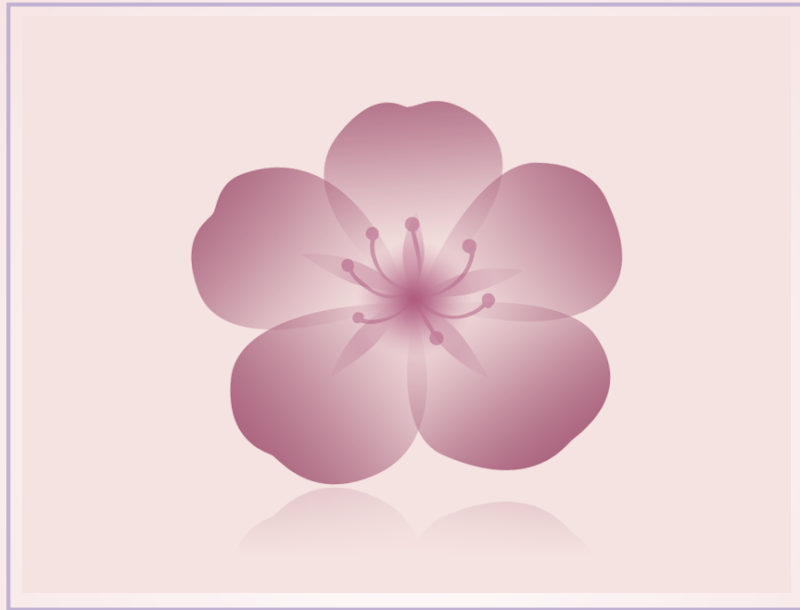


AGE IS NOT MATURITY



YOU DON'T JUST MAGICALLY BECOME MATURE ON 45 BIRTHDAYS



AVITUS LEONARD

INTRODUCTION

Maturity is something that develops after experiences we face in life; you don't just magically become mature on 45 birthday. You can mature at a very young age or maybe, you never truly mature.

But, society makes us feel that if we haven't figured out ourselves by our mid-20s. We have lived and continuing to live incorrectly. The majority of us has future plans and hope to be a certain point by a certain age, but that isn't always the reality of the situation.

People always say "Act your Age" we are expected to leave our childish behaviors at our high school graduations and be mature "Adults" that is not the case for everyone, though, because we are all on our own, natural paths. Experience happen to people at different times in life, causing some to grow up faster or slower than the norm. You can be 24 years old with the mind of a 45 years old or vice verse.

Maturity is a spiritual phenomenon; Aging is nothing that you do, aging is something that happens physically. Every child born, when time passes, becomes old.

Maturity is something that you bring to your life... it comes out of awareness. When a person ages with full awareness he becomes mature. Aging plus awareness, experiencing plus awareness is maturity.

A mature person has the integrity to be alone. And when a mature person gives love, he gives without any strings attached to it; he simply gives. And when a mature person gives love, he feels grateful that you have accepted this love not vice versa.

He does not even need your thanks. He thanks you for accepting his love. And when two mature persons are in love, one of the greatest paradoxes of his life happens, one of the most beautiful phenomena. They are together and yet tremendously alone; they are together so much so that they are almost one. But their oneness does not destroy their individuality; in fact, it enhances

it; they become more free. There is no politics involved, no diplomacy, and no effort to dominate.

How can you dominate the person you love? Just think over it. Domination is a sort of hatred, anger, and enmity. How can you think of dominating a person you love? You would love to see the person totally free, independent; you will give him more individuality.

That is why it is called the paradox; they are together so much so that they are almost one, but still in that oneness they are individuals.

Immature people falling in love destroy each other's freedom, create bondage, and make a prison. Mature persons in love help each other to be free; they help each other to destroy all bondages. And when love flows with freedom there is beauty. When love flows with dependence there is ugliness.

CHAPETR ONE

If you were to do an Internet research of the word maturity you would very likely get links to several million websites, many with their own definitions and musings about what maturity means and how to know when they are, in fact, mature. The truth is maturity can be defined from a number of different perspectives, hence the broad pool of writings about it.

In simplest way or form, maturity is the ability to respond to a given situation appropriately. What does that mean?

When viewed from the perspective of Age, it has to do with whether you are an infant, child, adult, older person, etc. from an emotional standpoint; it deals more with how appropriately you respond to the given situation.

