

Qualities That Measure Spiritual Maturity - Part 3

by Phil Beach Jr.

Spiritual maturity is achieved through faith that comes from Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, and is characterized by a heart that is in tune with God and a desire to live in His presence forever.

Duration: 1:07:45

Scripture: John 14:6, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Spiritual Maturity", "The Role of the Holy Spirit"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth in guiding believers away from worldly distractions and towards a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. He encourages the congregation to continuously seek the truth found in Christ, which is essential for spiritual maturity and freedom. The sermon highlights the importance of focusing on Jesus, guarding our hearts, and being aware of our spiritual condition, as well as the need for genuine care for others in the body of Christ. Beach Jr. calls for a transformation of hearts to reflect the love and concern exemplified by the Apostle Paul, urging believers to prioritize spiritual maturity over worldly attachments.

Transcript

Thank you, Lord, for your precious Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, Lord, and we together want to again affirm that we stand together with the Spirit of Truth against the spirit of this world, against the spirit of the devil, who would seek to entice us to look somewhere other than our God to be satisfied, who would seek to entice us to find the depths of our hearts' needs met somewhere other than the heart of Jesus Christ. Lord, we thank you for the Spirit of Truth that has triumphed this morning, that has conquered the lying spirits of hell, that has conquered the spirit that works in this world, and that has released us from the voluptuous, tormenting powers of this age, Lord, and has caused our hearts to once again look afresh to the Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all of our joy, the source of all of our love, the source of all that we have need of. Thank you for releasing us this morning from looking to that person, looking to that circumstance, looking to that dream, looking to that hope, as if we would find our need met in that.

Oh, thank you, Lord, for the precious work of the Holy Spirit. We give you honor, we give you praise. We realize this is the way things ought to be.

This is the way things ought to be, Lord. We ought to be a people who are continuously drawing from you, continuously looking to you, continuously drinking from the rivers of living water that flow from your throne. And now we commit this time of your word into your hands, and pray, God, that iron bars would be broken, that chains would be loosed, and that, oh, God, we would know the freedom that comes through Jesus Christ, as he himself said, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Lord, we want to be free this morning, and we claim the freedom that's ours in Jesus Christ. Hallelujah to God. My God, my God.

What a mighty Savior we serve. Amen. What a mighty God we serve.

The spirit of truth is truth. The spirit of truth is opposed to the spirit of lie, the spirit of this world. Brothers and sisters, the more we become acquainted with Jesus Christ, who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, the more we will long to know the truth, the more we will love the truth, the more we will pursue after the truth, the more we will allow our lives to be governed by the truth, the more we will let God's Word correct us and reprove us and adjust us into the way of truth.

God's people need to be truth-lovers. God's people need to be truth-seekers. God's people need to be truth-lovers and seekers.

Oh, my God, may the Lord give us a hunger to know the truth that is found in Jesus Christ. The truth alone will set us free this morning. The truth alone.

Only that which comes from the spirit of truth, only that which God's Spirit enables us to receive from the book of truth will set us free. Now listen, feelings might come, but feelings will not set you free. Emotion might come, and it's okay, but emotion alone will not set you free this morning.

A good song will come. How many are thankful for the good songs that God gives us when we gather together? But a good song alone will not set you free unless that good song leads you to the source of truth, and that is Jesus Christ. Nothing will set us free but the truth that is inherent in the person of Jesus Christ and the truth that is recorded in this book as it is quickened and made alive by the spirit of truth.

Nothing else has the power to set us free. And so may the spirit of truth and the word of truth work together in our lives, setting us free, setting us free. I just want to reaffirm some of the work that the Holy Spirit has done and is doing in our midst.

And number one, the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 12, Hebrews chapter 12, we are continuing along this series of the evidences, the signs of spiritual maturity. I see the Holy Spirit sovereignly walking us through this. Can't you see it? One step after another, one step after another, one gathering after another, one outpouring after another, a little bit here, a little bit here.

The heart and into our spirits, little bits of his heart, enabling us to see his passion for us to come into spiritual maturity. That is the direction that he is moving. Every single person here who knows the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the direction you're heading in.

