



Our Vision

Characteristics of a Maturing Believer



To mature as a Christian is essentially to become more and more like Christ, following the example of our Lord in the world and accomplishing the mission He has given the church. As we imitate Christ's life of obedience that was a sweet act of worship to the Father, we will increasingly be able to love God and others, grow in Christ and community, and reach our neighbors and the nations. All of this is by the grace of God and completely dependent on the Spirit working within us and through us.*

As such, characteristics of a maturing Christian include the following:

1. Maturing Christians will be living an increasingly Gospel-centered life (Grace oriented): The most central truth of a Christian's life is that we have been reconciled to God through Christ by grace alone through faith alone to the glory of God alone. Hence we will see every aspect of life through the frame of the Gospel, growing in grace and fully dependent on the Spirit's empowerment for every good work. We increasingly remind ourselves and others of the Gospel of grace we are sent to proclaim and its implications for our lives. Every other aspect of this profile hinges upon this foundational characteristic. ⁱ

2. Maturing Christians will be growing in their relationship with God through the Scriptures (Word oriented): The Scriptures are God's gracious self-revelation to humanity, and as such are vital in our coming to a greater understanding of who He is and what He has done for us through Christ by the power of the Spirit. The Scriptures not only provide us knowledge about God but serve as a Spirit-illuminated conduit for growing in our relationship with Him. We intentionally spend time hearing from God in His Word, reflecting on what it reveals about Him and His mission for us, and responding with joyful wonder and humble obedience. ⁱⁱ

3. Maturing Christians will be growing in their relationship with God through prayer (Dependence oriented): As we hear from God in His Word, we respond to and commune with Him through prayer and thus develop a closer relationship with Him. Prayer reminds us that we need to be drawing on Him for strength and relying on Him for our maturity, knowing that apart from God we can do nothing. A very high priority for the maturing Christian is developing one's relationship with the Lord through prayer; indeed, going to God in individual and corporate prayer ought to be increasingly the first impulse of those who follow Christ. ⁱⁱⁱ

4. Maturing Christians will be growing in their relationships with other believers (Church oriented): We believe that Christian community is not an option for believers; lone ranger Christians will not mature in the faith as they should. Thus we seek to grow in our commitment to the local church and in cultivating genuine relationships with our brothers and sisters, being patient and gracious with one another, pursuing peace and unity in our midst, relying on others in times of need, using our gifts to build up the Body, intentionally seeking to repent and be reconciled to those we have wronged or who have wronged us, discipling and being discipled by other believers, and fully joining with the Body of Christ as it ministers to a broken world. ^{iv}

* Matthew 5:13-16, 28:18-20, Mark 12:29-31, John 15:4-8, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 2:11-22

ⁱ Romans 1:16-17, 3:21-31, 5:1-10, 11:33-36, 1 Corinthians 15:1-5, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Galatians 2:11-14, Ephesians 2:1-10, Colossians 1:3-6

ⁱⁱ Deuteronomy 29:29, 2 Kings 22:1-23:3, Psalm 19, Luke 24:25-32, John 5:36-47, 1 Corinthians 15:1-5, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, Hebrews 1:1-2, 4:12-13, 1 Peter 1:10-12, 2 Peter 1:19-21

ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Chronicles 6:19-7:1, Matthew 6:5-15, Acts 2:42, Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2-6, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, James 5:13-16, 1 Peter 3:12

^{iv} Matthew 18:15-20, Acts 2:42-47, Romans 12:3-21, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, 12:12-31, Galatians 6:1-10, Ephesians 2:11-22, 3:10-12, 4:1-16, 1 Peter 2:4-10, 4:7-11



5. Maturing Christians will be growing in their relationship to family (Kinship oriented): Christians are called to serve those within our household and family unit in light of our faith, and because these relationships are so central to our identity they are a place where we should expect to see Christians growing in Christ-like service to others. Husbands grow in sacrificially serving and dying to self for the sake of their wives, while wives grow in trusting submission to the headship of their husbands, knowing that the profound unity of the marriage relationship was created by God to demonstrate the relationship between Christ and His church. Children grow in obedience to and honoring of their parents, while parents grow in better leading and instructing their children, knowing that children learn to pattern the self-sacrifice, grace, kindness, joy, generosity, and sovereignty of their God through the lives of their parents. All the while the church is to be the place we find the familial bonds we all long for, with all of us, married or single, being shaped more and more into the pattern of biblical manhood or womanhood that God designed. ^v

6. Maturing Christians will be growing in a biblical understanding of the world (Truth oriented): Christians allow the truth of God's revelation to break through into every sphere of their lives, internally and externally. Our view of ourselves is entirely reoriented around our identity as an adopted son or daughter into the family of God because of the Gospel, and our sense of self-worth is increasingly derived from this identity rather than the opinion of others. Our view of the world is increasingly run through the grid of what God has said in His Word; the true, the good, and the beautiful now increasingly find their origin in God's definitions, and we grow in understanding the trajectory of the world from creation to new creation as one full of spiritual warfare and yet one where we can have great hope knowing that God's sovereign will is triumphantly being accomplished. ^{iv}

