

The Mature Believer

Bravemen of Friday Mornings, July 23, 2010

1. **“Mature” in NT Greek = *teleios*** = mature, perfect, complete, full grown, fully developed.
2. **The immature believer:**
 - a. **Accepts part of the Gospel, but not the core “good news”:**
 - i. “He said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’” **Luke 9:23.**
 - ii. “As for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.” **Luke 8:14.**
 - iii. “If you want to be perfect (*teleios*), go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” **Matthew 19:21.**
 - b. **Doesn’t journey beyond his conversion and the “four spiritual laws”.**
 - i. “Let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God ...” **Hebrews 6:1.**
 - c. **As a result, the immature Christian is easily confused and discouraged.**
 - i. The immature are spiritual infants “...tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.” **Ephesians 4:14.**
3. **Mature believer summary in Ephesians 4:13-15.** The gifts are “... 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 ...”
 - a. **“Building up”** = *oikodemos* (*oikos* = house).
 - b. **“The body of Christ”:** the gifts are given first of all for the benefit of the Body. By being a member of the Body, by being in Christ, we receive the benefit of the gifts. Outside of the Body, gifts are not received. There is no such thing as a Lone Ranger Christian
 - c. **“We attain ... (*katantaō* = arrive, as on a journey) ... to the unity of the faith”** (both visible and invisible): doing “our thing”, not “my thing.”
 - d. **“We attain to ... the knowledge of the Son of God”.** “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.” **Philippians 3:10.**

- e. **“We attain to ... mature manhood”** = *andra teleion*
- f. **“Attain to ... the measure of the stature (*ēlikias* = age, age of strength) of the fullness of Christ”**
- g. **“Attain to ... speaking the truth in love”**:
 - i. Speaking the ... 1) truth to God; 2) truth to myself; 3) truth to each other.
 - ii. ... in love: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” **Philippians 2:4.**

4. Other qualities of the *andra teleion*, “the mature man”.

- a. **He delights in a diet of spiritual meat.**
 - i. “Solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” **Hebrews 5:14.**
 - ii. The mature believer knows God’s voice, not because he feels it, but because he’s grown accustomed to hearing it in God’s word.
- b. **He abides (*menō*) in Christ as his first priority:**
 - i. *menō* = remain, stay, continue, continue to live, persist, dwell, lodge.
 - ii. “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” **John 15:4.**
 - iii. “Martha, Martha, ... you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better ...” **Luke 10:41.**
- c. **He knows and experiences the Lord’s sufficiency through discipline.**
 - i. “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect (*teleios*) and complete, lacking in nothing.” **James 1:4.**
 - ii. “trials of various kinds”: God decides; we don’t.
- d. **He leaves the past behind, moves forward, keeping his eyes on Jesus:**
 - i. “One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let those of us who are mature think this way...” **Philippians 3:14.**
 - ii. He endures (*hupomenō*) to the end: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” **2 Timothy 4:7.**
- e. **He discovers that his life is meant to be a conduit of the Spirit to bless others ... to build up others.**
 - i. “Epaphras, who is ... always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.” **Colossians 4:12.**