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## Leading God's People Towards Maturity (5 Essentials)



Can you imagine two mothers talking and encouraging each other about their children's progress? One of them says, "William has been a great baby! God has really blessed us with such a wonderful boy! We are a little concerned however, about his progress in potty training. He just can't seem to get interested in going on a big boy potty.

Buying diapers is getting a little old because it seems that he should have gotten the potty thing down by now. We don't want to push him, you know, just let him develop at his own pace, but he is a little behind his peers." This sound quite normal until you realize that William is 14 years old. Now we know there is a bigger problem. Babyhood is a delightful thing; but perpetual babyhood can be deplorable.

One of the main calls of anyone serving as a leader is to help people grow and mature in Christ. Paul had a great desire for himself to personally "press on towards maturity" by "forgetting what is behind and stretching towards what is ahead" (Phil 3:12-16). Paul also had a desire to help others mature. It was the core motivation for his labor in helping God's people in churches everywhere. This was one of the reasons he was so challenging to the Corinthians because they were regressing towards immaturity rather than progressing towards maturity (1 Cor 3:1-3).

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Paul saw all leadership "gifts" given by God were designed to help the saints "mature." Every sacrificial suffering he endured had an aim in it to help bring people to maturity.

**Ephesians 4:11-13** *And He gave some as...(12) for the equipping of the saints...(13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **mature man**, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

**Colossians 1:24-29** *In my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions... (28) We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, **so that we may present every man mature in Christ.** (29) For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.*

What does it mean to be growing towards maturity? A simple definition is living more

**Leaders should never be content to facilitate the perpetual babyhood of the believer. Everyone is called to maturity.**

of our lives responding to God and less to any other motivation (self centeredness, flesh, culture, or the enemy). Maturity is seen in the highest two aims of "loving God with everything in us and loving others as we love ourselves" (Mt 22:37-39, Mar 12:29-33, Lk 10:27-29).

**People growing in maturity will progressively exhibit fruits in the 3 areas of life.** They are indelible characteristics of one growing in maturity.

- **The ethic of God's love (attitudes and actions of 1 Corinthians 13:1-13)**
- **The mind/attitude of Christ (Philippians 2:1-11)**
- **The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24)**

## **5 Essentials for maturity**

In helping people mature leaders need to be aware of 5 things that are essential in growing towards maturity. People cannot grow without them.

- 1. Personally encountering Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit through private Spiritual disciplines (prayer, worship, continual Spirit fillings, and His Word).** These are the essentials of walking with, and being empowered by God.
- 2. Receiving God's word that applies to both belief and living (Bible reading, learning His word through teaching, conversations "speaking the truth in love", as well as prophetic words etc.).**

Receiving His word isn't just receiving information but also taking steps to put it into practice. If we are not seeking to put His word into practice it becomes what James calls "self deception" (knowing something we should be doing but not doing it James 1:21-25).

When we hear His word through any venue there are important things that need considering.

- What is God wanting us to know?
- What does He want us to do in light of that knowledge?
- How can we take practical steps to put His word into practice?
- How can I help, or receive help for consistent progress in practicing His word (prayer, accountability etc.)

*3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.*

**3. Engaging in personal ministry (serving and mission).** Serving others as we engage in His mission helps us get our eyes off of ourselves and onto Jesus and others. As we consistently serve it becomes less about us and more about Jesus which is a mature perspective.

**4. Encountering and walking in Godly relationships in which we put into practice the 59 one another's of the New Testament (Eph 4:15-16, Col 2:19).** These types of relationships lead to progress. They also promote important relational designs seen in Hebrews 3 and 10, "stimulate one another to love and good works" as well as "holding onto what God said and is saying" and "not falling away due to the hardening of sin."

*Heb 10:24-25 NASB and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

*Heb 3:12-14 NASB Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.*

**It is better to be pruned to grow than to be cut to burn (Jn 15:1-6)**

**5. Walking through difficulty which becomes defining seasons that shape our faith.**

Defining seasons involve pain, disappointment, disagreements or rubbings with members of God's family, the death of someone close to us, divorce, prolonged illness,

job transfer, or betrayal. Adverse circumstances can **damage** an individual's faith or **deepen** it. God often showcases His calling, power, and purpose on the stage of human weakness. God is faithful to walk with us through confusing and challenging times and will see to it that in the midst of them He works something precious in us by taking us deeper in Him and revealing more of His glory.

No one likes to walk through difficult times but as we do He turns our difficulty into destiny. We walk alongside others in those times to give support, comfort, and prayer.

- **1 Peter 1:6-7** *In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, (7) so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:18** *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:14** *We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*
- **Rom 8:28** *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.*

Check it out and sign up

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Good leaders help walk with and guide God's people in all 5 of these things that promote maturity.

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