7. Maturing Christians will be growing in biblical engagement with the world (Kingdom oriented): Christian maturity does not mean becoming separated from the world. Rather, we are called to be cultural agents who interact with and critically assess the values of the culture rather than drink these values in uncritically or withdraw from the surrounding culture altogether. Maturing Christians grow in cultural literacy that we might better express the Gospel to our neighbors, showing Jesus Christ as the source of every culture's good dreams and the answer to every culture's nightmares. We thus seek the expansion of the Kingdom of God in every arena of life and culture, knowing that the One that is in us is greater than the one that is in the world. ^{vii}

8. Maturing Christians will be growing in vocational faithfulness (Calling oriented): Christians are people who honor God in their work, knowing that He created humanity to care for and cultivate the earth. We see that God has called each of us to contribute in some way to human flourishing, and we believe that His calling to a vocation is extremely significant. Maturing Christians seek to be faithful in that calling, knowing that God is honored by the work in and of itself and that He desires for believers to be salt and light in all the different arenas to which He may call us to labor for His glory. ^{viii}

^v Genesis 1:26-28, 2:21-25, Exodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Joshua 24:15, Malachi 4:5-6, 1 Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5:21-6:4, 1 Timothy 5:3-8, 1 Peter 3:1-7

^{vi} Genesis 1, Psalm 2, Matthew 5:44-46, John 1:1-17, 14:6, Romans 1:18-25, 8:14-25, Galatians 4:1-7, Ephesians 1:3-14, 6:10-20, 1 Timothy 4:1-5, Revelation 21:1-22:5

^{vii} Ecclesiastes 3:10-11, Matthew 5:13-16, John 3:16-17, 15:18-19, 16:33-17:26, Acts 17:16-34, Romans 1:18-20, 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, 10:3-5, 1 John 2:15-17, 4:4

^{viii} Genesis 1:26-2:3, 3:14-24, Exodus 20:8-11, 36:1-8, Ecclesiastes 2:17-26, 3:22, Matthew 9:35-38, John 5:17, Ephesians 4:28, Colossians 3:23



9. Maturing Christians will be growing in sacrifice for others (Service oriented): A Christian's life should increasingly become other-centered, just as Christ gave up the prerogatives of being God and came to serve rather than be served. More and more our selfish orientation should give way to a service orientation that humbly puts others' needs before our own. We are called to use the resources which God has given us to serve, to show mercy, and to seek justice for others, especially those who stand in need, understanding that in God's economy it is more blessed to give than to receive. ^{ix}

10. Maturing Christians will be growing in hospitality (Invitation oriented): Christians should increasingly become people who delight to welcome others into our world and shower them with warmth, acceptance, and gestures of love. Sharing our world with others and allowing them to see the various ways that we worship God with heart, soul, mind and strength is part of how we will accomplish the mission Christ has given us: they will see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. Inviting others in and living lives characterized by hospitality is another way that we are called to be faithful with what God has given us. ^x

11. Maturing Christians will be growing in incarnational ministry (Outward oriented): At the same time, we should be growing in the art of entering into the worlds of others with a preservative and redemptive function. Just as Christ entered into our world and experienced what it was to be human, so we are called to go and walk alongside of those who are "other" than us, valuing them as image-bearers of God and seeking to find ways to serve them and make the Gospel plain to them. We should thus intentionally build relationships with unbelievers in our social spheres and beyond, seeking to be ambassadors of God's reconciling ministry and loving them regardless of their sin and disregard for God and the Gospel. ^{xi}

12. Maturing Christians will be growing in spiritual discipline (Stewardship oriented): Christians will be growing in Spirit-led, disciplined, generous, and joyful stewardship of our resources (time, money, giftings, etc.) for kingdom purposes. We become more and more dedicated to individual and corporate disciplines which cultivate our communion with God and one another as well as a mission mindset that seeks the proclamation of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Maturing Christians increasingly embrace life routines and patterns of walking with God, serving in the church, and advancing the Gospel, all in reliance on the Spirit and to the glory of God. ^{xii}

^{ix} Deuteronomy 15:1-10, Matthew 20:28, 25:31-46, Luke 10:25-37, 22:26-27, John 13:1-17, Acts 20:35, Galatians 2:10, 5:13, Philippians 2:1-11, James 1:27

^x Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48, Luke 14:12-14, Romans 12:13, 13:8-10, 16:23, Colossians 1:13-14, 1 Timothy 5:9-10, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9, 2 Peter 1:10-11, 3 John 8

^{xi} Luke 10:25-37, John 1:1-18, 4:1-26, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, Ephesians 5:1-2, Colossians 4:2-6, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:14-16, 5:7-10, 1 Peter 2:11-12

^{xii} Psalm 1, Micah 6:8, Matthew 24:14, 25:14-30, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Corinthians 8:1-14, 9:6-15, Galatians 5:22-26, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, 2 Timothy 1:6-12, Titus 2:11-14, 3:3-8

