

# Maturing in Christ

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's initiative in our salvation and the ongoing process of maturing in Christ through the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.*

**Duration:** 46:17

**Scripture:** Micah 7:18-19, Zechariah 4:6, John 12:35-36, Romans 5:1, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 2:1-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:5, Titus 2:11

**Topics:** "Maturity", "Transformation in Christ", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the transformative process of maturing in Christ, highlighting that it is God who initiates and performs our salvation. He explains that the Holy Spirit reveals God's will to us, creating both knowledge and desire to align with it. This journey involves recognizing our sins and inconsistencies, and willingly consenting to God's work in our lives. Beach stresses that understanding the finished facts of our salvation is crucial for growth, as it allows us to face our shortcomings without despair. Ultimately, the goal is conformity to Christ, achieved through our cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

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## Transcript

To develop within that Christian and establish within that Christian a sense of I must not, I cannot, I will not allow myself to function in a manner that would be displeasing to my Lord. How does God bring about such a radical transformation in our life, in our lifestyle? Beloved, there is a fourfold process that God works in us in order to ultimately affect us so that we are in agreement to the desires of His will so that He can fulfill and perform that in us. And that's what we want to look at this morning.

The great work of the Holy Spirit at the present time in the life of every true, genuine believer, every true, genuine believer, the great work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the will of God, make known to us by quickening the Word of God, by speaking to our own spirits through the Word of God in so much as to produce in us a knowledge of His will. And then, not only does God want to produce in us a knowledge of His will, but He wants to take it a step further and produce in us a desire to be brought under the authority of His will. And then once we know what God's will is and we want God's will, then God performs His will.

You see, God initiates it and God performs it. We do not do it. It's His salvation from beginning to end.

It is performed by Him. It is not by power, it is not by might, but it's by my Spirit, saith the Lord. Zechariah chapter 4. It is not Him that runneth or Him that willeth, but God.

The focus and cause of our salvation is God's initiative. This is true in the life of a sinner. It is God who initiates the call.

It is God who shines the light. Titus chapter 2, for the grace of God has appeared unto all men. It is God who decided that while we were yet sinners, Christ would die for us.

It is God who in His heart said, I so love the world that I'm going to give my only begotten Son. It is God who is initiating. It is God who was thinking of us when we weren't thinking of Him.

It is God who was concerned for us when we were not concerned for Him. It is God who was hurting over our broken lives and the misery of sin that had brought such a depravity and such a sense of hopelessness in us. It was God.

God took the forethought. God took the initiative. And He responded to our need by sending Jesus Christ.

And we who heard the call, we who were privileged to be brought under the direct influence of God's Spirit, showing us our sin, showing us our need for a Savior. It was at that crisis moment that as a result of God's initiative, we cried out to Him, recognizing and acknowledging our sin and our despair. And in the moment of our cry, then God finished what He started.

He started by calling. He started by initiating. And then He finished it by working the grace and performing the grace and saving our soul.

So it is God is the initiator. He is the one that calls. Then we are brought into a crisis.

And that crisis is whosoever will come, let him come. Now, beloved, there's no coming unless there is an invitation. There's no walking toward the Father unless we are walking as a result of being led and drawn by the Spirit of God.

But there is that crisis that every single person must experience. And that is after God's initial call, there must come a crisis in us where we are willing to what? Humble ourselves, recognize what God is saying, and then respond by saying, yes, Lord, save me. Yes, Lord, I want your mercy.

Yes, Lord, I want the forgiveness of sin. Jesus, help me. And then God responds and does the work.

Now, the reason why we introduce this subject using that analogy is because the process, the workings that we experienced as sinners without hope being brought to the cross and then experiencing salvation after we believed on Christ, that process never stops. It is a process that God continues to seek to work in us. And we're going to discover this morning exactly how that process is wrought in us.

I want to invite you to turn to John, the book of John. The book of John. And I'm inviting you to turn to verse number 35.

Verse number 35. Chapter 12, verse number 35. John 12, 35 and 36.

Then Jesus said unto them, those who he was speaking to, both believers and unbelievers, both people who were responding to the call of God and people who were not responding. Jesus said unto them, yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you.