If you want to know the goal, if you want to know where you're heading, you might have started here and you might be somewhere here. Brothers and sisters, you know, the old saying that because I'm not sure how it goes, but because of the tree, I missed the forest. I can't see the forest because of the tree.

Do you know what that basically means? Simply this, because I am so focused on what is immediately in front of me, I can't see where I'm at or where I'm going. And, and, and we need to see that, that we're, we're here. Many of us are here.

Some of us are here. Some of us are here. Some of us feel here, but it doesn't matter where we feel.

The fact is, if we know Jesus, we're heading here and the goal. Now I'm not saying this is inclusive. God's purposes are infinite.

God's purposes for us in the ages to come, I don't think anybody knows, but at least now while we're pilgrims and we're sojourners, now many still remember you're a pilgrim and a sojourner. My God, I, have you forgotten that you don't have a permanent dwelling place down here? Listen to the Spirit of God as He speaks to us. Listen, don't get too comfortable down here.

The Bible says that we are pilgrims, that we are sojourners, that we are strangers, that our true, true heavenly citizenship is in heaven. Don't get too comfortable down here. There is a Spirit in the world that is seducing the church and this Spirit is causing us to want to get too comfortable down here.

Brothers and sisters, don't get comfortable down here. This whole world is going to be burned out with fire and the elements are going to melt with fervor and heat and God's going to have a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness and we're destined to be part of that kingdom. So I mean you can use the world's goods, that's okay.

And you can own things, that's okay. But don't let anything use you and don't let anything own you. Let God search your heart this morning.

Let Him search your heart. Let Him put His loving but firm finger upon anything in your heart now this morning that is laying too heavily, that is resting too heavily upon that which is transient, that which is temporal. Come on, let go, let go.

Say, Lord, release my heart from too heavily looking to what is here. Help me to see that I am a heavenly person, partakers of a heavenly calling, indwelt by a heavenly Spirit, worshiping a heavenly Savior, looking for a heavenly city. Everything about us is heavenly.

Now you might not see that. And you might wonder sometimes, boy, what I'm doing is not very heavenly, or what my brother's doing is not very heavenly. But the fact is, we have to work with the truth.

And the truth is, we've been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and been put into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And so we need a reminder this morning, God knows, we need a reminder. And that is this, brothers and sisters, don't forget about your heavenly calling.

Don't get so entangled in life's affairs and life's business that you forget that this is not where it's all at. This life that you're living, 70, 80, 90, 100 years, I've asked the Lord for 120. But compared to eternity, it's like the breath that you see on a winter morning.

It's there, it goes for a second, and it's gone. And because of the tree, because of what's happening in our life right now, we have forgotten our destiny. We are destined to roll with Christ by the authority of His name.

We are destined to live in the presence of God forever. So don't get too comfortable down here. And so we're all going on this.

We're all going on this road and this goal ought to be the image of Christ. God's goal for us while we're on this earthly pilgrimage is to ever continuously grow. No matter where we're at, God's moving us in this direction toward the goal of being conformed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what the Lord did this morning, as I mentioned earlier, Hebrews chapter 12, is He is enabling us to possess a heart posture that provides us with the power to move toward this goal. God wants to express through you in ever increasing splendor the loveliness of the Son. Now watch this in Hebrews chapter 12.

We'll just spend a few minutes here and then we'll try to move on. Hebrews chapter 12, beginning in verse 1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. Now that's referring to Hebrews chapter 11.

All of the great men of faith that the writer just spoke of. All of those great men of faith. Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so doth easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Looking. Now I want to look at that word looking for a few moments. That is a very interesting word.

When I first discovered this it affected the rest of my Christian life and it continuously affects my Christian life. The Lord is constantly talking to me about this word because it has great power. This word literally means to turn from something in order to clearly see and focus into another.

I'm going to say that again. The word look means to turn from something in order to clearly focus in on and see another. And so the idea here is this.