In psychology, maturity is the ability to respond to the environment in an appropriate manner. This response is generally learned rather than instinctive. Maturity also encompasses being aware of the correct time and place to behave and knowing when to act, according to the circumstances and the culture of the society one lives in. Adult development and maturity theories include the purpose in life concept, in which maturity emphasizes a clear comprehension of life's purpose, directedness, and intentionality, which contributes to the feeling that life is meaningful.

In Legal and Political Issues

The definition and determination of maturity has been applied to the issue of criminal responsibility of juvenile offenders and a number of legal ages. The age of majority, the most broadly applied legal threshold of adulthood, is typically characterized by recognition of control over oneself and one's actions and decisions. The most common age threshold is 18 years of age, with thresholds ranging from 14 to 21 across nations and between provinces. Although age of majority is referred to as a jurisdiction's legal age, the legal ages of various other issues of legal maturity like sexual consent or drinking and smoking age are often different from the age of majority. Aside from age based thresholds of maturity, restrictions based in a perceived intellectual

immaturity also extend to those with a variety of mental impairments (generally defined as anyone with mental disability that requires guardianship), with laws in place in most regions limiting the voting rights of the mentally disabled and often requiring the judgment of a court to declare fitness. Similar to those restrictions place on children, persons with mental disabilities also have freedom restricted and have their rights assigned to parental guardians.

The reason behind why children and mentally disabled are not permitted to vote in elections is that they are too intellectually immature to understand voting issues. This view is echoed in concerns about the adult voting population, with observers citing concern for a decrease in civic virtue and social capital, reflecting a generalized panic over the political intelligence of the voting population. Although critics have cited youth culture as contributing to the malaise of modern mass media's shallow treatment of political issues, interviews with youth themselves about their political views have revealed a widespread sense of frustration in their political powerlessness as well as strongly cynical view of the actions of politicians. Several researchers have attempted to explain this sense of cynicism as a way of rationalizing the sense of alienation and legal exclusion of youth in political decision-making.

Cultural and religious issues

In Jewish religion, the becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah (literally an agent who is subject to the law) refers to the ceremony declaring that a Jewish child is morally and ethically responsible for their actions, is eligible to be called to read from the Torah, as well as responsibility to abide by the 613 laws written in the Torah. Traditionally, this ceremony awarded adult legal rights as well as the right to marry. Similarly, some Christian churches hold confirmation as a rite of passage in early adolescence. The rite holds fewer practical responsibilities than the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but carries ethical and moral consequences.

In churches, of age Christians are responsible for going to church on Sundays and for confessing their sins periodically; within certain

denominations it is also a common practice to warn children that it would be a mortal sin (an act punishable by banishment to hell) to lapse in these responsibilities.

By, starting with this; what does maturity mean? When is one mature? How does one measure maturity? These are questions, which are too often neglected in today's society. We often talk about maturity with little understanding of what it is. John is very mature for his age. Anitha is so intelligent!, but she can be so immature! She needs to grow up” Although this word is common piece of most everybody's vocabulary. Little time is given to truly understanding it. You don't learn maturity in high schools or universities and its meaning is rarely talked about among friends.

Unfortunately, this lack of exposure to the concepts of maturity results in a lack of understands of how we can improve ourselves as individuals.

The first thing; we must define maturity and distinguish between different types of maturity. In the dictionary maturity is defined as a full development. We know that the dictionary are not written in the kind of philosophical depth that we would like, so we must ask the questions ourselves... full development...of what? This leads us to distinguishing between different kinds of development.

In what ways, as human beings, do we develop? Or, put another way, in how many different ways do we mature? Although there are many ways in which we mature, most people are emotionally and intellectually immature and still they try to gain spiritual maturity. This usually ends up growing ego or makes the mind more unstable. Yet they think they are growing spiritually.

Without conquering one's lower nature it's not possible to progress spiritually. If one is still a slave to overreacting or drinking alcohol or any other destructive activity, this needs to be conquered first before a higher evolvment can follow.

When you are striving to correct your faults, accepts and learns and solve everyday problems by listening to your conscience, you receive the greatest spiritual growth, and not by learning astrology, trying to open your third eye. Spirituality cannot be divorced from every day existence; there so many people attending temples and meditating, but when it comes to dealing with people, they are selfish and judgmental.