For he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. Now, while ye have light, number one, believe in the light, number two, that ye may be the children of light, number three.

Now, there is a threefold principle that the Bible teaches that is essential for you and I in understanding so that we can continue to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, what we want to do is just for a moment we want to look at our present state as Christians. Our present state as Christians, true believers.

I'm going to be reading several scriptures and going to be going through many scriptures. You may follow me if you like. First of all, we want to look at the facts of our salvation.

The facts of our salvation, the finished fact, the finished fact. It is essential for us to understand the finished fact of our salvation if we are to be able to enjoy growing up in our salvation. You see, because part of the process of growing up in our salvation is facing our sins, facing our inconsistencies, facing our irresponsibilities, facing our childish ways, facing our behavior many times that is not pleasing to the Lord.

Now, Christians who do not understand the finished fact of their salvation, when God brings them to a crisis where they've got to begin to deal with these things, they begin to get very, very despondent. They begin to lose hope. They begin to feel like these things in them are going to constitute God turning His face from them and they get out of faith, they get out of rest, they get out of peace with God and they go into a world of hopelessness and despair.

So consequently, before we understand the major work of God in our life as Christians, which is affecting our will, affecting the root desires of our heart, as to bring my desire into accord with God's desire. For example, and this is just a hypothetical situation, if I am constantly being harsh with my wife and saying words to her that are unkind, I know that that's wrong. I have the light on that.

The Bible says, don't let your words be harsh, but let them be seasoned with salt. Let them minister grace to the hearers. Now, if that shoe fits, wear it, but you don't have to raise your hand.

Now, what's the problem? I know it's wrong. I realize God's word tells me, saying this is maturity, this is growing up in God, putting off childish ways, putting off the ways of the flesh, putting off the old man, and putting on the new man. So the problem is not that I don't know that that's not wrong, but the problem lies within me.

I am not ready or willing to say no to that wrong attitude. My will is set on yielding to that attitude. That's why I do it.

See, you can't say, well, I don't have any control over it, and yes you do. You're a Christian. Sin shall not have dominion over you any longer.

Now, if you were a sinner, and Christ was not in you, and you were not filled with the grace of God, then I could agree with you and say, you're right, friend, you have no control over that terrible attitude in you, and you need to come to Christ. But that's not so as a Christian. You are in Christ.

It's not a matter of coming to Christ as a Christian, it is a matter of coming to Christ, but it's being willing to recognize the error, the sin, the inconsistency, the thing that's displeasing to the Lord, and then humble yourself before God, and say, Lord, I'm doing this because certain situations occur, my pride gets

offended, my territory begins to get challenged, and I begin to get mad, that's sin in me, and until I recognize it and begin to learn, here we go, learn to hate that sin. See, we have to learn, we have to be taught. You have to learn to hate sin.

You have to learn not to like what's not good. Now, there's the process, but here's the thing that I've seen. I've seen that when most Christians begin to go through that process, and they don't have a sure foundation regarding the finished facts of their salvation, they go into all kinds of hopelessness and despair.

Some people feel like they're going to lose their salvation because God is showing them a deep root of rebellion in their life, or a problem they have with gossip or something, and it's because they don't understand the magnitude of the salvation that they've experienced. So, once we get the foundation laid, then we have liberty, we have freedom, and we have perfect assurance that we could come to God, face our difficulties, face our problems, not be afraid, and allow God to minister to us and bring about that change that's so necessary. Now, how many want to go on that road and grow in God? Okay.

Now, I am referring, before I go through this list, remember, I am referring to people who have experienced the gift of salvation, born-again Christians. This does not refer to professed Christians. This doesn't refer to people who just confess Christ.

It refers to people who have genuinely been saved. Genuinely been saved. Number one, Romans chapter five.

Like I said, I'm going to be going through many scriptures. The facts of our salvation. Romans chapter five, beginning in verse number one.

Romans chapter five. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. As a Christian, as one who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and trusted in Him, the Bible declares that I have been justified before God.

To be justified before God is to be declared innocent and in right standing with Him. To be justified before God is to be declared innocent and right standing in His presence. Now, mind you, this justification that God has brought to you is on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done.

It is on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He has saved us. By the washing of regeneration, by the renewal of the Holy Ghost.

