

Qualities That Measure Spiritual Maturity - Part 4

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. explores the essential qualities of spiritual maturity, emphasizing the importance of brokenness, redeeming time, and character development in the Christian life.

Duration: 1:11:17

Scripture: Isaiah 57:15, Job 41:25, Isaiah 66:1, Ephesians 5:15, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Spiritual Maturity", "Brokenness"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of spiritual maturity, focusing on three key aspects: brokenness, redeeming the time, and character qualities. He highlights that true maturity requires a willingness to let go of childish ways and embrace the Father's desire for growth in our lives. The preacher encourages believers to recognize the need for brokenness as a pathway to spiritual strength and to actively redeem their time for God's purposes. He also stresses that maturity is characterized by a willingness to be led by God rather than pursuing personal desires. Ultimately, the message calls for a deep commitment to follow the Lord wherever He leads.

Transcript

By the grace of the Lord and as he enables this very important message on the heart of the Lord in relation to seeing our spiritual maturity. We already have three tapes back there that our dear brother Gary has been making, and we do appreciate his and all the other labor of love in our midst. There's many who, because of love alone, are working together with others and providing great services for everyone, and this tapes that he's doing is providing a great blessing.

But we're going to continue along this subject of maturity, and I'm going to write a third point here, and I'm going to call it character qualities. This morning, by the help of God's Spirit, we're going to continue along these lines, and we're going to look at three different aspects of maturity. I don't want to go over the material that we've already covered for fear that I won't be able to cover the material that I feel is in my spirit this morning, so I won't.

The best thing to do if you want the entire message is to get the tapes. There's no cost. Everything is made available free of cost, as the Lord provides.

This has been our policy for 15 years or so, and God has never failed us. And so all the material and the literature is available free of cost. I want to ask you a rhetorical question, meaning one that you don't have to answer out loud, but one that I'd like for you to answer to yourself, and that is this.

Ask yourself, do I truly see the Father heart of God in desiring me to grow up spiritually? Together with my brothers and sisters, do I really see the Father heart of God in desiring me to grow up spiritually? Together with my brothers and sisters, it is very important that each and every one of us come to this point in our spiritual walk with the Lord, where we see in a very clear way that it's Father's desire to bring spiritual maturity in my life. And if we've been seeing over the past several weeks, spiritual maturity can be a difficult road because it requires putting off childish things. It requires putting off childish ways.

It requires putting off childish thinking. And so if you have a desire in your heart for the Holy Spirit to work in you spiritual maturity together with other brothers and sisters in your life, so that together we can grow into spiritual adulthood, then there are three important aspects of God's dealing in your life regarding spiritual maturity that we're going to have to grasp. Because nobody here will come into spiritual maturity unless we partake of our Father's child-training hand resulting in working in us brokenness.

Number two, working in us the capacity to redeem the time. And number three, character qualities. That is, qualities of our character that reveal a maturing going on in us.

I suggest you listen carefully to the Word this morning, because this message is applicable to every single Christian who is destined by God to come to spiritual maturity. I'd like to begin in reading from the prophet Isaiah chapter 57. I had a brother call me yesterday, Daniel, and we chatted on the phone for a good 30 minutes or so, and Daniel was reading from Isaiah 66, not knowing that it was one of the Scriptures I was planning on sharing this morning.

And so I didn't even tell him, I just listened and rejoiced together with the teaching that the Holy Spirit had been giving him. But it was perfectly in unison with this first point that we're going to deal with this morning. And I thank God that we're all hearing the same thing.

Because one of the goals, one of the passions of the Father's heart, and one of the passions of true leaders among God's people, is not to create a bunch of people dependent upon them, but to prevail and to bring the Word, and to bring prayer, in order that maturity might occur so everybody might be able to hear the Lord. Everybody might be able to recognize His voice. The true heart of a leader rejoices when people grow spiritually, and are able to hear from the Lord, are able to get into the Word, and be taught properly what God is saying.

And so that's the end of true leadership, to see spiritual maturity. Not to create a co-dependence relationship upon a particular flock or church, which many leaders are doing today. And it's dangerous.

It's not God's thought. Isaiah chapter 57, beginning in verse 15. For thus saith the High and the Lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, I will dwell in the High and the Holy Place with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isaiah chapter 66, beginning in verse 1. Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

Job 41, verse number 25. You may turn there if you like. I'm going to simply read it.

By reason of breakings they purify themselves. Job 41, verse 25. By reason of breakings they purify themselves.

