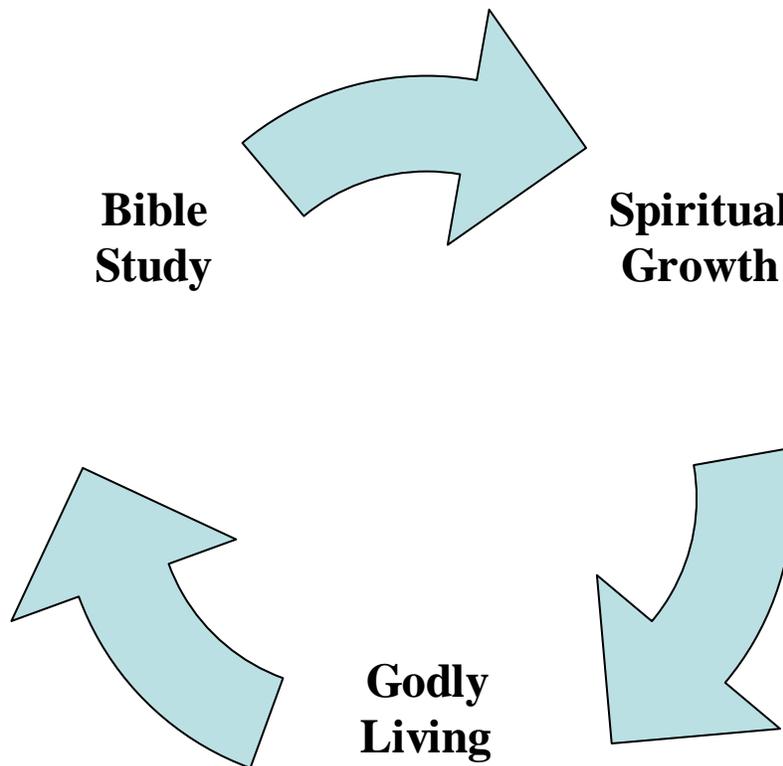


Spiritual Growth Manual

**Spiritual growth is not about what you do,
It is about what you become.**



An easy Step by Step Guide to Spiritual Growth

**By Michael Youngblood
Book two
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**The concept of this paper.
Setting the stage.
What are you missing in life?
What's wrong with the world?**

Childishness

**What is spiritual growth?
What is maturity?
Substitutes for maturity,
Characteristics of maturity.
Hindrances to maturity.**



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Choices



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**Submission
Prayer
Purity
Study**