Now, we could reference this with many other scriptures, but for the sake of time, we cannot do that this morning. However, I encourage you, if you have a pen and pencil, write down Romans chapter five and do a little homework. I can't stress it enough, I cannot stress it enough.

The burden of the apostles, the burden of the New Testament church was to see the church rooted and grounded in the facts of their salvation so that they could enjoy growing in their salvation and not be lied to by the devil. So, we are justified by faith. Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, God has forgiven me of all my transgressions, He has healed me of all my sicknesses, He has wrought in me a perfect cleansing.

Micah says, let me see, in the Old Testament, the book of Micah, I believe it's the last chapter of the book of Micah. Let's just turn to that real quick. Jonah, Micah.

Micah chapter 7. Micah chapter 7. Beginning in verse number 18. Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again.

He will have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities. And thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Now, there's a prophecy in the book of Micah concerning the work of Jesus Christ. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old. So here the Bible says that he will have compassion on us.

He will subdue our iniquities. Thou wilt cast all their sins. How many of their sins? All of their sins.

Beloved, as a child of God, you are justified. You are delivered from the consequences of your sins. You are free.

Thank God I'm free. I'm no longer bound to fear the condemning, damnatory effects of sin any longer. I am delivered.

I am free. Hallelujah. I don't have to fear.

I'm free. Now that's the joy of our salvation. The joy of our salvation.

Number two. We're going to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and we're going to discover several more facts regarding our salvation. And all of these dovetail one with another.

All of these dovetail one with another. 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Not only does the Lord declare in Romans chapter 5 that we are justified, but in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 beginning in verse number 9, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. Be not deceived.

Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Now verse number 11. And such were some of you.

Past tense. And such were some of you. Present tense.

But ye are. Got it? Past tense. Such were some of you.

Present tense. But ye are. Now watch this.

I love it. Oh, this is so good. Beloved, this is good.

This is the foundation. This is the rock that can't be moved in the storm. This is the rock that can't be moved.

Here we go. You ready? Now here's the grace of God. But ye are washed.

Oh my. So let's put a 2 down here and put washed. Alright? Ye are sanctified.

Sanctified. Ye are justified. Paul again mentions the word justified.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. So here we find this marvelous declaration. It is God declaring those whom He has saved by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

God is declaring us justified. He's declaring us washed. He's declaring us sanctified.

And it's all because of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Now remember, these are the finished facts of our salvation. If you have become a Christian, this never changes.

This never changes. God has washed you. Now, next, Ephesians 1, verse 4. Again, we're going to be just passing through some Scriptures.

Ephesians 1, verse 4. According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Verse 7. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. So not only are we justified, washed, and sanctified, but we are also forgiven.

Now this coincides with Micah chapter 7, doesn't it? 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. Verses 1 through 8. Beginning in verse number 5. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunk are drunk in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. So the Bible declares us to be children of the light.

Now beloved, let me ask a question. I'll sit here on your side for a second. Are you seeing the finished facts of your salvation? Are you identifying yourself with these? Do you see yourself as justified and washed and sanctified and forgiven and children of light? I submit to you that it will be absolutely essential for you to see yourself in this way if you are to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and grow in your salvation.

Because unless you see these unmovable facts about your salvation, the moment God begins to pierce your heart and introduces you to the cross of Jesus Christ where He says, forsake everything and follow Me, you will go into utter despair because you will see the depths of who you are, the depths of the sin that lurks within. And unless you are absolutely persuaded that in spite of what you are, in spite of the deep-rooted self-life that lurks within you, you are still justified, you are still cleansed, you are still washed, you're not being condemned. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

See, unless you understand this, you're going to go into a world of trouble. And what will happen is you'll run from God's call to grow up and you'll stay a baby Christian all your life. And you'll never get a handle on your sins and you'll always be stumbling and falling and you'll never face those things you'll begin to deny, you'll live in denial, you'll start repressing the facts about your inconsistencies and you'll just stay away from them because you're afraid, you can't cope, you can't see how God can still accept you and yet you see how miserable you are.

And many Christians are in that place right there. And it's because they lack the finished facts of their salvation, they lack understanding it. But when you can get a hold of this, you can go right on with God and be fearless because my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. There's my hope. There is therefore now no condemnation.

