

WHOLE DISCIPLE

GROWING and Grounded in Christ

(Ephesians 4:11-16)

1. A Whole disciple is **Known** & **Connected** within biblical community (who really knows you?)
***Living in authentic relationships within the Church Body in smaller contexts ...where???*
(GROUPS: Community Groups)
2. A Whole disciple is **Grounded** and **Growing** in Christ: (praying; learning Scr.; applying faith)
-Growing **Spiritually** (connected to Holy Spirit: sensitive to His voice & leadership/conviction)
-Growing **Biblically** (pressing in to reading, studying, meditating, applying, & sharing Word)

READ Ephesians 4:11-16

And Jesus gave some *as* apostles, some *as* prophets, some *as* evangelists, some *as* pastors and teachers, [=Church leaders]¹² for the **equipping** of the [a]saints [=spiritual growth] for the **work of ministry**, [=meaningful service for the Church] for the building up of the body of Christ [=spiritual equipping & unleashing the body to serve/sacrifice =spiritual growth]; ¹³ **until we all** attain to the **unity** of the faith, and of the [a]knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature [g]which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ [h]As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people, by craftiness [i]in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but [i]speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is, Christ**, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together [j]by what every joint supplies, according to the [m]proper working of each individual part, causes the **growth** of the body for the building up of itself in **love**.

Spiritual Process:

- A. **Regeneration** (death to life =soul remade; restart)/*Saved*; Titus 3:5 being born again spiritual
- B. **Transformation/Changed** =**new species** 2C. 5:17=(*Spiritual* indwelling; infilling; anointing);
- C. **Justification**/Reconciliation =made righteous; given righteousness; holy; now *His UNION* w/Christ/*Adopted* (relationship, identity, security, purpose =meaningful life *NOW* &
- D. **Sanctification/Renewed** & Restored to Christlikeness (*daily process* of spiritual **growth**)
*=**DISCIPLESHIP** (**whole disciple**) -Lk 6:40 "A student is not above the teacher; but everyone when he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher"=**we were born to look/be like Jesus**
-Rom. 8:29 "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become conformed* to the **image of His Son...**" We were created/born to live to look like Jesus in every way, more *every day*
*A **Disciple**: One who is *following* Jesus, being *changed* by Jesus, & continues the *mission* of Jesus
-1 Peter 2:21 "For you have been called for this purpose, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in His steps."

Are you a true disciple? You following Jesus? Being changed? On Mission??? Or still same?

-What is different about your life today than last week? Last month? Last year?

***Discipleship**: *Leading* others to love God, follow Jesus, and model His mission to transform all peoples/nations w/gospel = *leading because YOU are following, being changed, & understand the mission!* ***We need disciplers.....You need discipleship. How do I disciple another???

-Spiritual growth through *intentional* discipleship leads to spiritual **maturity** (Christlikeness):

The Bible is clear that spiritual maturity is the goal for every Christian. Spiritual maturity is defined as being molded into the very character of Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus “*grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*” (Luke 2:52), so **we** too must continue to grow spiritually – with the Lord and in our relationships with others.

-“*In fact, we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. We also pray for this: your **maturity**.”*
2 Cor. 13:9

-“*Finally, brothers . . . **Keep on growing to maturity. Keep listening to my appeals. Continue agreeing with each other and living in peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.***”
2 Cor. 13:11

“*You, therefore, must be perfect* [perfect = growing into **complete maturity** of godliness in mind and character, having reached godly virtue and integrity], *as your heavenly Father is perfect.*”
Matthew 5:48

“*Jesus answered him, If you would be perfect* [that is, have that **spiritual maturity** which accompanies divine, self-sacrificing character], *go and sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; and come, be My disciple.*” Matthew 19:21

“*but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and **mature** character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*” Romans 5:4

“*And endurance (fortitude) develops **maturity** of character* [approved faith and tried integrity]. *And character produces joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation.*” Romans. 5:4

“*that you may stand firm in all the will of God, **mature** and fully assured.*” Colossians 4:12

“*Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be **mature** and complete, not lacking anything.*”
James 1:4 See a theme here in Scripture??