Characteristics

**Faith, hope, charity
Guidance
Conformed
Disciples**

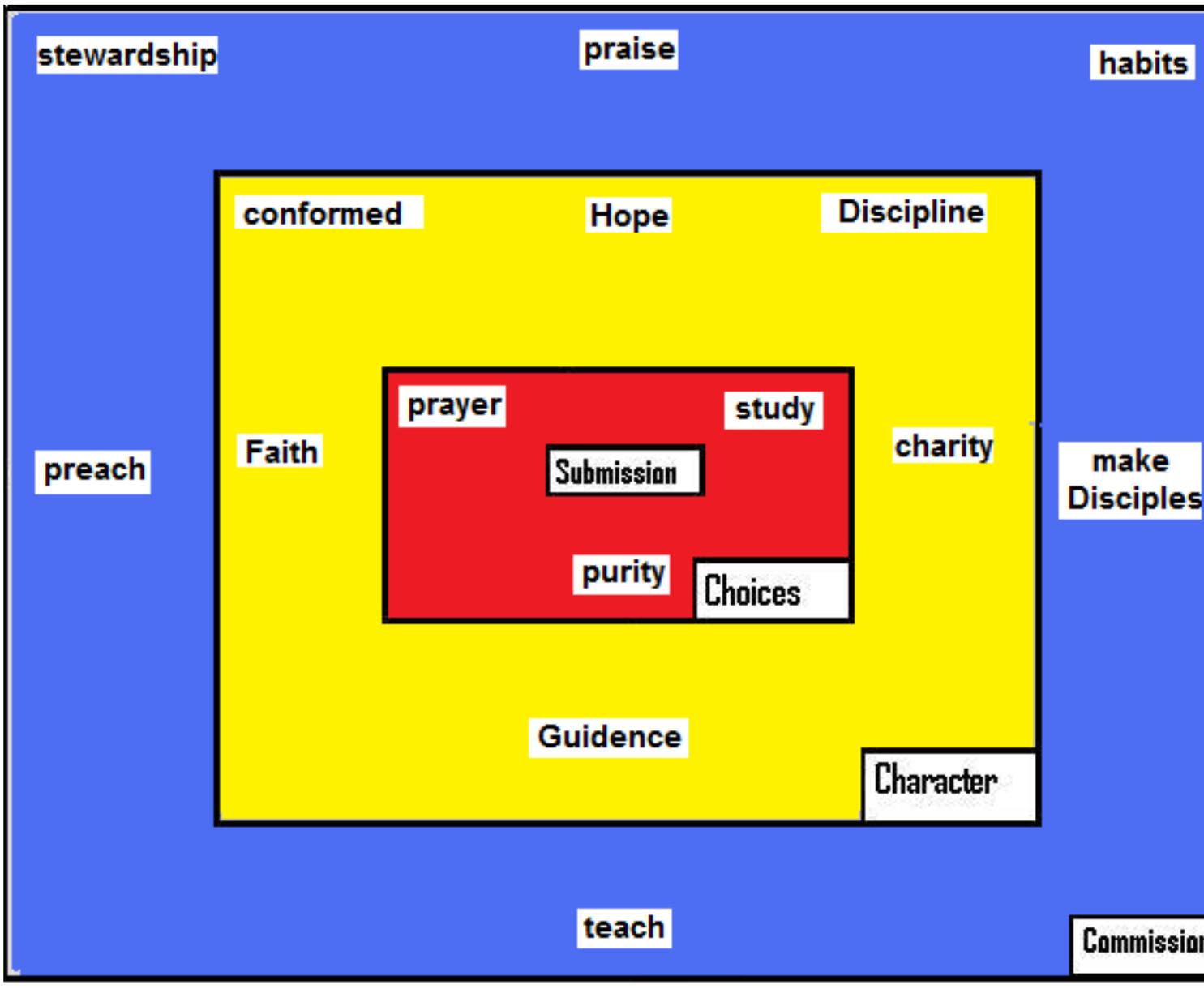


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The concept of this paper

**Spiritual growth is not about what you do,
It is about what you become.**

Most people seem to approach the Christian life from the outside in. They begin with trying to clean up their life from bad habits, and trying to tell others about the Lord. Although their zeal is admirable, without His proper core elements their spiritual growth will soon run out of fuel. True spiritual growth begins with a few choices; the choice to submit to prayer, study and keep a pure life. These choices bring forth Spiritual fruit and Godly character.



This Series is based on Trinities

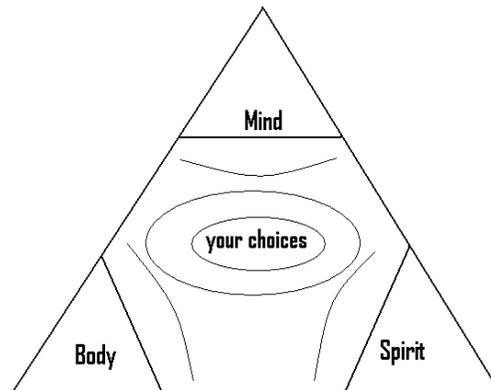
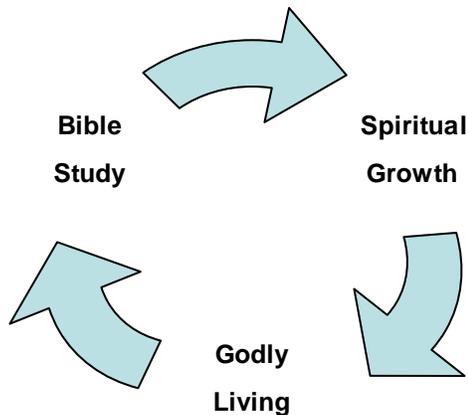
This series itself is a trinity and is set up to meet the trinity of needs in every person. You are a spirit, you have a mind and you live in a body. Here is a verse which tells the necessity of all three areas of the Christian life.