So not only are we children of light, we're free from damnation because in context, Paul is talking about the dominatory power of sin has been broken in the true child of God. The temporal consequences of sin have not. And being punished and spanked if you continue in sin have not.

God will deal with you as a child, but that sin will not overcome you and send you into a Christless eternity. Thank God for that hope. Ephesians chapter 2, and this is our last few facts about our finished foundation that must be secure.

Must be secure. Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2. Paul was referring here in Ephesians chapter 1 to the marvelous fact that Christ has raised up from the dead and is seated down now at the right hand of God Almighty. He is above all power.

Everything is subject to Him. Glory to God. He is the head, not the foot.

And then Paul introduces us in chapter 2. And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. So now I am quickened. And that means made alive.

I am made alive. Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherein He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ and hath raised us up together and made us to sit down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

So not only have we been made alive in Christ, but the Bible also says that we have been caused to sit together with Christ. Now we see why Paul prayed that the eyes of our understanding would be opened and that we could understand the riches and the glories of this inheritance that's ours as children of God. Now my question is this, why has God provided such a glorious fact regarding us? Now this is not all exhaustive.

There's other aspects that we can get into, but like I said, I just wanted to touch on the major milestones in the Christian faith. Why has God done this? Why has God done this for us? I submit to you that it is not exclusively, it is not wholly for the purpose of just being thankful that we are justified and washed and sanctified and forgiven and children of light and free from damnation and made alive and raised up together and sit with Christ. It's not just to be thankful over these things, but there is a greater purpose that the Father has for securing us in this fact and that is this, now that we are secure in this fact, God can come to us through the power of the Holy Spirit and by the power of the Word of God and begin the process of transformation, introduce to us the cross life and begin to teach us obedience to Him.

So this is not an end within itself. This must be the foundation, this must be that which we are resting upon, but it is not an end within itself, it is a means to an end. Here is the end.

Conformity to Christ. Conformity to Christ. The purpose is to produce conformity to Christ in our lives.

And beloved, that means that God wants to so secure us in His wonderful mercy and grace as to free us from fear so that He can begin to search our hearts, search our motives, begin to shine the light in areas of our life where we are yet walking after the flesh, we are yet following the ways of our old sinful self and begin to require that we forsake these things and choose God's way rather than our way. See, we realize here that we are saved in spite of ourself and now during this process, God says, alright, now that you

realize I've saved you in spite of yourself, now I want to deliver you from yourself. Many Christians glory in that they're saved in spite of their self, but they refuse to follow on in the Lord so that God can deliver them from themselves.

And this is the walk of adulthood, this is sonship, this is becoming sons and daughters in the Lord. That which I feared the most has come upon me. But you know what? I'm going to use for the last couple of minutes this cardboard and I'm going to simply sum up this transitional stage.

Now, I want you to listen carefully as I read this paragraph. In light of this, we find the working of God in this way. As God affects my will, loosing it and freeing it from desiring self and the old man and fulfilling the desires of the sinful flesh and by the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, gains more and more of my consent.

Now listen, He gains more and more of my consent on a daily basis. He then brings me more fully into a participation with His life. Now, we've got to put our thinking caps on.

We've got to put our thinking caps on. But we feel this is essential if we are to grow and become useful servants fit for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work. Once the believer is secure in the finished facts, then a process begins.

And this process, listen, does not happen apart from my consent. This is essential. Now watch this.

Here's the process. I am being filled with God's Spirit. I am being renewed in my mind and thinking.

My character is being changed. I am learning to put off the old man and I am learning to put on the new man. Now, you see the transition we have here now? Here, the moment I believed, God justified me, washed me, sanctified me, forgave me, made me a child of light, freed me from damnation, made me alive, gave me the Spirit of God, just translated me out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son.

I am a child of God. Praise God. God has just gloriously worked in my life.

Now, once God builds this foundation in our life, He starts working in our life in a new way, and He starts now working in the depths of our heart in order to gain our consent, to affect our will, so that we become willing on a daily basis to be filled with the Spirit. We become willing on a daily basis to allow God to renew our mind. We become willing for God to change our character, which is our behavior, which is our actions.