In order to see Jesus we have to turn from everything else that's got our attention. Oftentimes, and I know that before the Lord opened this up to me, I would often be saying, Lord I'm looking at you. But at the same time my heart was looking at my circumstances, my heart was looking at my fears, my heart was looking at this, my heart was looking at that.

And so really I was trying to do two things at the same time. But the word here that the Holy Spirit chose indicates that we really can't do two things at the same time. That's why Peter sunk, remember, when he was walking on the water.

Because he couldn't look at Jesus and the waves at the same time. So what the Lord has done this morning, what He has done by the Spirit of Truth, is He has gone into the depths of our spirit and He has rescued our hearts from focusing in on things, from focusing in on things that we're looking to. Perhaps our fears, perhaps things that we hope will satisfy us.

He's delivering us from those things so that we can turn from them and look unto Jesus. Now listen, when we get our eyes focused on Jesus something happens. The when we look unto Jesus we discover Him as the author and finisher of our faith.

And so this process of moving from point one to point go is through faith. It's not through works. It's not through self-effort.

It's not through conforming to religious codes and through religious bondage. It's not through observing how faithful we are in our religious devotions. No.

But this goal from going from point one to point go is through faith that comes from Jesus. It comes from Jesus. But the heart during this whole journey has to be constantly exercised by grace, has to be constantly touched by grace so that the eyes of the heart, I know this is funny but bear with me, the eyes of the heart has to be focused on Jesus Christ from whence cometh our faith enabling us by the power of His Spirit to be brought to the goal where truly it is no longer I that liveth but Christ that liveth in me.

And so this is what God has done. This is what He's constantly doing. This is why we gather together so we can worship Jesus and love Jesus and God can stir us up and awaken us and encourage us and bring to our remembrance what He is doing in our lives and then we are strengthened and encouraged to go back into the real world and to keep on looking unto Jesus.

Who experienced this morning, and I'll be the first one to raise my hand, a supernatural touch of God enabling your heart in some area of your life to turn from something in order to more clearly see Jesus? Why did you experience that? Because faith comes by the Word and the Word comes through the energizing of the Spirit. When God works in our hearts, it's always turning us from something unto something. And so the devil's work is to keep the heart, the eyes of the heart, blinded.

You ever feel like you have cataract in the eyes of your heart? You know what cataract is? It's some kind of a film. I'm not a medical doctor, I can't describe it medically, but it's a film that gets on your eye. And if not corrected, it can cause blindness, it can cause your vision to be blurry or it looks like you're always seeing like through fog.

How many have felt that regarding your spiritual vision, regarding the eyes of your heart? Did you know your eyes have heart? Your heart has eyes? Did you know that you don't see the Lord with these physical eyes? Did you know you don't hear the Lord with these physical ears? Now the Lord can manifest Himself in a physical way, but woe unto the people that start seeking for that. Because if you do a study in church history, everybody who starts seeking after physical manifestations starts getting deceived. Because God is a spirit and Christ is now in the heavens, incorruptible.

He doesn't have a physical body, He has an immortal body now. It was His physical body that raised from the dead, but it's not physical anymore. It's immortal, it's incorruptible.

And so we don't look for the Lord with these eyes. We don't listen for the Lord with these ears. We have to listen with the ears of our heart.

We have to see with the eyes of our heart. That's where the spiritual battle is today. That's where the spiritual war is going on today.

The eyes of your heart are being attacked by the powers and principalities P and P and the rulers of darkness. They're fighting against the eyes of our heart, causing spiritual cataract, causing you to be overly concerned with your difficulties and your struggles and the things that you're going through, hoping that the eyes of your heart get preoccupied with something other than Jesus. Knowing, knowing that if you start seeing Jesus, your life changes.

My God, when you see Jesus, everything is okay, isn't it? Just one glance and everything is okay. It doesn't matter if you're in with a den of lions. If you see Jesus, you're at peace.

If you're in the fiery furnace, if you see Jesus, no smell of smoke gets on you. That's what it says about the three Hebrew children. And so this is what the Lord is doing.

He's, he's wanting to heal us from the things that cloud our eyes. Let me tell you, brothers and sisters, you need to learn to pay special attention to the state of your heart. Guard your heart because out of it, the Bible says flows the issues of life.

