

# Going on to Maturity

A study Christian maturity and what it looks like.

## INTRODUCTION

Last time we looked at Ephesians 4 and Paul's desperate plea for the Christians at Ephesus to continue growing up in their faith towards maturity so that they would

- a) Fulfill their personal calling (v1)
- b) Undertake their spiritual responsibility to help grow others in the Church (v 11-13,16)
- c) Become unified under Christ. (v13)
- d) Become like Jesus himself. (v 13)
- e) Become stable and assured in their faith and so would not be rocked by divergent teaching (v14)
- f) Develop a pattern of behaviour that sets them apart from the corruption and licentiousness of the surrounding community (v 17ff)

The important thing is that they "*grow up in their faith*". Part of the previous study involved making an inventory of what mature vs immature looks like. While this is helpful it is important to remember that while Christian maturity is evidenced by a set of behaviours, those behaviours are not necessarily a sign of a growing faith. In this regard this weeks study is about clarifying what defines Christian maturity.

Take a moment and consider for yourself. What makes a Christian, mature? Write it in the space below then discuss as a group.

The following working definition may also be helpful.

"Christian maturity is a growing spiritual walk with God evidenced by a lifestyle that shows more and more the characteristics of God worked out with other people."

## THE STUDY

Read 2 Peter 1:1-15

This passage picks up on a number of issues raised by Paul in Ephesians 4 and takes us a little further.

1. What are the writers' goals for his readers in this passage from Peter?

You will note the commonality of God's 'calling' in both the Ephesians and 2 Peter passages. If not discussed earlier, take some time to consider what is meant by this term.

2. What is God's 'calling'? Consider it both in general and as it relates to you specifically. How is a calling is fulfilled?

The writer goes on to specify in practical terms how a Christian might become fruitful in their faith. Before discussing the process in detail it is important that we note what all Christian activity is founded upon. Read again 2 Peter 1:1-4.

3. What are the foundations of our faith which are outlined in this section?

Lastly let us look at the practical steps. Read the whole passage again and consider how this may apply to Christian growth and maturity.

4. What are all the steps the writer outlines?
5. Are these things about behaviours, attitudes, spiritual discoveries, a combination of all three or something else? How can we go about doing what he tells us to do?

It could be seen that these steps represent either a ladder which are taken consecutively to help progress someone upwards, or like the faces of a diamond which are together in the process of being polished. Either way, it is worth taking the time to explore more fully what it means to build up each of these attributes.

6. Go through each of the steps outlined in question 5 with your group and discuss how you can develop each of these areas including the one you find most challenging. Be as specific as possible.

Finally, read 2 Peter 1:12-15. Peter noted that his spiritual responsibility was to be a constant encouragement to other Christians to continue to strive towards these goals, whether he was alive or not. Do you think his attitude was unique or is it something we should all take hold of?