I'm going to be reading from October 15th of Streams in the Desert. Listen carefully as we hear the heart of the Lord regarding this first aspect of brokenness. And remember, beloved, that this is the road that you and I will travel upon if we aspire to spiritual maturity.

Now, if we want to live the rest of our Christian lives as spiritual children and play religious games, we'll experience Father's provision, won't we? Because He's faithful. If we want to just have fun and just, you know, sing and dance and just do our own thing and see God blessing us and see God blessing us when we go and when we come and we just want to live a fun, happy Christian life, well, God will be there because He's faithful. But if the Holy Spirit and the Word of God grips a hold of your heart and you see the Father heart of God, the Father heart of God, it's in the heart of a father to see his children come to maturity in the natural, isn't it? Every true father delights in the little baby, the little toddler.

I love my children. I love the little ones. They're so precious.

But oh, how my heart longs to see maturity in all my children. And unfortunately, my oldest one now is suffering under that burden. Because sometimes we deal with our children when it's time for them to mature in a way that they don't like.

And likewise, Father deals with us in a way that we don't like when it's time to grow up. He starts crossing our will, doesn't He? He starts denying us things that perhaps we've always been able to have. And we misunderstand it and we say, Father, why are you being so mean to me? How about this? Everybody else is doing it.

Everybody else has got it. And you wonder in loneliness and in quietness why Father has seemingly denied you this thing. Could it be that God in His infinite wisdom has looked down upon you and said, It is time, my son, it is time, my daughter, to experience a different aspect of my heart.

You've known the nurturing aspect of my heart. You've known the nurturing of a mother. You know, mothers are so gifted of God, aren't they? Mothers have such a unique, unique gift.

A mother is able to take a crying child and so nurture that child and so coddle that child and just everything's going to be all right. Now, if I say that, it doesn't work. But if Mommy says it, it works.

I can't tell you how many times my little ones will fall or they'll get hurt and I'll say, Aw, come to Daddy. No, I want Mommy. Excuse me? I want Mommy.

Collette! Something about a nurturing heart of a mother. And our Father reveals Himself in the Old Testament as the Breastly One. Did you know that that's one of His names? The Breastly One? That indicates the aspect of God that is capable of nurturing His children like a mother would nurture and nurse their little babies.

And don't we all appreciate that aspect of our Father? He's got such a gentle touch. But the day comes when we hear the voice of our Father. And He says, It's time to grow up.

Now, listen closely. God uses most for His glory those people and things which are most perfectly broken. The sacrifices He accepts are broken and contrite hearts.

It was the breaking down of Jacob's natural strength at Pineal that gave him where God could clothe him with the spiritual power. It was breaking the surface of the rock at Horeb by the stroke of Moses' rod that let out the cool waters to thirsty people. It was when the 300 elect soldiers under Gideon broke their pictures, a type of breaking themselves, that the hidden lights shone forth to the consternation of their adversaries.

It was when the poor widow broke the seal of the little pot of oil and poured it forth that God multiplied it to pay her debts and supply means of support. It was when Esther risked her life and broke through the rigid etiquette of a heathen court that she obtained favor to rescue her people from death. It was when our Lord Jesus took the five loaves and broke them that the bread was multiplied in the very act of breaking, sufficient to feed 5,000.

It was when Mary broke her beautiful alabaster box, rendering it henceforth useless, that the pinup perfume filled the house. It was when Jesus allowed His precious body to be broken to pieces by thorns and nails and spear that His inner life was poured out like a crystal ocean for thirsty sinners to drink and live. It is when a beautiful grain of corn is broken up in the earth by death that its inner heart sprouts forth and bears hundreds of other grains and thus on and on through all history and all biography and all vegetation and all spiritual life.

God must have broken things. Those who are broken in wealth and broken in self-will and broken in their ambitions and broken in their beautiful ideas and broken in worldly reputation and broken in their affections and broken oftentimes in health. Those who are despised and seem utterly forlorn and helpless.

The Holy Ghost is seizing upon and using for God's glory. Isaiah says, the lame take the prey. And then a poem by Thomas Bunch.

Oh, break my heart, but break it as a field. It is but the plow up broken for thy corn. Oh, break it as the buds by green leaves sealed are to unloose the golden blossom torn.

Love what I offer unto the love's great Master. Set free the odor. Break the alabaster.

Oh, God, break my heart. Break it, victorious God, that life's eternal well may flash abroad. Oh, let it break as when the captive trees, breaking cold bounds, regain their liberties.

