



## Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity in the believer's final stage of spiritual growth. It is the area for the normal function of the priesthood of the mature believer, the place of perfect happiness and perfect benefit from God's grace. It is characterized by occupation with Christ, maximum capacity for freedom, life, love, happiness, prosperity, and adversity. The mature believer has maximum *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the soul.

Spiritual maturity is also characterized by an overflowing of God's grace blessings in the form of promotion, wealth, success, sex, social life, etc. As the believer matures spiritually, God begins to pour out blessings and He keeps on pouring! The cup is maximum capacity from the Bible doctrine resident in the soul and through the consistent function of the grace apparatus for perception. Again, the believer reaps what God has sown. Psalms 23:5.

*"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows." (Psalms 23:5, NASB)*

The life of the spiritually maturity believer is distinguished in God's grace in James 4:6 which talks about "greater grace." "Greater" is μέγας (megas) and means a thing to be highly esteemed for its excellence, God's preeminent blessings.

*"But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.'" (James 4:6, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace" is God's grace and refers to the answer to Paul's three prayers for God to remove the "thorn in his side." God's grace is sufficiency for the believer to handle the situation or problem and rely solely on God's grace resources. Isaiah 30:18-19.

*"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Corinthians 12:9, NASB)*

*"Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him. O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you." (Isaiah 30:18-19, NASB)*

Grace is God's eternal provision apart from human volition. Greater grace is God's provision for the believer in maturity exercising non-meritorious positive volition. Spiritual maturity is analogous to God resting on the seventh day after the restoration of the earth. Everything was finished. The work was done. Heb. 4:3; Heb. 4:10.

*"For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, 'AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,' although His works were finished from the foundation of the world." (Hebrews 4:3, NASB)*

*"For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His." (Hebrews 4:10, NASB)*

God loves every believer unconditionally with a maximum *agapao* love. However, the believer's love response varies according to the amount of Bible doctrine in their soul. The spiritually mature believer



loves God with a mental attitude *agapao* love because God first loved us. Rom. 8:28; 1 John 4:19.

*“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NASB)*

*“We love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19, NASB)*

God’s love to the spiritually mature believer is expressed in blessing. God’s love to the reversionist is expressed in cursing and divine discipline. Heb. 12:6.

*“FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” (Hebrews 12:6, NASB)*

God loves all believers. He has unconditional *agapao* love toward all mankind – to the unbeliever, to the believer in fellowship, and to the believer in reversionism. But God expresses His *phileo* love or rapport love to the spiritually mature believer by pouring out overflowing blessings. Psalms 23:5; John 15:15.

*“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.” (Psalms 23:5, NASB)*

*“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:15, NASB)*

### **Characteristics of the Mature Believer**

From the standpoint of spiritual growth, all believers range from a babe to a mature believer, depending upon the amount of time spent “living in the Word.” Heb. 5:11-14.

*“Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:11-14, NASB)*

**Faith:** The mature believer has a consistent transfer of *gnosis* into the mind, then to the right lobe of the soul by faith resulting in *epignosis* which forms a strong faith, a frame of reference faith which could be described as faith-patience. James 1.

**Grace:** Mature believers have a maximum use of who and what God is in their life, having absolutely no illusions about themselves. They have a constant divine viewpoint of grace.

**Knowledge:** The mature believer has maximum knowledge of Bible doctrine in the soul. This is *epignosis* or full knowledge in the soul. This is the foundation of the edification structure. 2 Peter 3:18.

*“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18, NASB)*

**Wisdom:** The mature believer consistently applies *epignosis* Bible doctrine from the soul’s frame of reference to the situations of life which is “wisdom” or σοφία (*sophia*) in the Greek. Col. 1:28.

*“We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.” (Colossians 1:28, NASB)*

**Divine Good Production:** The mature believer produces a maximum amount of divine good. Maturity is



not spirituality, but a mature believer is filled with the Holy Spirit a greater amount of time than is an immature believer. The mature believer glorifies God more than an immature believer because they have learned how through renewing of their thinking to make better use of God's grace resources and more often. Rom. 12:2.

*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2, NASB)*

### **Maximum Capacity to Live the Spiritual Life**

The mature believer has maximum love and appreciation of Jesus Christ. You are occupied with Him. In the Church Age, your *agapao* mental attitude love for God and your rapport *phileo* love for God are tested every time there is a communion table. Lam. 3:22-25; Heb. 12:2; Col. 3:1-2.

*"The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him." (Lamentations 3:22-25, NASB)*

*"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2, NASB)*

*"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:1-2, NASB)*

The mature believer has maximum capacity for freedom. Gal. 5:1; James 1:25 - 2:12; Rom. 8:21; 2 Cor. 3:17.

*"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1, NASB)*

*"that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:21, NASB)*

*"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17, NASB)*

The mature believer has capacity for life. 1 Sam. 17:47; 1 Sam. 18:5; 1 Sam. 18:14; 1 Sam. 18:30.

