

Marks of Spiritual Maturity

1 Co.3

¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

- Satisfied to remain babies [talk / food].

1 Co.14

²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

- Paul established the Corinthian church, Ac.18 (second journey)
- Third journey (from Ephesus): news got worse and worse

1 Co.14

²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

- After five year absence, physical babies had grown; their parents still babies
- Marks on door: horizontal, not vertical
- Baby talk . . . Baby food (milk)
- What if Paul visited us every five years?

I. Holds Truth Regardless Of Consequences

Matthew 10:34-39

34: we applaud peace; sword implies pain

- Ac.12:2; Hb.4:12

35-36: came to divide...one against another

37: Jesus forces us to choose: Josh.24¹⁵

And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Matthew 10:34-39

34: we applaud peace; sword implies pain

- Ac.12:2; Hb.4:12

35-36: came to divide...one against another

37: Jesus forces us to choose

38: cross: most unpleasant word in warning

39: importance of right decisions

- Not trivial pursuit
- Choice determines our eternal destiny

Mark 11:27-33

Jewish leaders: politicians, sorry servants.

- Put finger to wind

What does popular opinion have to do with truth?

The belief doesn't make it true.

Churches pursue political correctness ...
abortion ... evolution ... humanism ...

I. Holds To Truth Regardless Of Consequences

II. God-sufficient

Mark 6:14-29

John: great man. Why?

- **17-18**, went to prison/death rather than forsake God. Pharisees compromised . . .
- **20**, opportunities to recant; he did not.
 - Did disciples pamper him to keep him faithful?
 - If brother fails us, do we forsake God?
 - Are mature conscious of others' failures, not their own? Lk.15

Where is Paul's focus? (Philippians)

- NOT on problems, 1:12
- NOT on mistreatment of brethren, 1:14-17
- NOT on presence of faithful brethren, 2:12
- NOT on neglect, 4:10

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If you find yourself beginning to love any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than your Bible, any house better than God's, any table better than the Lord's, any person better than your Savior, anyone better than your soul, a present indulgence better than the hope of Heaven—take alarm!

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- NOT on problems, 1:12
- NOT on mistreatment of brethren, 1:14-17
- NOT on presence of faithful brethren, 2:12
- NOT on neglect, 4:10
- **ON CHRIST, 1:21; 4:13**
 - 1:21, to live is Christ, to die is gain
 - 4:13, derives strength from Lord
 - Enables him to overlook petty problems

I. Holds To Truth Regardless Of Consequences

II. God-sufficient

III. Constant Growth
In Scriptures

Hb.5:11-14

Knowledge + obedience → salvation

11: dull of hearing – sluggish.

12: time...ought to be teachers.

12: first principles...elements (of learning).

12: milk, not meat.

13: unskilled in word of righteousness.

14: full age: complete, mature, adult.

Hb.5:11-14

How to reach this maturity? (14)

Use: repeated activity; habit; constant practice
in applying the Scriptures to life

Exercise: train ('gymnasium')

Study of Scripture

+ Time

+ Application (obedience)

Maturity

Discernment: distinguishing

There is always more that we need to know

2 Pt.3:18, grow in the grace and knowledge...

2 Tim.4:13, bring the cloak that I left with
Carpus at Troas when you come – and the
books, especially the parchments

I. Holds To Truth Regardless Of Consequences

II. God-sufficient

III. Constant Growth In Scriptures

IV. Covet Constructive Criticism

2 Pt.3

¹⁵ and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

2 Pt.3:15-16

- **Though Paul corrected Peter...**
 - Peter showed no ill-will
 - Praised Paul
 - Profited from the rebuke
- **1 Kings 22 – Ahab**
 - Instead of profiting from correction, he plunged headlong into his error
 - Paid for it with his life

I. Holds To Truth Regardless Of Consequences

II. God-sufficient

III. Constant Growth In Scriptures

IV. Covet Constructive Criticism

V. Never Quit

Jer.20:7-9

- Ph.3:12, I press toward the goal...
- Hb.6:1, let us go on to maturity...