1John 2:5 “But whoso keepeth His word, in Him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.”

Keeping His Word which in Bible study; leads to you being **perfected** in character which is growing spiritually, and that leads to Godly living. As you learn to live Godly, it will bring you back to more study.

Keeping His word is Bible study
The love of God perfected is spiritual growth
Us living in Him is Godly living

**You are a trinity and you have
a trinity of needs.**



God is a trinity and created us a type of trinity too.

- 1John 5:7; “For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one”.
Gen 1:26; “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”

This paper has been designed to teach you how to grow spiritually. You are a type of trinity because God is a trinity and He designed you after His image. *A trinity is three things in one.* You are one person but you are made up of body, mind and spirit.

Your whole life is affected by the three parts that make you the person you are, and influences the choices you make. Most of the material in this paper has been purposely written to meet the needs of the trinity that you are.

What are you missing in life?

Millions of people have searched the world over to find it. You can't build it, buy it, order it, or store it up. What is it? It is peace. Many people around world look for the meaning to life, and a sense of peace. Do you ever feel like your life is going no where? Are you tired of looking for something more in your life and not finding it? John 16:33 **"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."**

Just going to church and living a moral life will not bring peace. Only a relationship with God can give you a true sense of peace. Let's take a look at spiritual growth and how to have a relationship with God. A relationship with God is the only thing that can give your life the meaning and peace that you seek. **A relationship with God *plus* submission to Him *minus* self-will and doubt *equals* a peaceful heart.** Do you want peace?

Peace test

How do you define peace?

Is your life a peaceful one? ____ If not why not

Philippians 4:6; "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God".

Philippians 4:7; "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

What do these verses say you need to do receive peace?

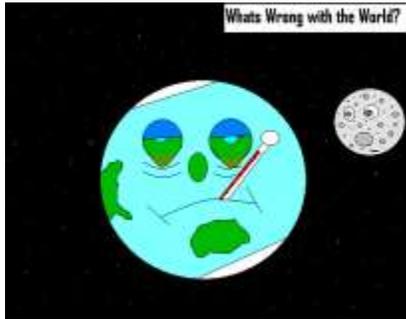
You can't know *peace* until you know the *Peace Maker*:

Ephesians 2:8; "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

Romans 10:13; "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

It is by the grace of God that He saves you. It is not by your works. Repent and ask Him to save you. No amount of church attendance, Bible study, or any other good works will get you into heaven.

What's wrong with the world?



Every culture has its own definition and answer to the question, “*what’s wrong with the world?*” Some eastern religions teach if we all become one with nature then all our problems will be solved. The Nazi movement used to teach “loyalty to the state” was the answer. Many educators say that all we need is more research and development to bring peace and prosperity to the world.

There are many other theories and philosophies, around the globe, on how to solve the world’s problems. The Bible tells us the problem with the world is quite simple, *it is sin.* . **1Corinthians 1:18; Romans 3:23;” For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”**. The answer to sin is the gift of salvation. No amount of education, loyalty, or any other worldly solutions can substitute for salvation.

In the 1930s, Chicago outlawed alcohol in order to clean up their town. Instead of eliminating drunkenness, it made the problem worse. Criminal’s, illegally selling alcohol, became more powerful and rich. Instead of changing a law, they should have tried changing the mindset of the people. Only the *Holy Spirit* working through the *preaching of God’s word* can truly change the world. **“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God unto salvation”**

Though we’ve always had sin, now more than ever we need spiritual maturity.

What is **your** philosophy about the purpose and meaning of life?

A Society of Adult Children

Ever since Adam first chose to rebel, there has always been sin. Some societies have been moral and just, while others are consumed with perversion. However, the necessity of providing for their families guided most people of those societies in the right direction to maturity, regardless of cultural influence. With the breakdown of the family, society changed God's natural order. The Bible commands husbands to love their wives, as well as wives to submit to their husbands.



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1Peter 3:1; “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;”

1Peter 3:7; “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

One example of this breakdown is the feminist movement. In the feminist teachings, the natural headship of men has been taken away and given to women. (Genesis 3:16) Now most people show less family responsibility than at any other known time in recorded history.

