

## Marks of a Mature Christian, Part 1

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At a recent elder's meeting, we were talking about how to help you be the Christian God wants you to be. And so we thought it would be good to talk about the character of a mature Christian, what are the godly qualities God wants every Christian to have? These are areas you should focus on for your life, and help other Christians grow in too. And so my plan is to go over 12 different areas in the next month, and these are: *“Knowing and Loving God; Knowing and Believing the Truths of God; Living a Holy Life; Walking with the Spirit; Being Humble; Having Faith; Loving Others; Serving Others; Fulfilling Your Purpose; Having Godly Speech; Being a Good Steward; and Having Hope.”*

Let's start with *“Knowing and Loving God.”* Knowing and loving God, having a close and personal relationship with God, is foundational. And it starts when you get saved, when you believe that God, through the punishment and death of His own Son, justified you, forgave you of all your sins, and gave you eternal life. John 5:24  
John 17:3. Eternal life is defined as knowing God, as having a personal and eternal relationship with the living God, and this is the most important relationship there is.

Now what does it mean to have a relationship with God? I think of Mary who sat at Jesus' feet, who spent time with Him, and listened to Him, learned from Him, and believed what He said. (Luke 10:38-42). I think of Enoch, and he walked with God. He knew God's love and he loved God, and he enjoyed God, and had this close relationship with Him. (Gen. 5:22). There's Abraham and Moses, and both were friends of God, and they also had a close relationship with Him. They knew what God was like, they knew His character, His love, mercy, power, and wisdom, and that He was holy, sovereign, and faithful. Songs – Moses, Hannah, and Mary

Now to love God means putting Him first in our life - it means not loving the things of this world, not loving money, food, or work. It means loving God, and not having idols. It means we love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength - we're wholehearted in our love for God, we're devoted and committed to Him, we're sold out to Him. To love God means we love His word, the Bible, and we read it. Psalm 119:97  
And God's word is the key to your relationship with God. It tells us all about Him, and how we can get to know Him and walk with Him and talk to Him. Eph. 4:1

And we're to read this book and believe it and do what God says. Having a relationship with God means He's our Lord and that we obey Him, we do what He says. Psalm 119:44  
To love God means having faith in God, depending on Him to meet all our needs. It means relying on Him through thick and thin; it means trusting His promises, believing He'll lead us, and give us all the grace and peace we need. Jer. 17:5-8

The most important aspect of loving God is worshipping Him. We're to praise God, we're to love God by what we say and do, and we're to thank Him. Psalm 9:1-2, 69:30, 145:1-2 Phil. 3:10. Like Paul, we should really desire to know Christ, and grow in our relationship with Him, and with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. 2 Cor. 13:14

Here are some vss. that describe aspects of this relationship God wants us to have with Him. Ps. 23:1, Ps. 63:3-4, Ps. 73:23-24, Ps. 103. Now the book of Psalms is one of the best books to help you grow in your relationship with God. Indeed, having a close relationship with God, knowing and loving Him, is the most important thing in your life. I'd encourage you to pray for yourself and for others, that you grow in your relationship with God. Eph. 1:17, 3:14-21

The second area I want to talk about is "*Knowing and Believing the Truths of God.*"

First, let me share some things about the truth:

1. We are talking about spiritual truth, not truth about the physical world.
2. All the spiritual truth you need to know is in the Bible, is in God's word. 2 Tim. 3:16-17
3. God's truth is inerrant; it's true, it's right, it's correct, it's not error.
4. The truths God wants you to learn are clear, they're not vague or confusing.
5. The devil tells lies that are opposed to the truths of God, and wants us to believe his lies. And if we believe the devil's lies, we won't believe God's truths, and we'll be led astray, and we'll go down the wrong road, an evil road, a devilish road, a worldly road, an unrighteous road. Eph. 4:14-15
6. God wants us to know His truth and to live by His truth, and then we will be set free from sin and evil and the snares of the devil. John 8:32
7. The church is the body of Christ, and it's the pillar and support of the truth. And the church is to know and understand the truth, and teach the truth, and fight for the truth, and defend the truth, and train people to teach the truth. 1 Tim. 3:14-15, Matt. 7:24-27
8. A mature Christian lives by the truths of God's word, and not just one or two truths, but by all the basic truths of the Bible. Psalm 119:160
9. Jesus Christ embodied the truth of God by His words and His life. Jesus always spoke the truth, and His life, His character, His actions always displayed the truth. John 1:14-18

What are the basic truths of the Bible, the truths you need to know?