When we work on our self, therefore, and learn to support ourselves, become independent emotionally and materially, and strive to be the best can be, we are making a fast spiritual progress too. It is big mistake for people who haven't transcended fear and who do not know how to take care of themselves to try open the third eye.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MATURITY AND AGING

A great difference, a vast difference, and people always remain confused about it. People think to age is to become mature, but aging belongs to the body. Everyone is aging; everyone will become old, but not necessarily mature. Maturity is a growth. Aging is nothing that you do; aging is something that happens physically. Every child born, when time passes, becomes old. Maturity is something that you bring to your life- it comes out of awareness. When a person ages with full awareness he becomes mature. Aging plus awareness, experiencing plus awareness, is maturity.

You can experience a thing in two ways. You can simply experience it as if you are hypnotized, unaware, not attentive to what is happening; the thing happened but you were not there. It didn't happen in your presence, you were absent. You just passed by. It never struck any note in you. It never left any mark on you. You never learnt anything from it. It may even have become a part of your memory because in a way you were present, but it never became your wisdom. You never grew through it. Then you are aging. But if you bring the quality of awareness to an experience the same experiences becomes maturity.

There are two ways to live: one to live in a deep sleep. Then you age, every moment you become old, every moment you go on dying, that's all, your whole life consists of a long slow death. But if you bring awareness to your experiences- whatsoever you do, whatsoever happens to you, you are alert, watchful, mindful, you are savoring the experience from all the corners, you are trying to understand the meaning of it, you are trying to penetrate the very depth of it, what has happened to you, you are trying to live it intensely and totally- then, it is not just a surface phenomenon. Deep down within you something is changing with it. You are becoming more alert. If this is a mistake, this experience – you will never commit it again.

A mature person never commits the same mistake again. But just an old person goes on committing the same mistakes again and again. He lives in a circle. He never learns anything. You will be angry today, you were angry yesterday, and the day before yesterday, and tomorrow also you are going to be angry, and the day after tomorrow also. Again and again you get angry, again and again you repent, again and again you take a deep decision that you are not going to do it again, but that decision makes no change. Whenever you are distributed the rage takes over, you are possessed. The same mistake is committed. You are aging.

If you live an experience of anger totally, never again will you be angry. One experience will be enough to teach that it is foolish, that is absurd, that it is simply stupid- not that it is a sin. A man who is gaining maturity never decided that he will not be angry again, no, that is the sign of a man who is not getting mature. A man of maturity never decides for the future. The maturity itself takes care. You live today. That very living will decide how the tomorrow is going to be- it will come out of it.

If the anger was painful, poisonous, you suffered hell through it, what is the point of deciding, or taking vow that I will never be angry again? All this is childish. There is no point! If you have known that anger is poisonous-finished! That way is closed. That door no more exists for you. The situation will be repeated tomorrow but you will not be possessed by the situation. You have learnt something- that understanding will be there. You may even laugh; you may even enjoy the whole thing of how people get so foolish. Your understanding is growing through every experience.

You can live life as if you are in a hypnosis- that's how ninety-nine per cent of people live-or you can live with intensity, awareness. If you live with awareness you mature, otherwise you simply become old. And to become old is not to become wise. If you have been a fool when you were young and now you have become old, you will be just an old fool, that's all. Nothing. Just becoming old, you cannot become wise. You may be even more foolish, because you may have attained to mechanical habits, robot-like.

Life can be lived in two ways. If you live unconsciously you simply die; if you live consciously you attain to more and more life. Death will come, but it never comes to a mature man, it comes only to a man who has been aging and getting old. A mature one never dies, because he will learn even through death. Even death is going to be an experience to be intensely lived, and watched, allowed.

The elements of maturity

The foundational goal of parenting is to raise children to be mature. The problem in modern people is that most parents assume that maturity is a byproduct of getting older, so few make significant efforts to develop it within their kids. In fact, most couldn't even define maturity, let alone begin to do what it takes to cultivate it. Those parents, who do want to help their kids become mature, confuse maturity with independence, so grant their immature children autonomy early on in life. They do not realize that an immature person granted their independence does not develop the self-restraint of maturity, but digresses deeper into the self-indulgence of immaturity. They may develop survival skills and increase in sophistication, but they will not grow in maturity.