Recreation test

Hours watching TV or playing games per day:	(1-2)	(3-4)	(5 or more)
Off work I spend most of time on:	(on recreation)	(Family issues)	(house work)
While at work I think of my time off:	(most of the time)	(some)	(very little)
I collect these recreational items:	(Posters)	(Sports toys)	(Books or magazines)

In our society, we also have more free time because of technology, which most people use for recreation. This also promotes immaturity because we become addicted to getting to the next level or winning the next fight. Our focus changes from living by God's standards to getting pleasure from our entertainment. While there were plenty of other cultures with games, only ours has such a vast quantity of styles to choose from. Our culture also promotes irresponsible and dangerous behaviors by endorsing a, “guilt-free”, party lifestyle

In the past, in tribal cultures, if a person became a danger to the tribe, they were kicked out or killed for the good of the tribe. But in today's society, irresponsibility is not only rewarded but encouraged. We live in a

world where alcoholism and partying are promoted and drunk drivers are simply given minor fines and released many times over before being prosecuted.

Proverbs 22:6; “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. “

Proverbs 29:15; “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.”

Through lack of discipline and guidance from parents, we are taught to think only of ourselves, blame others for our problems and avoid any responsibility, while having as much fun as we can. This kind of thinking has led many people into a lifestyle of non-maturity. This lifestyle is destructive in every way. **Proverbs 25:28; “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls”**

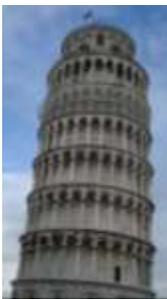
How mature are you? _____

How have immature areas of your life left you defenseless against satanic temptations?

What is spiritual growth?

Growth, in the biological sense, is the development from a simple organism to a more complex one. It is the manifesting of the nature of an organism as it gets more diverse.

Spiritual growth is the manifesting of God's nature in you. It is when the seed of God's character begins to manifest itself in your life. You were given God's nature at salvation, and as you grow, you begin to take on some of God's characteristics. These Characteristics are His Character.



Character is a unique feature or attribute. For example, the unique feature of this building is that it leans. The unique character of a beaver is its instinct to build dams. The unique character of a Christian is the fruit of the spirit. **Galatians 5:22; “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.”**

Spirituality is not at our command. We cannot simply turn it on and off like a light switch. It is a long term way of living.

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Spiritual growth is *not* something we do, it is what we *become*.

Real spiritual growth is the process of becoming like Jesus in your character and mannerisms

Romans 12:2; “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”



What characteristics are manifesting in your life?

Rate yourself from 1-10 (10 being the highest) on each of the following characteristics:

___ Kindness		Cruelty___
___ Gentleness		Harshness___
___ Patience		Impatience___
___ Hate		love___
___ Humility		pride___

The definition

- **What is Maturity?**

Maturity is a way of thinking and acting opposite of childishness.

I Corinthians 13:11; “When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Maturity is choosing to reject childish things

How mature do you act in public or at home?

Circle the one that applies to you.

(I have to have my way often)

(I often consider others needs first)

(I often lose my temper)

(I restrain my temper in spite of provoking)

(I often act silly to get attention)

(I let others share the spotlight)

(I Gossip and complain often)

(I often speak thankfully and kindly)

So what is Childishness?

Childishness is undisciplined, selfish behavior.

Proverbs 2:15; “foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.”

Proverbs 29:15; “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to Himself bringeth his mother to shame.”

“Foolishness” means; lacking in good judgment: and the phrase, **“left to Himself”** means without discipline.

Childishness is a completely selfish behavior, lacking in wisdom; silly, and chaotic. Childishness is based on perceived realities; that is, they see the world from a totally emotional point of view.

Childish behavior is having no control over your emotions, living for the moment, and having no advanced planning. An example of living for the moment is a new born baby boy doesn't care how tired his mother is, he just wants her to meet his needs.

Do you have childish qualities?

Maturity is everything that childishness is not. Maturity means being disciplined, responsible, showing wisdom, and being able to plan for needed tasks or problems. Maturity means you understand the true value of long range goals which take a commitment of time and effort. A mature person also thinks of others needs along with their own.