We become willing for God to teach us how to put off the old man and how to put on the new man. So the process now is God is saying, alright, now that I've done all of this glorious work for you, I'm asking you now to come before me. Let me search your heart.

Let my word search your heart. And through the power and working of the Holy Spirit in you, let me gain your consent. Do you want to stop being proud, or do you like being proud? Do you want to stop being rebellious, or do you want to be rebellious? Now you see the difference, the transition? Well, I can't help myself.

That's what children say. Children do not want to accept responsibility for their actions, do they? Remember a few weeks ago, we preached a whole series of messages on playing the blame game? Remember the blame game? Adam, what happened? It's a woman's fault. Eve, what happened? It's the

serpent's fault.

We play the blame game. Children, when God deals with us as children, He doesn't require much of us. His intent as working in our lives as children is not so much to require us to accept responsibility as much as it is to just show us how loving and how gracious He is in spite of us.

But He doesn't want us to stay like that all of our life. When the second transition comes in our Christian life, and God starts requiring us to grow up, then He wants us to take responsibility for our action and be willing to say yes to Him and no to our way. And then He performs the work.

It's not us doing the salvation. He's still doing it. But He's doing it with our consent.

And if He doesn't have our consent, we're saying to Him we don't want Him to do it. And if we don't want Him to do it, then He has to win us by His love. He's not going to force us.

See, this whole thing with being a Christian, it's a love relationship with Christ. It's not a forced relationship. He woos us, He draws us.

And He knows just the circumstance and just the situation that it takes to bring us to the end of ourself where we acknowledge our sin, we acknowledge our problem, and we give it to Him. He doesn't take it from us. We give it.

But as soon as we give it, He takes it. And then that's learning obedience. That's walking down the road of the cross.

That's growing up in God. And that's the joy of the Father's heart to make us sons and daughters. They that are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

That ye may be the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation in whom ye may shine as bright and shining lights, holding forth the Word of Truth. You see it? Aren't you glad I'm not going through all of it? God shines the light? My will. He shines the light.

Hey, you're walking wrong there. You're doing what's wrong. He initiates it.

He shines the light. Next, He puts the faith in our heart to assure us that if we choose God's way and forsake our way, He'll perform the work. Oh my.

He shines the light. He puts the faith in our heart and now here is what determines whether we grow in God or not. Once the light comes and the faith is created, God puts the faith there.

We don't. Faith is the gift from God. It's the fruit of the Spirit.

It's not a creation of our mind. The light comes by God. The faith comes by God.

And then God waits for that faith, listen, to gain our consent. Do you see it? Faith in me that comes from God must gain the consent of my will. I must say, Yes, Lord.

Faith is telling me that Christ can deliver me from this terrible rotten attitude. But the faith that's telling me this must gain consent of my will. I must say, Yes, Lord, I want the faith.

I want you to deliver me. Ah, so what happens? We've got the light comes from God. God creates the faith.

Then the process of God waiting until His working in us, that is the light and the faith created by Him, actually affects our will. As to the area where we need to readjust our will so that we want His way rather than our way. Once faith gains the consent of our will, it's all over with.

Then God takes the responsibility and performs it. So He becomes the author and the perfecter of our salvation. It's all Him.

To Him be the glory. But He does it in cooperation with our consent. Me giving God consent is a sign of adulthood.

Just like a child accepting the responsibilities of life is a sign. Congratulations, son. Congratulations, daughter.

You're becoming an adult. It's exciting, isn't it? I better stop. I know.

God performs it. But now you see why you have to know this? And be completely grounded in it so that when God pins you down and says you are rebellious, who do you think you are acting like that or talking like that to your husband, wife, child, or so and so? If you don't know your position in Christ, God's going to forsake me. God will never forgive me.

You see? So God can't deal with us as sons until He first gets that foundation in us. Once the foundation is there, watch out. He'll deal with you, but guess what the end result is? It's no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me.

It is no longer me that's demanding my way. It's no longer me snapping back at people. But Christ is living His life through me, ministering to people, because He has gained the consent of my will, which has cried out to Him, Lord, at any cost, work in me what's pleasing in You.

I want You to do it. I don't want sin. I hate sin.

You've taught me to hate it. I want Your way.

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