

~MATURITY (265)

- The state of **being full grown, ripe, complete**, as determined by a standard. The Bible provides the standard for ascertaining what constitutes **spiritual maturity, completeness**. According to this standard, a mature Christian is one who is not a spiritual babe, often changeable and easily led astray or influenced by others in matters of doctrine.
- And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers. (**Ephesians 4:11**)
- With a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ. (**Ephesians 4:12**)
- Until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ. (**Ephesians 4:13**)
- In order, that we should no longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error. (**Ephesians 4:14**)
- Since his perceptive powers are trained, he is able to distinguish both right and wrong. He does not need to be taught elementary things.
- Concerning him we have much to say and hard to be explained, since you have become dull in your hearing. (**Hebrews 5:11**)
- The teaching on baptisms and the laying on of the hands, the resurrection of the dead and everlasting judgment. (**Hebrews 6:2**)
- He is guided, not by worldly wisdom, but by God's spirit.
- Now we speak wisdom among those who are mature, but not the wisdom of this system of things nor that of the rulers of this system of things, who are to come to nothing. (**1 Corinthians 2:6**)

- For it is to us God has revealed them through his spirit, for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10)
- For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man that is in him? So, too, no one has come to know the things of God, except the spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11)
- Now we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God, that we might know the things that have been kindly given us by God. (1 Corinthians 2:12)
- These things we also speak, not with words taught by human wisdom, but with those taught by the spirit, as we combine spiritual matters with spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:13) Footnote

See Also PERFECTION

- Never does the Bible speak about degrees or stages of spiritual **maturity** or adulthood. However, just as a person continues to grow in knowledge, experience, and discernment after becoming an adult, the **mature Christian likewise continues to make progress.**
- Trials that he has can strengthen his faith and endurance. Wrote the disciple James;
- Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials. (James 1:2)
- Knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance. (James 1:3)
- But let endurance have its work complete, that you may be **complete** and **sound** in all respects, not lacking in anything. (James 1:4)
- Similarly, as adults will vary in physical aspects and in mental abilities and talents, so **mature** Christians may vary in certain qualities, some being notable in some aspect, such as **knowledge, judgment, courage, or generosity**, others in another.
- But I wish all men were as I myself am. Nevertheless, each one has his own gift from God, one in this way, another in that way.

(1 Corinthians 7:7)

- **Now there are varieties of gifts, but there is the same spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:4)**
- **And there are varieties of ministries, and yet there is the same Lord. (1 Corinthians 12:5)**
- **And there are varieties of operations, and yet it is the same God who performs all the operations in all persons. (1 Corinthians 12:6)**
- **But the manifestation of the spirit is given to each one for a beneficial purpose. (1 Corinthians 12:7)**
- **For example, to one there is given through the spirit speech of wisdom, to another speech of knowledge according to the same spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:8)**
- **To another faith by the same spirit, to another gifts of healings by that one spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:9)**
- **To yet another operations of powerful works, to another prophesying, to another discernment of inspired utterances, to another different tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:10)**
- **But all these operations the one and the same spirit performs, making a distribution to each one respectively just as it wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11)**
- **Now you are Christ's body, and members individually. (1 Corinthians 12:27)**
- **And God has set the respective ones in the congregation, first, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, then powerful works, then gifts of healings, helpful services, abilities to direct, different tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:28)**
- **Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all perform powerful works, do they? (1 Corinthians 12:29)**
- **Not all have gifts of healings, do they? Not all speak in tongues,**

do they? Not all are translators, are they? (**1 Corinthians 12:30**)

- But keep zealously seeking the greater gifts. And yet I show you a surpassing way. (**1 Corinthians 12:31**)
- Thus, in considering **maturity**, it is necessary to take into consideration that special abilities or talents are not the things that determine whether one is a **mature** Christian or not.
- The entire congregational arrangement, with its apostles, prophets, evangelizers, shepherds, and teachers, served to produce **mature Christians, spiritual adults**.
- And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers. (**Ephesians 4:11**)
- With a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ. (**Ephesians 4:12**)
- Until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ. (**Ephesians 4:13**)
- In order, that we should no longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error. (**Ephesians 4:14**)
- He is the one we are publicizing, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in union with Christ. (**Colossians 1:28**)
- To this end I am indeed working hard, exerting myself in accordance with the operation of him and which is at work in me with power. (**Colossians 1:29**)
- Epaphras, who is from among you, a slave of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings, always exerting himself in your behalf in his prayers, that you may finally stand complete and with firm conviction in all the will of God. (**Colossians 4:12**)
- I indeed bear him witness that he puts himself to great effort in

behalf of you and of those at Laodicea and of those at Hierapolis.
([Colossians 4:13](#))

- Obviously, then, those serving as shepherds and teachers had to be spiritually mature persons, not babes. However, more than spiritual adulthood was required of one appointed as an overseer or a ministerial servant.
- That statement is faithful. If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. ([1 Timothy 3:1](#))
- The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach. ([1 Timothy 3:2](#))
- Not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent, not a lover of money. ([1 Timothy 3:3](#))
- A man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness. ([1 Timothy 3:4](#))
- If indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation? ([1 Timothy 3:5](#))
- Not a newly converted man, for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil. ([1 Timothy 3:6](#))
- Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from people on the outside, in order, that he might not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil. ([1 Timothy 3:7](#))
- Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not giving themselves to a lot of wine, not greedy of dishonest gain. ([1 Timothy 3:8](#))
- Holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience. ([1 Timothy 3:9](#))
- Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households. ([1 Timothy 3:12](#))

- For the men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus. (**1 Timothy 3:13**)
- For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might correct the things that were defective and might make appointments of older men in city after city, as I gave you orders. (**Titus 1:5**)
- If there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children that were not under a charge of debauchery nor unruly. (**Titus 1:6**)
- For an overseer must be free from accusation as God's steward, not self-willed, not prone to wrath, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, not greedy of dishonest gain. (**Titus 1:7**)
- But hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled. (**Titus 1:8**)
- Holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict. (**Titus 1:9**)
- For example, one of the requirements for an overseer was that he be a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness.
- A man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness. (**1 Timothy 3:4**)
- Thus, a man could be **mature** in certain respects from a spiritual viewpoint, and yet, if his children were rebellious and uncontrollable, he would not qualify for the position of overseer.