- Eph. 4:4-6. There's one body which is the church, and there are many truths you need to know about the church. You need to know that she was chosen before the creation of the world, that she's the body of Christ, that she's to be holy and loving, that she's to preach the gospel and to make disciples of all the nations, that she has elders to lead her, and that she'll be glorified at Christ's coming, and that she'll worship and serve Christ forever.

There's the Holy Spirit, and He is God, and He indwells and seals every believer. He sanctifies believers, teaches believers, empowers believers to do God's work, comforts and encourages believers, has fellowship with believers, gives spiritual gifts to believers, helps believers to pray, and leads believers. Gal. 5:16-18, 22, 25

There's one hope, which means you have a future, that you'll have a home in heaven and be with Jesus and all the other believers, and will be given a new glorified body and an incredible inheritance, that you'll be rewarded for your work on earth, that Christ is coming again, and that you'll be worshipping and serving God forever. Rom. 15:13

There's one Lord, and this is Jesus Christ. And God wants you to understand the truths about Christ, that He's God and man, that He's your Creator and the Creator of the world, that He's the Lord over all people and things, that He's the Savior, the One who died to pay for our sins, that He's the Judge, the one who judges every person, both saved and lost, and that He's the King, the One who will reign over the world. Rev. 22:12

There is one faith, and this is referring to God's word, to what we call the Bible, and God's word is inerrant, is without error in the original texts; and it's sufficient, for it contains all we need to live the Christian life, the truths of God that we are to believe, the commands we are to obey, and the promises we are to believe. 2 Tim. 3:16-17

There is one baptism, and this refers to salvation, to the truths of the gospel, that people are sinners, and that Christ died to pay the penalty of sinners, that Christ rose from the dead, that God was satisfied by His death for us. (Isaiah 53). And those who repent of their sins and believe in Christ are freely and apart from any works, justified by God, redeemed by Christ, forgiven of their sins, receive eternal life, become God's children, are sealed by the Spirit, and will go to heaven when they die, and at Christ's coming, will receive a brand-new body. Phil. 3:20-21

Finally, there's one God and Father of all, and this is referring to God the Father, and He chose and predestined us to get saved. And He saves us, calls us His children, answers our prayers, cares for us, meets all our needs, and will bring us to heaven. Psalm 116:15 - And these are seven areas of truth - and there's also the truth about man, that we're made in God's image, that we're male and female, that we have sinned against God, which results in death - and apart from Christ, we will go to hell.

These are the eight areas of truth that are found in most church doctrinal statements, and they are basic and foundational and necessary for the growth of every Christian. So too for each one of you, these truths about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, salvation, God's word, the church, and hope, need to be believed, understood, and shared with others. And knowing these truths will help you have a Biblical worldview, will help you live a vibrant, loving, powerful, and successful Christian life in this sinful world. And I'm talking about your daily life, how you live your life every day of the week.

The third area I want to talk about is, *“Living a Holy Life.”* This is an extremely important area, and there are many verses on this subject.

1. God wants us to be holy. Eph. 1:4 - *“God chose us in Him... that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”* We see that God’s primary objective is for us to be holy. 1 Pet. 1:16 - *“Like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior.”* God is holy, and holiness is one of His main character qualities, and He commands us to be holy. 1 Thess. 4:3 - *“This is the will of God, your sanctification.”* Is. 6 - Israel

2. We need to learn to stay away from sin. Now we are all tempted to sin, and we need to say no to it, to avoid it, and to turn away from it. In Gen. 39:9, Joseph when tempted by Potiphar’s wife, said, *“How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?”* - 1 Cor. 10:13. We need to say no to sin, and say yes to truth, to what is good, right, and true. Ps. 1:1. We need to stay away from bad people, and bad music, bad movies, bad TV shows, and bad websites. Psalm 119:101, 104

3. God enables us to be holy. Jn. 17:17 - *“Sanctify them in the truth, Your word is truth.”* God’s Word, His truth, is the primary means by which we can be holy. Ps. 119:9 says, *“How can a young man keep His way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.”* Thinking about God’s truth helps you to have a pure thought life, and helps you to have godly speech, to talk in a Christ-like way. And obeying God’s word enables you to live a holy life, to have godly conduct. Eph. 4:20-24

Now you can’t be holy in your own power, and so God gives you the Holy Spirit - and one of the primary purposes of the Spirit is to make and keep you holy. Eph. 3:14-17b. Rom. 6:11-14. A key element in living a holy life is presenting yourself to God as an instrument of righteousness. Knowing that God wants to use you to fulfill His purposes, and having the mindset that you are to serve God with your spirit, mind, and body, will motivate you to be holy. 2 Tim. 2:20-22

Next week, we’ll talk about *“Being Filled with the Spirit; Being Humble; and Having Faith.”*