“*Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly—as infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for solid food. In fact, you are still not ready, for you are still worldly. For there is jealousy, insecurity, and dissension among you.*” 1 Cor. 3:1-3 **REBUKE!!

-God has designed all living things to **grow** (life cycle: birth, growth, maturity; reprod; death)

-God has *designed you, called you, equipped you, & expects you to **grow spiritually R U? Plan??***

-Though we never “arrive” spiritually =continual growth process, yet we can be **mature** spiritually

*[**Spiritual maturity** is evidenced in loving God fully, loving His Word, & loving His Church; in serving others using one’s spiritual gifting & blessings; evangelizing the lost & discipling believers with Joy, sincerity, and with a lifelong commitment to Christ’s mission that all may hear the good news of salvation; & pursuing this life for others’ blessing, learning to suffer well and die well for God’s glory]

What is Godly Maturity? = **What God sees about Himself in You.** (=less you, more Him)

- How you learn life lessons in such a way not to have to learn them over again (**some people never learn**)
- How you respond to adversity vs. React
- How you reject your instinct and rely on the Holy Spirit
- How you control your thoughts
- How you choose to keep silent when your flesh wants to scream out (for “Justice”)
- How you react when someone treats you like a servant (though God has called us to serve all)
- How you understand what rights you really have as a slave of Christ (we have no rights)

Eph. 4:11-16

And Jesus gave some *as* apostles, some *as* prophets, some *as* evangelists, some *as* pastors and teachers, [=Church leaders]¹² for the **equipping** of the ^{la}saints [=spiritual growth] for the **work of ministry**, [=meaningful service for the Church] for the **building up of the body of Christ** [=spiritual equipping & unleashing the body to serve/sacrifice =spiritual growth];

Vs. 13 *until we all attain to the unity of the faith*, - We will all be edified, encouraged, Grown in our faith as we *all* work together (unified) toward the same PURPOSE, with the same HEART, empowered by same Holy Spirit. We are to be unified around God’s Mission: **His glory in redem**

- **UNITY** is a big deal to God. WE are to grow in our FAITH (how we LOVE, TRUST, and LEAN on GOD for ALL Things in our Life) = **EXPERIENTIAL FAITH** = living it out

and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, - WE grow more as we LEARN more about God, Jesus THRU the WORD of God and teachers and disciplers, & just time in God’s Word:

to a mature man, What is Maturity? Spiritual Maturity?

7 Traits of Godly Maturity: (Rate yourself to see how you are Growing in spiritual maturity)

- 1) **Knowing who they Are IN Christ** (Secure in their Identity as a Child of God)
 - A. Knowing God’s Nature
 - B. Knowing God’s Word (Doctrine)
 - C. Knowing God’s Presence & Promises for you. = Security!!
- 2) **Taking Responsibility for their Own Actions**, Your Own Sin, and Your own Broken Nature (No excuses, no Blaming others, No blaming satan, or your upbringing, or your environment, or your spouse, your circumstances – Just owning up to your own nature & your own choices/consequences) = HUMILITY
 - The Humble person knows their own weakness, true dependence, & has the most vivacious prayer life
- 3) **Embracing God’s Perspective on all Situations** (How they see & respond to their world)
 - Learning how to be THANKFUL in all circumstances
 - Knowing how to find JOY in God’s near Presence, even when the world seems darkest
- 4) **Putting others’ Needs before themselves. Selfless. Sacrificial. Generous**

