

“Growing Up In Christ”

“Ephesians” — Part 11

Ephesians 4:11-16

“We easily forget that the church is a body. We have tried to operate the church as an institution, a corporation, a business. But the reality Paul wants us to grasp in Ephesians is the church is a body made up of “cells” - and the cells are individual believers, you and me and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Each cell has a unique role to play in keeping the entire body healthy.”

Pastor Ray Stedman

Four Evidences of Spiritual Maturity:

1. The first evidence of maturity is Christlikeness.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13

- ⇒ Built up
- ⇒ Reach unity in the faith
- ⇒ Reach knowledge of the Son of God
- ⇒ Become mature
- ⇒ Attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ

2. The second evidence of maturity is stability.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

Ephesians 4:14

- ⇒ The mature believer is not tossed about by every religious novelty that comes along.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:6-7

- ⇒ The mature believer recognizes false doctrine and stays clear of it.

Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips. The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception.

Proverbs 14:7-8

- ⇒ The mature believer is not dependent on others to feed himself/herself, but he/she feeds himself/herself and others on the Word of God.

⇒ The mature believer is not disconnected from the local church doing his or her own thing.

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day *(of Christ's return)* approaching.
Hebrews 10:25

⇒ The mature believer is connected more than others and committed to the ministry of their local church.

3. The third evidence of maturity is truth joined with love.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.
Ephesians 4:15

⇒ The balance between truth and love is often difficult to maintain.

⇒ Some of us are good at truth and have no fear of pointing out inaccuracy, but can easily hurt others.

⇒ Others of us desire peace so much that we cannot bring ourselves to correct errors in doctrine.

⇒ God desires us to be neither abrasive nor timid.

⇒ God wants both strength and love.

***“Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love.
Love becomes soft if not strengthened by truth.”***

Reverend John Stott

4. The fourth evidence of maturity is cooperation.

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
Ephesians 4:16

⇒ The body is healthy when all parts are working properly and working in harmony.

⇒ The body is healthy when all parts submit to the headship of Christ.

⇒ The body is healthy when all parts walk in the Spirit.

⇒ The body is healthy when all parts contribute to the community with their gifts and talents.

⇒ The body is healthy when all of its members live in cooperation with each other.

Application: Body life at its best is when LOVE circulates through every part of the body. Christ's love for us and our love for others produces change and growth, but only through the power of the Spirit can lasting change come about. Day by day, moment by moment, as we walk in the Spirit and yield to His direction, can we experience what Jesus came to give, life in all its fullness.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
John 10:10

Spiritual unity is not something we manufacture. It is something we already have in Christ, but we must protect and maintain it. Truth unites. Love unites. Spiritual growth unites. May we all grow up to be more and more like Christ!

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. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:5-11