Childishness Test. (Circle the answer that best fits you.)

You played a joke on someone? Last week last month last year

You plan ahead on? Most things some things few things

You lost your temper? Yesterday last week last month last year

You make impulse purchases or decisions? Most of the time some times little

You feel envy for something someone else has or can do? A lot some rarely

If you didn't do too well on the test, do not despair. Keep reading this paper because I'll walk you through the steps of maturity.

Characteristics of immaturity

Selfishness is defined as the sole concern of self. How selfish are your prayers and the things that you do in your daily life? When someone is hostile toward you, how well do you control your temper? Many people base the decisions they make on how they feel: do you? How much wisdom do you show?

Circle one of these to indicate how childish you think you are in each area.

1 indicates low control and 10 is very high

1 selfishness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2 no emotional control 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 lacking wisdom 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

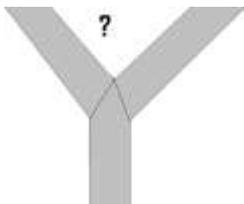
What things are often mistaken for maturity?

1. **Age-** Some people think, as they get older physically, it, automatically, makes them more mature. **1 Timothy 4:12** says “**Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.**”

Age does not always determine wisdom and maturity. Look what Paul tells Timothy; “be an example”.

Do you learn from experience or do you keep making the same mistakes?

As a person ages they have the choice of learning from their past mistakes and maturing or remaining a child. If they do learn from these mistakes, maturity is the main effect from the wisdom gained. However, there are some that age but never learn, so they never grow in maturity.



You are walking up a path and you come to a fork in the road. How many choices do you have? Most people would say two choices; left and right; but you have a third choice. You could choose to go back the way you came. In order to grow, you need to learn to think beyond the obvious. Learn to see things from a different perspective and gain wisdom from that view.

What, life changing, bad choices have you made and what have you learned from them?

2. Financial status- The ability to earn great sums of money, or already possessing it, is not a characteristic of maturity. **Proverbs 28:11; “The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth Him out.”**

He is only wise to Himself. Everyone has makes bad choices with their money, but have you learned from those decisions?

**How would your attitude change if you won a large amount of money?
How would you spend the money?**

3. Occupational Skill- Having a great talent or job related skill is useful. However, a person can be an immature yet talented person. **Galatians 6:3; “For if a man think Himself to be something, when He is nothing, He deceiveth Himself.**

If you could have any talent in the world, what would it be, and how would you use it?

4. Educational status- Some think that achieving a certain educational status makes them better than the average person, therefore, making them more mature. Doctors and scientist, for example get more respect than a trash collector. They themselves tend to think if they have a doctorate they are more mature than someone with little education. . **Romans 1:22; “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,**

If you were the worlds leading expert on a subject how proud would you be?

5. Perceived Intelligence- If a man or woman is seen as intelligent; most people automatically give them credit for maturity also. **Proverbs 16:18; “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”.**

Have you ever considered yourself better than another person because you were the smarter than them?

Have you ever bragged about your IQ?

Have you ever teased another by calling them retarded or stupid?

6. Accomplishment- Some people see maturity in great feats. Alexander the Great cried when he had conquered all the countries around him, because there was no one left to fight. Great feats do not necessarily make a great man. The pharaoh of the Exodus story was a rich and powerful person, but that did not make him mature. **Exodus 5:2; “And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD; neither will I let Israel go”.** He was foolish and immature, and all of Egypt suffered because of him.

When ever you have won an award or contest how did it make you feel toward others?

7. Social Milestones- Getting married, having kids, or even gaining fame does not bring a person to maturity. Celebrities are in the news constantly for doing great acts of immaturity and immorality. The best Biblical example of this is King David who was chosen by God to lead Israel. King David had it all: popularity, respect, wealth; but he chose to lust after another man’s wife whom he impregnated which lead to him killing her husband.

Have you ever had a position of power or authority and let it go to your head?

Have you ever sacrificed doing what is right to be accepted by others?