- 5) **Never losing a Teachable Spirit** (Adopting the mentality of a Life learner) – Disciple for life
- 6) **Consistently following through with their promises**, with their “yes” to questions, keeping long-term commitments =One who is dependable, consistent, and able to be a foundation for others to grow upon and emulate.
- 7) **Being able to make decisions based on the future & not just the present** (not impulsive, not based on feelings, but careful, wise, decision-making understanding the consequences involved for all parties)
 - Decisions are based on Character, not feelings (wants/lusts/impatience)

to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **No One likes being compared to others. Young, Beautiful, Fit, Smart & then there is us ☺**

But, what about being compared to Jesus? Perfect. He is God. (Can you imagine his brothers & sisters)

Vs. 14 As a result, we are *no longer* to be **children**, ...time to grow up; be responsible; lead

-tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine,
 -by the trickery of people, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

A Spiritually Mature Person is one who is **STABLE** (Emotionally, spiritually, physically, socially)

They Know themselves because They know God (His Nature) and God’s Word (The Bible).

Stable people are grounded and rooted in God’s Word! And even spiritually stable people know they have not arrived yet, they are not perfect – but always striving after Christ

*“Not 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, ¹⁴**I press on** toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 3:12-14

Vs. 15: but ^[i]speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is, Christ,**

Vs. 16: from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together ^[i]by what every joint supplies, according to the ^[m]proper working of each individual part,

causing the **growth** of the body for the building up of itself in **love**

“We can never give away what we don’t own” we have to have this love/joy to model this to other

-Have you been changed /transformed by Jesus? Is it evident in ur life? Love His Word? Spirit???

Paul’s calling & passion was to win souls; disciple the saints; & unleash them on Mission to world

-What has changed in 2000 years???. The Church is still here!! You & me we’re here!!!

-Now others are waiting to be reached; we are called to pass this truth on; multiply believers; **glory**

*****We need disciplers.....You need discipleship. We have a plan: **The PATH** -will you step up?**

A **WHOLE** Disciple: At the WELL ...four basic components of comprehensive Discipleship:

1. Known in biblical **Community**
2. Knows the Lord, loves the Lord & **Grows** in Him

The WELL's pursuit of churchwide, biblical, & intentional discipleship = The PATH

APPLICATION

Think about the following questions about your life: **Because of Jesus living w/in you....**

- Has your attitude changed about God, the Bible, the Church, or others recently?
- Have your habits changed recently? What are those habits you are not proud of?
- Has what you do with your free time changed?
- Has your taste in music, movies, media, or online websites changed?
- Have you developed any sensitivities that you had not previously had?
- Have you begun to want to pray more? Actually interested in learning something in the Bible?
- Have you desired to be around more positive people, friends, co-workers lately?
- What is something that you think would indicate you have changed in some way for the better?
- What does it mean to begin to look like and become like Jesus as in Romans 8:29?
- Who has intentionally discipled you/mentored you biblically?
- Who have you intentionally discipled? Spiritually invested in?
- Are you ready????

As you reflect on these questions and honestly assess your life, know that no matter where you are spiritually in your development (spiritual Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, or Adulthood) – God wants you to keep growing and keep progressing spiritually into maturity. God's ultimate design for YOU is spiritual maturity – which can be defined as thinking, believing, and acting like Jesus. You were created to become more like Jesus everyday (Romans 8:29). This is the Lord's plan for your life.

What is your next step of obedience??

7 Community Group Questions

1. Why do you think God intends every believer—not just pastors or ministry leaders—to participate in the work of ministry? Where have you seen this lived out well?
2. How would you define spiritual maturity? What are some common misconceptions Christians have about what maturity looks like?
3. What are some modern voices, cultural messages, or ideologies that can subtly pull Christians away from biblical truth?
4. Why is it difficult to balance truth and love? Which do you tend to struggle with more—speaking truth boldly or speaking it lovingly? Why?
5. How has someone else's gifts or encouragement strengthened your faith?
6. What gifts, experiences, or opportunities has God given you to help strengthen others?
7. What practical habits or rhythms can our community group develop to intentionally build one another up throughout the week—not just during our meetings?