You need to pay special attention to the eyes of your heart. In the natural, we are taught to be responsible. That is, we pay special attention to certain things.

Some of us pay less attention, like me, when it comes to practical things. For example, I'll never forget the conversation my mom and dad had a few years ago on their porch. I had walked up their porch and there was a bunch of bricks that had fallen out of the steps.

And one of them was real shaky. And I said, Mom, this needs to get fixed. Someone's going to get hurt.

And she said, Yeah, well, you know, I've told Dad. He hasn't got around to doing it. And then eventually he did it.

And I'm guilty of that too. Any other guys guilty of that? No. But as my mom and dad were talking and I was there looking at these steps and I saw how my mother was so aware that this problem could have been corrected if it would have been fixed right at the very sign that there was something wrong right at the beginning, I began to hear the voice of the Lord.

Not here, but here. I heard the voice of the Lord and he started talking to me and he said, If my people were so concerned about their heart as they were fixing their homes and fixing their houses and fixing their cars, my people would be spiritual. You see, we are prone to take care of natural things and prone to neglect spiritual things because we are flesh, we are weak, we live in a world that doesn't think that way.

How many have ever turned on the TV and you heard a voice come out of the screen, Today, make sure you care for your heart. How many are reading magazines at the store where every page you turn to, you're reading exhortations to make sure your heart is soft today and open to the voice of God? You don't have it. So we're bombarded in a society that is constantly turning our hearts and our minds from the eternal, from that which is everlasting to that which is temporal.

Therefore, the reason for this exhortation, guard your heart, guard your hearts. What's the condition of your heart this morning? I know very few people who would let their lungs grow to a point where it was very, very, very. I'm not saying you neglect it a little bit, but you let it grow to a point where it's very, very displeasing to the eye.

Weeds all over the place, grass three feet high. Now some of us have almost got there, but not quite. But yet, there are some of us sitting right here who would go for weeks and even months without bringing to the Lord something that's wrong in your heart.

An attitude, a bitter feeling, an unforgiving feeling, a feeling of anger towards someone, unforgiveness towards someone. Or you might be preoccupied for weeks. Something has gotten bigger than God in your life.

And you just live a silent despair, a silent despair. Go to the Lord. Go to the Lord, beloved.

You should be in tune with your heart. And now we take this into levels of maturity. As you mature, you are not only in tune with your heart, you're in tune with the hearts of others.

Your husband, your wife, if you're married, if you're not, you're in tune with the hearts of your friends. You're concerned. You want to make sure everybody's heart is at peace, that everybody's heart is not being overcome by something that could potentially take it from seeing Jesus.

You see, let's just stay on this for a few moments. Listen, 1 Thessalonians, we're going to touch something here that is very, very powerful. We're going to touch that this is what was in the heart of Paul.

This is what was in the heart of Paul. This is a true, true sign of spiritual maturity. This is a true sign of really being someone who has the capability of blessing the body of Christ.

Listen to the heart of Paul here. Listen to the heart of Paul. We give thanks to God always for you, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, Paul, this is so much more than just a few lines. These lines are opening up to us the windows into the heart of a man that was transformed by the power of Jesus Christ. Paul was continuously concerned about the spiritual condition of his brothers and sisters, his spiritual children that he birthed into the kingdom of God.

And truly, brothers and sisters, as we touch spiritual maturity and as we begin to progress along this road, we're going to suddenly realize that the most important thing to life is maintaining a pure heart before God and also prevailing for your brothers and sisters that they too might maintain a pure heart before God. I know God's got to bring us here, but this is where we're heading if we keep saying, yes, Lord. Listen to this.

Verse number 17, chapter 2. Listen to the heart of a man who was no longer governed by the Pharisee, who was no longer governed by the man that was so hung up on himself. There was a time when Paul was Saul and all Saul cared about was who he was and how holy he was and how pure he was as Alan shared a few weeks ago with us in Philippians chapter 3. All he cared about was how he was living blamelessly before God according to the law. I think if neon lights existed in the day of Paul, Paul would have had a synagogue with his name on it flashing like the religious preachers are doing today.

