

God Is After Your Maturity

- Ephesians 4:11-15 - 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...
 - The Passion Translation – “the full dimensions of spiritual maturity and fully developed into the abundance of Christ.”
 - “mature” = from Latin *maturus* = ripe... originally meaning fruits and vegetables
- Colossians 1:28 – Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.
 - Quote: Christian Smith – “The clergy profession is fundamentally self-defeating. Its stated purpose is to nurture spiritual maturity in the church - a valuable goal. In actuality, however; it accomplishes the opposite by nurturing a permanent dependence of the laity on the clergy. Clergy become to their congregations like parents whose children never grow up, like therapists whose clients never become healed, like teachers whose students never graduate.”
- Colossians 4:12 - Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.
 - “fully assured” = 2 Greek words put together, meaning to fully carry the whole burden...
- 1 Corinthians 13:11 - When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.
- Proverbs 27:17 - Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

God is After Your Purity

- Ephesians 5:25-27 - 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.
- Titus 2:11-14 - 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.
 - “train” = Greek word for child-training, bringing up a young child under strict discipline, so they develop into a full, mature, responsible adult
- “Pure” = *katharos* = without mixture, free from contamination
- How does this purifying happen?
 - Simply the grace of God unleashed in you (Titus 2:11-14)
 - You purify yourself (2 Cor 7:1 - ...let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit...)
 - The Word of God (Ephesians 5:26 – ...the washing of water with the word...)
 - Trials of life (Isaiah 48:10 – ...I have tried you in the furnace of affliction...)
 - Other people (Ephesians 4:29)

God is After Your Longevity

- The end-goal is not to start the Christian walk but to finish it

- Colossians 1:21-23 - 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
 - “continue in the faith” = in Greek, implies “continuing on with persistence appropriate to the objective”
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 - Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.
 - “hold fast” = *katecho* = receiving something and taking possession of it
 - When Jesus did miracles at Peter’s house, people tried to “keep” him there (Luke 4:42)
 - Jesus talked about a wedding guest who “takes... [his] place” at the wedding (Luke 14:9)
 - When Paul was traveling to Rome by boat they “held” the ship in a direction toward the beach (Acts 27:40)
- Hebrews 3:6 - Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.
- 1 Corinthians 9:24 - Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

Jesus Commanded Us to Make Disciples

- How does God grow maturity, purity, and longevity into us? Making disciples.
- Matthew 28:18-20 - 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - “make disciples” = *mathéteuó* (math-ate-yoo-oh) = lit. to make into a disciple...
- Two Parts to this Call to Make Disciples:
 - 1) You need to be a disciple
 - 2) You need to make disciples