

**WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN BELIEVERS  
RESPONDING TO GOD'S GIFTS  
2 PETER 1:5-11**

**Introduction**

We've seen how **GOD'S DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN UNTO US ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN UNTO LIFE AND GODLINESS!**

- 1. WE were given ETERNAL LIFE by our FAITH in the GOSPEL,**
- 2. WE were given THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT the moment we TRUSTED CHRIST!**
- 3. WE were given THE ENTIRETY OF THE WORD OF GOD that the HOLY SPIRIT OPENS UP TO US!**

And then last week we talked about how to **APPROPRIATE** and **ACTIVATE** those three things that pertain to **LIFE** and **GODLINESS!**—  
The key is to **TRUST AND OBEY!**

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Today we examine the matter of **MATURING IN OUR FAITH! IT IS GOD'S WILL** for **EVERY CHILD OF GOD** to **MATURE** in their **LIFE** and **WALK WITH HIM!** But understand that **MATURITY** isn't something that is **INSTANTANEOUS** and **NEITHER DOES IT JUST HAPPEN AUTOMATICALLY OVER A PERIOD OF TIME!**

When we were **BORN AGAIN** by the **SPIRIT OF GOD** we became **GLORIOUSLY SAVED** at that very moment and we **BEGAN** our **WALK WITH GOD**, but we **ALL** began as **BABES IN CHRIST!**

*1 Peter 2:2—“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.”*

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I remember that even before our children were born, my wife and I had a **PLAN** to bring them up in the **NURTURE** and **ADMONITION** of the **LORD** and into the **MATURITY OF PROPER ADULTHOOD.** For the most part, by **GOD'S GOOD GRACE AND HELP**, we can say *“Mission Accomplished!”*  
Just as it takes a **PLAN** to properly help children **GROW** into **MATURITY,**

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so also it takes a **PLAN—GOD'S PLAN—to GROW US INTO SPIRITUAL MATURITY.**

If we, as **BELIEVERS**, are going to be successful in **MATURING** in our **WALK** with **GOD**, we must **YIELD** ourselves to **GOD'S PLAN** to **GROW** us in **HIM.**

But before we look at **GOD'S PLAN**, let's understand that there are a number of approaches to **LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE** that **WILL NOT BRING FORTH MATURITY** in our lives: *(Share 4 things.)*

- 1. Don't try to live the CHRISTIAN LIFE if you haven't first personally TRUSTED CHRIST as your SAVIOUR and LORD!**
  - a. MATURITY takes a DIVINE POWER.**  
*(Something that is dead cannot grow!)*
  - b. The DIVINE POWER** needed for **GROWTH** to happen comes from **CHRIST'S DIVINE NATURE** taking up residence and living within us.
  - c. It may seem simplistic, but it is FUNDAMENTAL— LIFE must precede GROWTH!**
- 2. Don't try to live the CHRISTIAN LIFE by merely relying on your ABILITY TO KEEP A SET OF RULES!**

*(We can't finish by human effort what we have begun by FAITH —Galatians 3:1-5; Colossians 2:6-7)*

Just as we must **RELY ON the LORD** for our **SALVATION**, so also we must **RELY ON HIM** for our **MATURITY!**

- 3. Don't mistake a weekly pilgrimage to CHURCH as BEING SUFFICIENT FOR GROWTH!**
  - a. Now don't get me wrong, meeting with the people of GOD is**

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vitaly important for **GROWTH** and **MATURITY**.  
*Hebrews 10:25*—“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

b. But, the **CHRISTIAN LIFE** is not just a once-a week, twice-a-week, or even three times-a-week happening, it is a day-to-day **RELATIONSHIP WALK** with the **LORD**!

4. **Don't try to live the CHRISTIAN LIFE by simply “doing good!”**  
(That is too general of a statement and is wholly inadequate because there is more to the **CHRISTIAN LIFE** than simply “doing good!”)

**In order to LIVE a LIFE PLEASING to the LORD, we must be GROWING and MATURING SPIRITUALLY in our lives. (3 things)**

1. **Don't confuse LENGTH OF TIME SAVED with SPIRITUAL MATURITY! (Hebrews 5:12-14)**  
*(Example—There was an adult man living on the same road our family lived on when I was growing up by the name of Talmedge. Talmedge was about the same age as my mom, but Talmedge had suffered brain damage as a six year old child. He had the body of an adult man, but because of the brain damage he had the mind of a 6 year old child all the way until he died.)*  
That was sad, but you know what is sadder than that?— Seeing a **BELIEVER** whose hasn't **GROWN** much whose **SPIRITUAL LIFE** has **STAGNATED**!