He would have had his name, Saul of Tarsus, and he probably would have had under it, sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the great teacher of the law. But we're touching a different man here. We're touching a man that was transformed by the lowly Christ and now look where Paul's at.

Verse 17, chapter 2. But we brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, not in heart, Paul's heart was all wrapped up in the people that he loved. This is costly, brothers and sisters. If you never let your heart get wrapped up in the people that you love, then you're not really touching the heart of the Savior.

It's costly. You have to become vulnerable. You have to be willing to hurt with them.

You have to be willing to be misunderstood. You have to be willing to go through thick and thin. You have to walk with them when they're up.

You have to walk with them when they're down. You have to stick with them. You can't get up and run.

Paul didn't leave them. And you know what I see in Paul? I see my Savior. I see my Jesus who doesn't get up and run when you have a bad day.

But some of us leave our friends and leave our close relationships simply because they have a bad day. And if we don't leave them physically, what do we do? Cut them off inside. We punish them.

Come on. We punish them. We hold our hearts from them.

We punish them emotionally. Or we might bring up something about their past that we know is going to really hurt them. That's not Christ.

Not in heart. We endeavor the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore, we would have come unto you, even I, Paul, once again, but Satan hindered us.

For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? Do you see what Paul was saying? His joy, his crown, his rejoicing were the people of God. He loved them more than anything. Today, nowadays preachers are saying, my crown and my rejoicing is how big my ministry is.

How many people I'm touching. How many books I've written. That's not your crown or your glory or your rejoicing.

What your crown and glory and rejoicing ought to be are the people of God that you're spending your life on. That you're pouring your life into. So I was reading over this and weeping over it as the Holy Spirit was taking the letter and making it a living word.

I realized there's going to come a day, and this is not just applicable to preachers, but there's a great application to preachers because we who speak and teach will be held accountable for what we say. Oh yes. That's why James said, don't desire to be a teacher.

Don't desire unless you know that you know that you know that what you're saying is profitable. But there's coming a day when all of us will stand before the Lord. And I'll use myself for an example.

And I'm going to see in a moment's time all the people that my ministry touched and affected. And I'm going to see whether or not it led them to the Lord or whether it led them away from the Lord. I'm going to be held accountable.

And I saw in the heart of Paul a confidence, not in himself but in the grace that was working in him, that the people of God that he was pouring his life into were his crown, his rejoicing, were his glory. And at that day in the presence of Jesus Christ, he wasn't going to be ashamed. He wasn't going to have to draw back and turn his head and say, well Lord, I really shouldn't have said that.

And I really shouldn't have taught that. What are you teaching people? What are you bringing into people's life? Parents, what are you putting into your kids? At that day when you and your children stand before God, will your child be able to say, but my mom and dad, they said it was alright. Or they taught this.

Now hear the spirit from which I'm speaking. This is not intended to bring condemnation or guilt. It's not intended to make you fear.

It's intended to stir you on and see Jesus as the source of your salvation. It's to see Jesus. Verse number 1 chapter 3, wherefore when we could no longer forbear.

Can you see what's happening here? How many of us are struggling because we saw long that the condition of the hearts of our brothers and sisters are right before God. This is what Paul is saying. I could no longer forbear.

I couldn't stand it. I had to know how you were doing. I had to know.

I couldn't sleep at night. I wrestled in prayer. I love you with the love of Christ.

I am willing to die. Paul said it. I'm willing to give my own soul for you.

Where is the preacher like that? Where is the apostle like that? Where is the sent one like that? Oh how we need to pray. God, God, give us the spirit of truth. A true sent one, a true apostle, a true preacher is not concerned for himself.

He's concerned for the flock. And he'll give his life for the flock. Than to take advantage of them in any way, shape, or form.

We need a revolt. Born of God. We need to get awakened.

The children of God need to see. I could no longer forbear. We thought it good to be left at Athens alone and sent Timothy, our brother, and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith.

