

Spiritual Maturity

- * Throughout the Scriptures we are encouraged to grow and mature as we “walk out our salvation!”
 - * This principle can be seen in Jesus’ command to make disciples and not simply make converts!
 - * Why is this the greatest challenge for each of us? Because it is hard!
 - * We actually have to surrender to the workings of the Lord and deny our own selves and desires!
 - * It seems this is the main theme of Paul’s letter to Ephesus!
 - * Watch video - <https://youtu.be/mvPCtrZ1K00>
1. Paul is addressing believers who were wealthy beyond measure yet living as beggars and ignorant of their true spiritual wealth!
 2. Paul describes their “spiritual bank accounts” as:
adoption, acceptance, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, inheritance, zeal of the Holy Spirit, grace, citizenship of heaven -
in short Paul says they are blessed with every spiritual blessing!!!!
 3. Paul encouraged the Ephesians to discover their spiritual wealth and walk as spiritual people! To mature into the stature of Christ!!
- I. We all should be a student of our salvation!!! Study your redemption!!!

Ephesians 1:3-9

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship [through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

A. What value do you put on your relationship with Jesus Christ?

1. Your life is an open expression of the value you place on it!!!!
2. What we truly value is what we give ourselves to!!

Matthew 6:21 (NIV)

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

3. Can the person of Jesus Christ be seen clearly in your life???

B. Being a Christian, walking out your salvation and being imitators of God like little children does not simply happen! You can expect push back and resistance in your walk with the Lord!!!!

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

II. I think it interesting what John wrote to the Church at Ephesus in light of what Paul had previously written to the Church in Ephesus.

Revelation 2:2-5 (NLV)

2 I know what you have done and how hard you have worked. I know how long you can wait and not give up. I know that you cannot put up with sinful men. I know that you have put men to the test who call themselves missionaries. You have found they are not missionaries but are false. 3 You have waited long and have not given up. You have suffered because of Me. You have kept going on and have not become tired. 4 But I have this one thing against you. You do not love Me as you did at first. 5 Remember how you once loved Me. Be sorry for your sin and love Me again as you did at first. If you do not, I will come to you and take your light out of its place. I will do this unless you are sorry for your sin and turn from it.

A. There are great compliments given in this letter:

1. Hard work
2. Stickability and patience
3. High standards of behavior
4. Suffering for their faith

B. Then, the Lord exposes their greatest need!!! Love and passion for the Lord!

1. They had lost that “childlike” love for the Lord!
2. They did all the “stuff,” but had gotten distracted by life.
3. Let’s be honest, like can distract us from our relationship with the Lord!
4. We can get so involved in the “work of the Lord” that we get distracted from the “Lord of the work!”

C. Remember, this was a real letter, written to real people in a real city!!

1. Jesus warning to them was, “Come back to your original love for Me. If you don’t I will remove your light from its place.”
2. The word used here is “lamp stand”. The lampstand in the Old Covenant Temple was considered the light of the Lord.
3. Jesus seems to be saying, “If you lose your passion for me, you will no longer be the “light of the world.”

D. We can see the outpouring of the Lord in Ephesus described in the book of Acts!!

Acts 19:8-11, 17, 20 (NLV)

8 For three months Paul went into the Jewish place of worship and spoke without fear. He taught them things about the holy nation of God. 9 Some let their hearts grow hard. They would not put their trust in Christ. These spoke against the Christian religion in front of other people. Then Paul took the followers away from the others. He taught them each day in the school of Tyrannus. 10 He did this for two years. All the Jews and the Greeks in the countries of Asia heard the Word of the Lord. 11 God used Paul to do powerful special works. 12 Pieces of cloth and parts of his clothes that had been next to his body were put on sick people. Then they were healed of their diseases and demons came out of them.

17 All the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus heard about it. Because of this all the people became afraid. And the name of the Lord Jesus was held in great honor.

20 The Word of the Lord became well-known.

1. Ephesus was thought to be the third largest city of antiquity. Behind Rome and Alexandria.
2. The population was thought to be around 250,000!
3. For the next 200 years Ephesus was the center of Christianity.
4. It is believed that true believers in Christ made up half the population! Maybe 150,000 followers of Christ in Ephesus!
5. The two years Paul was there, approximately 60% of the

population identified as Christian.... even with all the persecution! Meaning, their faith was real!!!!

6. Today, 99.8% of the population is Muslim!
7. Could this be what Jesus was referring to? Is this the result of their light being removed? Their lampstand of God's light?

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLV)

15 We are to hold to the truth with love in our hearts. We are to grow up and be more like Christ. He is the leader of the church. 16 Christ has put each part of the church in its right place. Each part helps other parts. This is what is needed to keep the whole body together. In this way, the whole body grows strong in love.