And as thought's sacred grove to life is springing, be joys like birds, their hope, thy victory singing. Brokenness before Almighty God is a quality that every mature, aspiring child of God will have to taste. And as the Word of God so clearly indicates this morning, brokenness is a quality through which God reduces us down to a posture inwardly where we realize that we have no strength, no wisdom, no power, no ability.

We have nothing in ourselves but are wholly dependent upon a sovereign God to lead us and move us and guide us and grant us the victory. Brokenness is the posture whereby the creature acknowledges that it is only in the Creator that we have our life and our joy and our righteousness and our strength. And this work of brokenness is something that only God can do in our life as His eyes of love fall upon us.

And He chooses, as Hebrews chapter 12 indicates, and then we're going to move on. Hebrews chapter 12. This quality of brokenness is only something that God Himself can bring in our life.

We read this last week. Verse 2, Hebrews 12, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Let me tell you, beloved, when God begins the process of bringing brokenness into your life, you're going to discover quite quickly that there is no place that you can look to except the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because when God begins to produce brokenness in our life, everything else becomes insufficient. We can't look to anyone or anything else. There's a story that the late Dr. J. Vernon McGee used to tell over the radio.

He and his wife had gone to a conference and heard a speaker. And he was a young man. Relatively young in the Lord, but very gifted.

And he got up and he spoke a tremendous gifted message on a topic that I don't even think Dr. McGee divulged on the radio program. And afterwards, his wife looked at him and said, what did you think? Thought it was pretty good. And J. Vernon McGee looked at his wife and said, the boy needs to suffer a little bit.

He needs to go through life a little bit. And then years later, years later, they found themselves in an audience where the same speaker was speaking. And afterwards, his wife said, what do you think? And old J. Vernon McGee said, not like that.

Why? Because the first message may have been gifted, might have been accurate to the letter, might have been good doctrinal truth, but it wasn't being delivered through a vessel that knew brokenness. But the second presentation was an earthen vessel who had suffered, who had been subject to Father's hand of discipline, who had come to know weakness, come to know brokenness, come to know what it was to be crushed. The greater the brokenness that God works in us, the greater capacity does the ministry of life have to flow through us into the lives of others.

You remember what Paul said, that it's death that worked in him, but life in others. So it's the ministry of life flowing out of us that comes through death working in us. What kind of death? The death that God works in us, weaning us from all dependence and trust in ourself.

Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin, and you have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you, as the King James says, children.

But the actual word there means sons. The idea here is you have forgotten that God is speaking to you and dealing with you as sons now. Not as little children, but as sons.

And listen to what He says. My son. See, the same word, My son, is the same word that is used when it says unto children.

It's the same word. Despise not the chastening, the child-training of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loves, He chasteneth and scourges every son whom He received.

If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons. For what son is He whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof are all partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which correct us, and we gave them reverence.

Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For verily for a few days they chastened us after their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness, of His sanctification, that word. In other words, that we might be partakers of the fullness of who He is. Not just the gift of eternal salvation, although that's part of it, but to be a partaker of the fullness, the stature, His manhood, His maturity, His character.

That we might be partakers of the fullness of His beauty, of His righteousness. This is God's heart for you and I. Verse 11, Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Be prepared. Brokenness. Be prepared, beloved.

And may I say, as we go on to point to, take special heed of verse 5. Despise not, nor faint. The greatest temptation that you will experience when God is dealing with you as sons and when God begins to bring brokenness into your life, is the temptation to despise it and the temptation to faint under the dealing of the Lord, to become weary in your mind. So look to Jesus and He'll give you the grace.

Number two, a second feature that each one of us will have to experience in a very real way, on the road to maturity, is learning to redeem the time. Ephesians. We've read this Scripture a number of times.

We're going to read it again. Chapter 5. Hebrews 5. Beginning in verse 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

The word acceptable there means agreeable. Proving what is agreeable to the Lord. Oh, how important that we learn to do this.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.

For whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Listen.

See then that ye walk circumspectly. Listen. Listen.

Not as fools, but as wise. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. On point number one, we could say that if brokenness indicates a growing maturity, then the absence of brokenness would indicate the presence of immaturity.

And so likewise, in order to help make the point of redeeming the time, if redeeming the time would be an indication that we're growing spiritually, then the absence of redeeming the time would indicate immaturity. Brothers and sisters, I believe one of the greatest needs in our lives today as a company of believers here,

but also as the church abroad, is the need to come to realize that time is a gift from God, and if we don't redeem the time, and that word redeem means to buy it back. If we don't buy back the time for God, then the time will be used for everything but God.