8. Physical stature- Men are prone to think that if they are tough it makes them more of a man. Sampson was blessed by God with a superior strength. Instead of using his strength to glorify God, he used it to get whatever he wanted. His lust for Delilah led to his demise. History could have recorded him as a great warrior for God; instead, he has been branded as foolish. **Jeremiah 9:23; “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:”**

Have you ever day dreamed of being super strong or having super abilities?
Have you ever bullied someone weaker than yourself?

Draw a line to match the Characteristics with the statements

Age	I am making a six figure income
Financial status	I have a 4.0 GPA average
Occupational Skill	You're so retarded
Education	when you're older
Intelligence	He's not the boss of me
Accomplishment	Be a man
Social Millstone	That not my job
Physical stature	Don't tell me what I can't do

Characteristics of maturity

All the characteristics of maturity can be seen when a person walks in the Spirit. The characteristics of maturity are the same across cultures and are confirmed as truth in God's Word. These are qualities in which God leads His children to grow, and are the qualities needed to be Christ-like. There are six basic qualities of maturity.

1. Maturity will pass up immediate gratification for long term goals.

If a child could choose between doing homework and playing, which one would he choose? Most children would choose to go play. The ability to see past an immediate task or goal and focus on the longer term benefit is the first characteristic of maturity. **Galatians 6:9**; “**and let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**”

Even children who are taught to be responsible often fall short in this area. It is one thing to begin a task, but it takes maturity to keep going in the face of discouragement and opposition to finish it. **Isaiah 40:3**;

“**But they that wait upon the lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.**”

How often do you procrastinate?

How often do you choose recreation over responsibilities?

2. Maturity is the ability to direct emotions.

What if an adult, who didn't get some electronic item they wanted, burst into tears, waved their arms around and screamed at the top of their lungs, essentially acting like a two year old? That person would be considered abnormal and would need to be monitored closely. Many people have learned that if they throw a temper tantrum as a customer in a retail store, they can get their way. This is selfish and immature.

Even married adults tend to think in this way, using this kind of behavior to get their way with their spouse. A mature person knows that they cannot always have what they want. Life is full of diverse circumstances, some good and some bad. This same principle is also true of all the other emotions as well. The more you mature, the better you will cope with sadness, lust, anger and many other feelings you experience **Proverbs 4:23**; “**Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.**”

If a person has no self-control over their own emotions, they are not dependable. That person is also vulnerable to the roller-coaster ride of daily life.

What kinds of things make you impatient, and how often do these happen?

3. Maturity is the ability to be unselfish.

Childishness is selfishness. Maturity, in a person, is demonstrated when they have learned to care about the needs of other people, even placing them above their own. Sadly, too many people who have reached the age of adulthood still think that the world revolves around them. **I John 4:8; “He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love”**

When a person cares for someone else’s needs above their own, they are performing Godly love.

If a friend needed a favor during your favorite TV program, how willing would you be to help them?

4. Maturity is order and balance.

A mature person learns that organization and planning have their benefits. Such organization takes time, work and effort. A neglectful person, for instance, might come in and simply throw his clothes on the floor or wherever is convenient at the time; while an organized, mature person not only has a place for clean clothes, but a spot for the dirty ones also. This organization leads to a balance in his life, a balance that yields long term rewards. **James 1:4; “but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing.”** The word *perfect* here means *complete*. God wants you to have a complete and balanced spiritual walk with Him. The word *entire* tells us that God does not want to leave any areas of your life untouched by His influence and grace.

Do you have a balanced spiritual life?

Do you read the paper more than the Bible?

Do you talk to your friends more than you talk to God?

5. Maturity is keeping your word.

How many times have your children promised to do a task then not kept their word? A mature person knows the importance of a work-related reputation. If you have a reputation of being lazy, you should not expect to be promoted. Just like most children, we tend to tell others what they want to hear so that we can get what we want immediately, and then fail to keep our side of the deal. **James 5:12; “But let your yea be yea: and your nay; nay least ye fall into condemnation.”**

What promises have you made and not kept?

6. Maturity is taking responsibility for your actions.

Just as a child tries to get out of responsibilities, a mature person promotes responsibility. An immature person is concerned with an alibi to get out of trouble. A mature person is concerned with fixing the trouble. Even from the very beginning, God was teaching us to be responsible.

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