Parents must therefore understand maturity and make a conscious effort to train their children to develop it. Based on a study of proverbs, we see that maturity, broken down to its most basic elements, is characterized by three primary character traits: self-control, wisdom and responsibility.

- **Self-control** person has all normal human passions, but is not ruled by them. A self-control child is one which is able to obey Mommy the first time when called. It is a self-controlled child that is able to not touch that which belongs to others or not sneak candy when Daddy's back is turned. Such a child may be angered when teased, but will have the self-restraint to not respond with violence. The bottom line is that a child with self-control or self-restraint has the ability to say no to himself and choose to do what is right. The child who is allowed to grow up without self-restraint, will reach adulthood, but remain a big kid-absorbed with himself, with pleasure, fun, and entertainment, often at

the expense of those around him. Whatever he thinks or feels is of supreme importance, so he will say whatever is on his mind, whether appropriate or not, and he will pursue whatever appeals to his passions. His self-centeredness will make him proud, impatient, demanding, and ungrateful.

- **Wise** person is not the same as a smart person whose intelligence is innate. Many brilliant people make foolish choices everyday-their rational thinking skills impaired by their passions and drives. A person who is truly wise is one who learns from mistakes, makes sound decisions, and handles stressful problems with a level head. More importantly, one with wisdom is rational, because passions are not clouding the thinking.
- **Responsible** person is one who accepts personal accountability for his own actions. He does not make excuses or blame others for his failures, and does not expect others to make up for his mistakes. He takes responsibility for himself and pays his own bills in life. A responsible person is faithful and conscientious in work habits. Such integrity and reliability, however, are only possible when passions are not in charge. When a child's desire for fun is greater than his sense of duty, he will compulsively play when it is time to work, and when he grows up he will produce poorly for his employer. When a child is not held responsible to fulfill his personal duties, but is cut slack time and again, he grows up thinking that everyone else is responsible to bail him out. He thinks he shouldn't have to live with consequences of his actions, and comes to develop a victim mentality – nothing ever his fault-someone else is always to blame for his misery. He sees himself as not responsible for his choices or reactions to life. In fact, he insists he has a right to that which he has not earned and is entitled to have equally all that others have worked for.

So the goal of parenting is to raise children to be mature, having the traits of self-control, wisdom and responsibility. The young person with those traits will be ready for adulthood when it arrives, and the society whose citizens reflect such character will be blessed as well. Most parents of the last 50 years

obviously did not have that as their goal, so, their children grew up, and we are now governed by politicians, judges and civil servants who lead us just as their parents led them. And our nation reaps the same bad fruit of that style of leadership.

Marks of maturity

What are the marks of maturity? We all love it when we see a young person who carries themselves well and shows signs of being mature. They interact with adults in an adult manner. We seek to build these marks in young people, ages 16-24, as we partner with schools.

1. A mature person is able to keep long-term commitments. One key signal of maturity is the ability to delay gratification. Part of this means a student is able to keep commitments even when they are no longer new or novel. They can commit to continue doing what is right even when they don't feel like it.

2. A mature person is unshaken by flattery or criticism. As people mature, they sooner or later understand that nothing is as good as it seems, and nothing is as bad as it seems. Mature people can receive compliments or criticism without letting it ruin them or sway them into a distorted view of themselves. They are secure in their identity.

3. A mature person possesses a spirit of humility. Humility parallels maturity. Humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less. Mature people aren't consumed with drawing attention to themselves. They see how others have contributed to their success and can honor them. This is the opposite of arrogance.

4. A mature person's decisions are based on character, not feelings. Mature people—students and adults—live by values. They have principles that guide their decisions. They are able to progress beyond merely reacting to life's options, and be proactive as they live their life. Their character is master over their emotions.

5. A mature person expresses gratitude consistently. The more I mature, the more grateful I am, for both big and little things. Immature children presume they deserve everything good that happens to them. Mature people see the big picture and realize how good they have it, compared to most of the world's population.

6. A mature person knows how to prioritize others before themselves. A wise man once said: A mature person is one whose agenda revolves around others, not self. Certainly this can go to an extreme and be unhealthy, but I believe a pathway out of childishness is getting past your own desires and beginning to live to meet the needs of others less fortunate.

7. A mature person seeks wisdom before acting. Finally, a mature person is teachable. They don't presume they have all the answers. The wiser they get, the more they realize they need more wisdom. They're not ashamed of seeking counsel from adults (teachers, parents, coaches) or other sources. Only the wise seek wisdom.