You see the Thessalonians were going through a hard time. They were suffering among their own countrymen the same things that the Jews were suffering among their countrymen. Paul's heart was broken.

You see all this has to do with the heart. What's our heart preoccupied with? You see the depths of this war? You see the depths of what Satan is? Don't you think for a second Satan's going to lay back and sleep and let God put a heart like that in you? Now I'm not saying everyone's going to become an apostle or a preacher or a teacher. But what I'm saying is this.

In spite of your particular calling, as far as your gift in the body, you can share this kind of heart along with Paul and Jesus. But don't think for a second that you're just going to be able to say, Father, I thank you by faith that I possess this heart and I receive it in Jesus' name. The moment you start seeing that your heart is supposed to be preoccupied with eternal things, this is not a call to monastic living.

This is not a call to go live in some monastery. I'm speaking to people who are working, people who are living in this world. It's not a call to disassociate yourself from people.

It is a call to let the eyes of your heart stay focused on Jesus in the midst of real life. Real life will not hinder you from serving the Lord. Real life is not something that prevents you from having the heart of Paul.

Now it's going to prevent you from traveling around the world and planting churches, but you don't need to do that. God hasn't called you to do that. God has called you to work, do what you have to do, but inside, Jesus, it's you that I'm after.

Jesus, it's you that I'm after. Jesus, it's your heart that I want. Jesus, my heart is broken for my brothers and sisters.

All hell will fight you if you see what God wants your heart to be. Stop trying to be something you're not. Stop wishing that you were somewhere else.

You know, how many times we've said, if only I lived somewhere else. If only I had more money. If only I had this.

Brothers and sisters, do you know what that is? Visions of grandeur. They're illusions. Your problem is not your circumstance.

It's your heart. Paul didn't say when he had no money, if only I had money. Now, what did he say? There you go.

Paul said, my heart is content with nothing. Then when Paul had a little abundance, he didn't say, oh, that I would have more. He was content.

Oh, Lord, have mercy. The heart. The heart.

Let's let God work on the heart. Okay, let's let him work on the heart. Thank you, Lord.

Lord, we're in your presence now, Lord, and all we're after is your heart. We're after an understanding of what you're saying. We're after an impartation from your hand into our lives.

Lord, this whole issue of the heart is so wrapped up in our spiritual maturity. It's so wrapped up in the journey of growing in our relationship with you. Lord, I know that spiritual maturity cannot be secured unless we're willing to come to you and let you work on our hearts.

And so, Lord, we freely right now in your presence, we freely right now in your presence offer you our hearts to you. We acknowledge, Lord, that these things are beyond us. They're beyond us.

We can't imitate it. We can't just do it. We stand helpless in your presence, but we believe that you're able and we acknowledge together.

Make our hearts like yours. We look to you, Lord, to do it by your power, Lord, by your spirit. Help us, Lord, to be in touch with our hearts.

Help us to daily in your presence be searched by you. Clean our hearts from things that distract. Grow in us hearts like Paul, genuine care and concern for our family and our brothers and sisters.

Do it, Lord, by your power, by your power, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

Thank you, Lord. I read this scripture. We're not going to go much longer.

I read this scripture, Psalm 119, 165. Let's just go there for a few moments. This all touches on maturity.

This is all part of the progress of maturity, the journey of maturity. Now, 119, 165. Listen to this.

Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. The word offend there means a cause to stumble, a cause to stumble. Nothing shall offend them.

Nothing shall offend them. Now, listen carefully, brothers and sisters. This is hard because it requires divine work in our life, but this is the truth.

If we are to move along this journey of spiritual adult, we are going to have to get over being so easily offended. Now, this is something the Lord spoke to me a few times this week, and I say it gently in Christ, but faithfully. Too many of us are too easily offended at the drop of a hat.

And let me tell you the problem with being easily offended. When you get offended easily, there is a break in the spirit of fellowship. And if that break is not healed, it can affect the spiritual advancement of the whole body.

Not only you, but the whole body. Now, this isn't a scathing word. It's not a rebuke.