2. **Don't confuse BIBLE KNOWLEDGE with SPIRITUAL MATURITY! (James 1:22; 4:17)**

3. **No matter how much we MATURE, there is room for more MATURITY. (2 Peter 1:12-13; Philippians 3:12-14)**  
I may be your Pastor, but I'm still maturing! I still haven't arrived!

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Now, as we think about **MATURING** I want us to consider the **LIFE** of **PETER**, the man who was **MOVED** by the **HOLY SPIRIT** to write this **EPISTLE** to **BELIEVERS**. He is the one telling us about these **GIFTS GIVEN TO US** and the **GROWTH EXPECTED OF US**!

1. **PETER** was one of **CHRIST'S** original twelve **DISCIPLES**—He saw the **POWER OF CHRIST** first hand. *(By that, I mean that he saw **CHRIST** healing the sick, raising the dead, multiplying the loaves and the fishes, and doing other **MIRACLES** that only **GOD** could do.)*
2. **PETER** was also part of **CHRIST'S** “*inner circle*”, so to speak, along with **JAMES** and **JOHN**
  - a. Those three were taken on the mountain where the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** was **TRANSFIGURED**!  
*(Matthew 17:1-8)*
  - b. Those three were also taken a little deeper into **THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE** by **CHRIST**!  
*(Matthew 26:36-46)*
3. **PETER** walked on the water! *(Matthew 14:22-32)*  
**Right after that, as his attention turned from JESUS to his CIRCUMSTANCES, he sank in the same water! PETER was then lifted out of the water by CHRIST!**
4. **PETER** knew what it was like both to get things **RIGHT** and to get things **WRONG**! *(Matthew 16:13-17; 21-23)*
5. **PETER** also knew the **AGONY** of **FAILING THE LORD GREATLY**! *(Luke 22:61-62)*
6. **PETER** knew what it was like to be **CALLED OF THE LORD**!
  - a. **JESUS** told him “*Follow me.*” *(Matthew 4:19)*

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- b. **JESUS** also told him *“Feed My sheep”* and *“Follow Me.”*  
(*John 21:15ff*)
7. **PETER** knew what it was like to **LEARN** at the feet of **JESUS**!
8. **PETER** knew what it was like to have to **WAIT**! He was in the **UPPER ROOM** awaiting the **COMING** of the **INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT**! (*Acts 1:13*)
9. **PETER** knew the **JOY** of being **OBEDIENT TO THE LORD**!
- a. **There Were About 3000 Saved When He Preached On The Day Of Pentecost**—*Acts 2*
- b. **There Were Also Some Things He Experienced As An APOSTLE OF THE LORD**:
- 1) He healed the lame man at the gate of the **TEMPLE**!  
(*Acts 3*)
  - 2) He showed the **CHURCH** the serious nature of **SIN**.  
(*Acts 5—Ananias & Sapphira*)
  - 3) He was used of **GOD** to open the **GOSPEL** to the **GENTILES**! (*Acts 10—Cornelius*)
  - 4) He was **DELIVERED FROM PRISON** by an **ANGEL** in **RESPONSE** to **PRAYER**. (*Acts 12:5ff*)
10. **And as he penned these words in this second EPISTLE, PETER was about to know what it would mean to DIE FOR THE LORD.**  
(*2 Peter 1:14; John 21:18-19*)

**Conclusion**

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So, **PETER** was once an **IMMATURE BELIEVER**, but he had **GROWN** into **MATURITY**!

When **PETER** was **IMMATURE**, he **WALKED** where **he** wanted to go. If we are **WALKING** where **we** want to go, we are **IMMATURE** too!

When **PETER** was **MATURE**, he **WALKED** where **THE SAVIOUR** wanted him to go.

If we're **WALKING** where **THE SAVIOUR** wants us to go, no matter the consequences, then we have attained a degree of **SPIRITUAL MATURITY** in our lives!

As we look into this portion of **SCRIPTURE** in the next few messages, we will discover that **PETER**, who **GREW** into **MATURITY**, gives us **GOD'S PLAN FOR MATURING US**!

- 1) **He Describes GOD'S Part In The Process Of MATURITY.**
- 2) **He Describes OUR PART In The Process, Including 7 Steps To Spiritual Maturity.**
- 3) **He PROMISES SUCCESS To ALL Who Will FOLLOW THE PLAN!**

In *2 Peter 1:1-4*, we learned that the **LORD** doesn't expect us to **LIVE BY OUR OWN STRENGTH** or **KNOWLEDGE**.

**GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS POWER and NATURE and HAS PROMISED TO HELP US!** So, if **GOD** wants us to walk on water, move a mountain, overcome temptation, forgive someone, show love to someone, lead a person to **CHRIST**, or do anything else for **HIM**, we can be sure that **HE** has already **GIVEN** us **all that we need** in order to **DO IT**! But we must **APPROPRIATE** and **ACTIVATE**! **TRUST** and **OBEY**!