Types of maturity

Emotional Maturity

An emotionally mature person doesn't react to things, but thoughtfully responds. We can decide when to get emotional because we use emotions as tools, instead of being a slave to them and dancing by their tunes. We don't ignorantly react to any thing because we transcended selfishness and self-centeredness; so not angered, when someone makes a rude comment, though her heart may ache with spiritual pain. This pain however doesn't generate emotional response, since there's no heat of selfish passion involved.

Emotional maturity is not jumping in joy when things are good and then crying and letting the fear rule the mind when things turn bad. Both are extremes that

aren't healthy, yet most people don't realize that the joy is just an opposite pole of misery, and thus is extreme too.

Emotional maturity means always being aware of our emotions and directing them to go, like to creative pursuit, for example; emotions must be tools and not servants; because if we are slaves of emotions they will end up putting our body and mind out of balance and then diseases will result. We can master our emotions by firstly becoming an observer of them, then learning to channel them somewhere.

Being emotionally mature means we seldom act out on, or suppress our emotions. Emotionally intelligent, but immature adults are often unable to identify or manage their emotions. They usually avoid their emotions by intellectualizing, explaining, analyzing, disagreeing, attacking, flattering, joking, apologizing, evading, going silent, becoming aloof or suspicious, rejecting, criticizing or judging. They often come across as superior, arrogant, stubborn, defiant, hostile, people-pleasing, wishy-washy, phony, resentful, intolerant, self-pitying or victimized.

Because they haven't explored their emotional development, many of them aren't aware that they superimpose their childhood emotions on to their adult life. Their past is leaking out in the present.

In contrast, the emotionally mature adult understands that my emotions are not me, but mine – I'm in control, not my emotions". So they are more objective are less judgmental. They are better able to detach themselves from triggers that would normally provoke an emotional reaction. They experience states of equanimity, serenity and inner peace. Blaming others is no longer a strategy they use to make themselves feel safe.

That's not to say that an emotionally mature individual isn't child-like. In fact they are often lively, excited, adventurous, joyful, happy and open. But they are also nurturing, supportive, firm, fair, helpful, respectful, self-responsible, non-judgmental, honest, sincere and focused on the well being of themselves and of others.

The emotionally immature adult, however, is often childish, rather than child-like. They are reactive and throw tantrums. They are fearful, scared, needy, angry, resentful, pushy, bullying, jealous or envious. They can be quiet, withdrawn, defensive, argumentative or grandiose. They can come across as overbearing, micromanaging, controlling, disrespectful, fearful, angry, negative, judgmental, critical, abusive (mentally, emotionally, psychologically, physically), dishonest, insincere, narcissistic and focused on the self and the ego.

Characteristics of Emotional Maturity

To have emotional maturity means to have developed, to some extent, the characteristics listed below.

1. Empathy

It isn't enough to be able to identify your own emotions. You also need to be able to identify, and relate to, the emotions of others. When you have empathy for other people, only good things can come: understanding, compromise, and a greater emotional intelligence all around. Having empathy for others is also a form of respect and it makes you more approachable, both important traits that make up an emotionally mature person.

2. Accountability

Part of being emotionally mature means being able to admit when you're wrong, and face the consequences for your own mistakes with understanding and dignity. Think about people who don't take accountability for things that they've done. Often, they'll be in denial of any wrongdoing, and sometimes even try to place the blame on somebody else. Part of being accountable means being responsible. You can't have emotional maturity without both.

3. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is one of the foundations of emotional maturity. When you're self-aware, it means being able to identify your emotional states, see your thoughts and actions from all angles, and judge yourself based on the same standards that you judge others. People who are self-aware tend to be better at taking criticism, which is another supporting trait of emotional maturity. This is because they are often more critical of themselves to begin with, being more perceptive of their own actions and emotions.

4. Flexibility

Flexibility means understanding that not everything is going to go your way, and that's just a fact of life. Being able to make compromises, especially when it involves other people, is a sure sign of emotional maturity. Developing a sense of flexibility requires a few different traits: patience, for one. If you can't keep your cool during times of change or when spontaneous issues arrive, you won't be able to make calm and informed decisions.