It's simply a statement. Now, ask yourself this question. Do I find myself on a daily basis getting offended? Now, guess what else happens when you get offended? You lose your peace.

You ever meet some Christians and they never seem to have peace? You know one of the major reasons why? Because they're living in a perpetual state of being offended. You see, the Bible says, great peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them. Proverbs 18.19. Proverbs 18.19. Here's the problem when people get easily offended.

I'm reading from the King James. Your version might say it differently, but I'm working out from how the translation in King James version is worded. Okay? Proverbs 18.19. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.

And their contentions are like the bars of a castle. How many have found that to be true? If somebody gets offended, it is almost impossible to undo that offense. Sometimes people get offended at their 20th year and they give up the ghost 40 years later at 60 years old and that offense hasn't been healed.

They bring it right to the grave with them. Now I'm going to make a statement here. Listen carefully.

The greatest stronghold Satan possesses in the immature Christian is their capacity to be easily offended. I will say that again. The greatest stronghold that Satan has in an immature Christian is their capacity to be easily offended.

You can have a hundred immature Christians walking together their eyes on Jesus and Satan knows all he's got to do is come up with some kind of plan to offend one of them and the whole thing can be ruined. And we've seen it time after time after time. Easily offended.

This person said that. What did you mean by that? When that kind of thinking finds a place in our life, the heights of heavenly life can be brought down to the lows of earthly contention. Almost overnight.

And then you notice there's something different then with your brother and sister when they're offended. There's something different. Before you were touching a transparency in their spirit.

You were touching a sense of life. But now when that brother or sister is offended, they might smile the same way. They might show up and do the same things they usually do.

But there's something different now. What is it? It's a break in the spirit. There's an offense there.

And to try and heal that offense, the writer of Proverbs says, it's like a strong city. It's harder to heal that offense than to win a strong city. And the bars, the contention of that offense can be like strong bars.

Now the flip side of this coin, I don't want to overload you with information. If this is true about the immature, then what should the life passion of the mature be? Forgiveness? Excellent? What else? Peacemaker? Let's use the words of Paul. 1 Corinthians 10.32. Come on, this is going to help you see how mature you are.

Verse 31 and 32. 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Wherefore, now remember, this is a man of God speaking.

This is a man who died to his own interests. Who died to wanting to be something in the eyes of people. Who died to wanting to have a little group of people following him.

He died to the carnal man. And now he is a man filled with the passion of Jesus Christ. And hear ye him.

Wherefore, whether ye eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. This is the mature heart. And until people rise up in the midst of the body of Christ and model this kind of Christianity, we're not going to see it coming together.

Because it takes these kind of people walking in the midst of the church, holding together what the devil is trying to tear to pieces. It takes these kind of people to do it. Yes it does.

Watch this now. Give no offense. Everyone together.

Give no offense. If we see the greatest stronghold of Satan in the immature believer is their capacity to be easily offended, then the mature grows into the posture where they are walking saying, Lord, help me not to offend my weak brother. Help me not to wound his conscience.

Help me Lord. Now that's not a call to compromise the truth. But it is a call to forsake your way and your liberties even.

Even a liberty that you find no problem in. If it causes your brother to stumble, then are you engaging in love? Do we want maturity in our lives? Do we want a growing body of believers? It'll never happen unless God gets a number of us to the point where we're walking in the midst of God's people, weeping for them, sharing in their infirmities, sharing in their joys, bearing up their weaknesses, and denying ourself all things that might be lawful but are not profitable and that could cause our brother to stumble. You know what makes us think like this? Love.

It's not law. Are you saying, preacher, that you're starting to put rules in what we can do and what we can't do? Now you know that's not what we're saying, right? You know what the law is that I want you to live by? Love. What would love do? Sometimes we don't care what love wants because we want to do what we want to do.

We want to do what we want to do. But are you thinking of your weaker brother? Romans 14.21. Romans 14.21. Now we had no idea the road of maturity had all this to do, did we? We just thought the road of maturity was, well, I just need to learn a little bit more Bible doctrine. Maybe go to a Bible school.