*"and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands." (1 Samuel 17:47, NASB)*

*"So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants." (1 Samuel 18:5, NASB)*

*"David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him." (1 Samuel 18:14, NASB)*

*"Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed." (1 Samuel 18:30, NASB)*



The mature believer has capacity for personal love toward God. This includes occupation with the person of Christ. Deut. 6:5; Deut. 30:20; Joshua 2:10-11; 1 John 2:5; 1 John 4:19.

*"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5, NASB)*

*"by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." (Deuteronomy 30:20, NASB)*

*"For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (Joshua 2:10-11, NASB)*

*"but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him." (1 John 2:5, NASB)*

*"We love, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19, NASB)*

The mature believer has capacity for love toward the opposite sex. Song of Solomon 8:6-7.

*"Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised." (Song of Solomon 8:6-7, NASB)*

The mature believer has capacity for unconditional love for all mankind. The believer's right relationship with others is based on first having a right love relationship with God that will serve as the motivation for love relationships with people.

God's unconditional love for the new believer is developed in the maturing believer from intake and application of the Word of God. The believer's love for other people when filled with the Holy Spirit is *agapao* love and is a mental attitude love. As the believer grows spiritually, this *agapao* love matures and is based on the Bible doctrine in their soul. Only then are they able to have an unconditional *agapao* love for people that are obnoxious and even enemies of the believer. This love is commanded of the believer. John 3:16; James 2:8

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NASB)*

*"If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF, you are doing well." (James 2:8, NASB)*

The mature believer has capacity for *phileo* love for close friends. *Phileo* love is also used as a compound word *φιλadelphia* (philadelphia) composed of the "phileo" (love) and "adelphos" (brother). Hence it's meaning is "brotherly love" or love for other believers. 1 Sam. 18:1-3; 2 Sam. 1:26; Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22.

*"Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself." (1*



*Samuel 18:1-3, NASB)*

*"I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful Than the love of women." (2 Samuel 1:26, NASB)*

*"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;" (Romans 12:10, NASB)*

*"Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;" (1 Thessalonians 4:9, NASB)*

*"Let love of the brethren continue." (Hebrews 13:1, NASB)*

*"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart," (1 Peter 1:22, NASB)*

The mature believer has capacity for maximum happiness. Psalms 9:1-2; Psalms 21:1; Psalms 31:7; Psalms 43:4; Psalms 97:12; John 17:13; 1 John 1:4; Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16.

*"For the choir director; on Muth-labben. A Psalm of David. I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High." (Psalms 9:1-2, NASB)*

*"I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness, Because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul," (Psalms 31:7, NASB)*

*"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves." (John 17:13, NASB)*

*"These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete." (1 John 1:4, NASB)*

*"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4, NASB)*

*"Rejoice always;" (1 Thessalonians 5:16, NASB)*

The mature believer also has capacity for undeserved suffering, that is, they can take it in stride and roll right on. 2 Cor. 12:7-10.

*"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10, NASB)*

The mature believer is the believer for the crisis as illustrated by the life of David. Spiritual maturity is characterized by maximum benefit from God's grace. 1 Sam. 17; James 4:6; Isaiah 30:18-19.

*"But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."" (James 4:6, NASB)*

*"Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him. O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you." (Isaiah 30:18-19, NASB)*





The mature believer has an efficient understanding and application of their spiritual gift(s). In the local church, the pastor-teacher can do the “work” of these spiritual gifts until different ones in his congregation mature much as a parent raises his children or a shepherd raises his sheep. An illustration is Timothy doing the work of an evangelist in 2 Timothy 4:5. This was not his primary ministry, but he could do it.

*“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:5, NASB)*

The mature believer has an efficient understanding and use of God’s grace. 2 Peter 3:18.

*“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18, NASB)*

The mature believer also has a good understanding and use of the whole counsel of the Word of God, especially a thorough understanding and reliance on the perfect essence of God. Acts 20:27.

*“For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.” (Acts 20:27, NASB)*

The mature believer also has an efficient understanding of the Angelic Conflict. Book of Job. The mature believer also has an efficient understanding of the celebrityship of Jesus Christ. Psalms 34; Psalms 84.

*“My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice. O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.” (Psalms 34:2-4, NASB)*

*“How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, In whose heart are the highways to Zion!” (Psalms 84:5, NASB)*

*“For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in You!” (Psalms 84:11-12, NASB)*

The mature believer also has an efficient understanding of dying grace to close out their life such as Stephen in Acts 7. They do not fear death. Phil. 3:10.

*“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;” (Philippians 3:10, NASB)*

God is tapping His foot. He can’t wait to pour out His blessings on maturing believers. Every time God pours out His grace, He is glorified. God is glorified when you grow spiritually and begin to gain the happiness of God in your soul. Isaiah 30:18.

*“Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him.” (Isaiah 30:18, NASB)*