5. A Healthy Amount of Confidence

Confidence is one of the elements that makes up emotional maturity, but it has to be a healthy amount. Too much confidence can border into arrogance. Not enough confidence can fall into low self-esteem. You need a balance of confidence and self-awareness to trust in your own decisions, but take the criticism necessary if you've made the wrong choice.

Intellectual maturity

Intellectual maturity means being able to make good decisions and the wise use of information. For example; it's intelligent to read less but to read useful information. It also means taking in less information, than to read more but only superficial information. It also means taking in less information but remembering it well, rather than taking in lots of information but remembering it well, rather than taking in lots of information and forgetting all the next day.

It means using our minds wisely; not overworking it, but also not giving it too much rest so that it wouldn't become lazy. Intellectual maturity also means not allowing emotions to stain our intellect, but using it in its pure form to make the most beneficial decisions.

Intellectual maturity means leaving judgment behind, being open to what is really happening, and making correct decisions as a result of such data gathering. Intellectual mature people are able to correctly guess the outcomes of actions, and decide in advance whether those one or not, and acting or not acting accordingly.

Spiritual maturity

Spiritual maturity is a process that begins when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. He or she is born again of the Holy Spirit and then chooses to live "in Christ." The Apostle Paul said that spiritual growth is an ongoing process.

Philippians 3:12-14 New International Version (NIV)

¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Speaking of full knowledge of Christ, he tells his readers that he himself has not "already obtained all this. Christian maturity requires a radical reordering of one's priorities, changing over from pleasing self to pleasing God and learning to obey God. The key to maturity is consistency; perseverance in doing those things we know will bring us closer to God. These practices are referred to as the spiritual disciplines and include things such as Bible reading/study, prayer, fellowship, service, and stewardship. No matter how hard we might work on those things, however, none of this is possible without the enabling of the Holy Spirit within us. Galatians 5:16 tells us that we're to "walk by the Spirit." The Greek word used here for "walk" actually means "to

walk with a purpose in view.” Later in the same chapter, Paul tells us again that we’re to “walk by the Spirit.” Here, the word translated “walk” has the idea of taking things “step by step, one step at a time.” It is learning to walk under the instruction of another—the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit means we walk under the Spirit’s control. As we submit more and more to the Spirit’s control, we will also see an increase in the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22–23). This is characteristic of spiritual maturity.

The marks of spiritual maturity

Spiritual maturity is learning how to walk in obedience to God. It is making the choice to live by God's viewpoint rather than your human viewpoint. In the book of Galatians 5:16 and 25 give the key, "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature...Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." The word "walk" in verse 16 is from the Greek word *peripateo*, which means "to walk with a purpose in view." The word "walk" in verse 25 is translated from another Greek word *stoicheo* and it means "step by step, one step at a time." It is learning to walk under the instruction of another. That person is the Holy Spirit. Since believers are indwelt by the Spirit, they should also walk under His control.

How can you learn to walk in the Holy Spirit's control? You study God's Word! 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17 instructs us, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth...All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." This is good practical instruction on how you become spiritually mature. It is not done by osmosis, but it is done by choosing to apply God's Word in everyday circumstances. As you walk step-by-step, applying God's Word to your life, you will grow spiritually.

Spiritual maturity should be a priority for you. "Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:13-14). As a believer, you are not to be milk-fed. Instead, you are called to chew on the "meat" of God's Word. Discover God's truth by in-depth Bible study and feed yourself spiritually. Then apply that sustenance to your life as you walk in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Maturity - Living In Christ

In order to experience spiritual maturity, you must also understand that growth comes by grace and it is God alone who is your resource. 2 Peter 1:3-9 reminds you that God is the source. "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins." Growing in spiritual maturity includes serving others in love.

Conclusions

Growing old is relatively easy. All we have to do is to keep having birthdays. Growing in maturity is a different story. It takes work to see the effects of aging through new eyes. It takes work to break from the past ways of seeing passed down to us from others from a different time and generation. While anyone can grow old, not everyone can grow mature. That takes a willingness to be aware of our past, without letting it control us. That takes openness to seeing ever-present changes and limitations as more than a sign of growing old. That takes a decided effort to see the changes and limitations as an invitation to grow in new directions, rather than to be daunted by what “we can no longer do.” Maturity is seeing the reality of our present situation and allowing ourselves to grow through them rather than to be diminished by them.

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