Maybe learn the gift of homiletics. I want to talk to you today about four things. The first point, that's not maturity, although it might be good sometimes to be in order.

You see, when we talk about maturity, we're not talking about something that appeals to the fleshly nature. We're talking about something that requires the fleshly nature to die. Any time you hear a message on maturity and it puffs you up and makes you think, oh boy, I'm going to be mature, I'm going to be something or someone, you've got the wrong maturity message.

God's maturity message is get down. Get down to the highest place and that is on your face at the feet of Jesus. Sometimes with my children, I'll joke when I sense they're getting arrogant and I'll say, be careful, the air is thin up there.

Don't get so high and mighty because the higher you get, the harder you fall. If the Spirit of God is teaching you about the maturity, it's not puffing you up, it's bringing you down. Alright, we're going to close.

And it's hard to because there's freedom. This is God's heart. God is releasing His heart to us.

Romans 14, I said verse 21. Watch this. This is the spirit of maturity.

God, give us men and women in our midst and in the body of Christ who will picture and demonstrate this maturity. Lord, give us leaders who will lead your people with this as their heart. There's coming a day, and I don't know when, but it's coming when God is going to bring down a generation of leaders who though they were gifted and though they had elegant skills and though they were able to communicate the Word of God, yet they got too preoccupied with themselves.

They got too enamored with themselves. He's going to bring them down and He's going to raise up a generation of leaders who have the heart of Paul. And God's going to give them the hearts of His people because they won't abuse them, they won't use them, but they'll serve them.

They'll serve them. And they won't look for anything in return. It's going to happen.

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything. Now I want you to take into your hands all the liberty that you have. Christian liberty is the freedom from the law.

It's the freedom from bondage. It's the freedom from legalism. Take your Christian liberty and judge it through this.

It is good neither to eat flesh, well I can eat flesh, but Paul said it's good not to, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumble, or is offended, or is made weak. There's the heart that God is after in a generation of Christians. This is another path, another window into seeing what true maturity is all about.

Now we're going to stop. We didn't even touch really the heart of the message yet. Just can't get around building the foundation, building the foundation.

Let's just bow our hearts before the Lord and let's ask Him by His Holy Spirit, Father we just want to commit this time into Your hands. We thank You for the presence of God, the Spirit of God. We thank You Lord that our hearts have been laid bare before You this morning.

We praise You for our acceptance because of Your blood. We praise You that You speak these things not to shame us, but to encourage us, to edify us, and to comfort us, and to show us where we're going by Your power. And so at this time Lord we simply want to acknowledge it is Your work.

Do it in us as we wait for a few moments in Your presence. Speak to us and do what only You can do. In Jesus' name.

If you've heard the word in your heart today, God is asking you for one response. The same response Samuel gave to the Lord. Yes Lord, Thy servant is listening.

Yes Lord, I've heard. Keep talking. Just say that and He'll speak to you.

Let's sing this out. I seek Your face, I seek Your face. There is no higher glory, no greater honor than to bow and kneel before Your throne.

I'm amazed at Your glory, embraced by Your mercy, O Lord. I live to worship You. Down at Your feet I lie, it's the most high place.

In Your presence, Lord, I seek Your face, I seek Your face. There is no higher glory, no greater honor than to bow and kneel before Your throne. I'm amazed at Your glory, embraced by Your mercy, O Lord.

I live to worship You. Down at Your feet I lie, it's the most high place. In Your presence, Lord, I seek Your face, I seek Your face.

There is no higher glory, no greater honor than to bow and kneel before Your throne. I'm amazed at Your glory, embraced by Your mercy, O Lord. I live to worship You.

O Lord, I live to worship You. O Lord, I live to worship You. When I look into Your holiness, when I gaze into Your love, when I look into Your love, when I look into Your holiness, when all things that surround me become shadows in the light of You, when I found the joy of reaching your heart, when my will becomes enthroned in Your love, when all things that surround me become shadows in the light of You, when I worship you, ooh, the reason I live is to worship you.

I worship you, I worship you, I worship you, I worship you, I worship you.

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