Now listen. I'm going to read a fictitious but powerful story. It will not take long.

In this story, we are going to see the seriousness of our need to redeem the time. The story is not true, and neither are the various different things being said in the story necessarily something we should do or shouldn't do. But you'll understand as I read it.

The point is well taken. Satan called a demonic convention. We can't keep people from going to church.

We can't keep them from reading a Bible and seeking the truth. We might, however, keep them from forming an intimate, abiding relationship with Christ. When that connection is achieved, our power over them is broken, so we must prevent it.

So let them go to their churches. Let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time so they don't seek that relationship with Jesus. That is what I want you to do, demons.

Distract them from gaining hold of Jesus and achieving that intimate union with Him. How shall we do this? shouted the devils. Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds.

He answered, tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, and borrow, and borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long, arduous hours and the husbands to work six, seven days each week, ten, twelve, fourteen hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children.

As their family fragments, soon their home will offer no escape from the pressure of work. Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive.

Keep them from silence. Entice them to keep the TV, VCR, CDs, and their PCs going constantly everywhere they go. See to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays worldly music.

This will jam their minds and prevent them from thinking on Christ. Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day.

Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail. Mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services, and false hopes.

Take Bibles and prayers from all their children's classrooms and give the children more time to learn of Me. Remember, Satan's writing this. Me.

Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines so the husbands will believe that external beauty is what's important and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. Ha! That will fragment those families very quickly. Even in their recreation, let them be excessive.

Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted, and unprepared for the coming week. Don't let them go out in nature to reflect on God's wonders. Send them to amusement parks and sporting events, concerts and movies instead.

Keep them busy, busy, busy. And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions. Go ahead.

Let them be involved in soul winning, but crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Jesus. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of their personal causes. Let us boost their egos to the heavens.

They think they aspire to. It will work. It will work.

I know it'll work. It was quite a convention. The devil's angels were eagerly to their assignments, causing religious people everywhere to get more busy, more rushed, going here and there.

They began to chant. I guess the question is this. Has the devil been successful at his scheme as far as you are concerned? You be the judge.

Does busy mean being under Satan's yoke? Reflect honestly, beloved. Our second point, redeeming the time under maturity. When God begins to work in your life seeking to see maturity, you will come to a crisis.

You'll have to come to a crisis whether you are a single person, whether you are a married person, whether you have one children or ten children. You will have to come to a crisis where you will begin to experience God's dealing in your life regarding the things that you do, the things that your family does, and you'll begin to have to hear Him say, this might not be unlawful, but it is unnecessary. This might not be overtly sinful, but it is not productive.

And as we preached a number of weeks ago, at that time, it's going to be time to make some tough decisions. The church is in the valley of decision today. We have got to decide.

And in making decisions, we will see the Lord work in our lives. I will not go into detail on this point. I will not play the Holy Spirit.

I will not legislate laws and rules and regulations for people to follow. That is not what I'm called to do. I will not write a list of do's and don'ts for you.

I will not tell you how to spend your time and what to do and what not to do. But I believe with all my heart, as I stand in the presence of Jesus Christ, along with you, that if you will listen to the voice of your Shepherd Jesus Christ, He will. I won't, but He will.

And He will not do it in order to create a legalistic lifestyle for you. He won't do it so that you can conform the rules and regulations and then think by doing so, you're attaining to spiritual maturity. No, He'll do it, and the basis of it will be love.

Love. It will be born out of a relationship. That's what He's after.

People maturing. That's springing out of love for Him. Redeeming the time.

Because the days are evil. This whole second point, the road to spiritual maturity, begins with an awakening within the heart. And here's what the awakening is.

It comes by the Holy Spirit. And this is what it is. Father, You have got to order my life and the life of my family.

And I've got to come to where I am hearing You give me wisdom on how to conduct my life and my family's life that is most conducive to spiritual maturity. That is most conducive to spiritual development. When that awakening occurs in your heart, and you realize there's going to come a day when you will give an account for every minute that you spent on this earth every day.

You're going to have to give an account to the Savior. And He's going to require of each one of us to stand before Him and give an account of how we spent the time that God gave us from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to bed. And those who under the hand of God come and grow and mature and enter into the process of spiritual maturity will refuse to conform to the role and to the pressures of society that are pushing us and pressing us to spend all of our waking moments so busy, our minds so preoccupied that we cannot and do not find time for the Lord.

The maturing Christian by the grace of God, by the Spirit of God in meekness, in weakness, in recognizing that the Lord alone is their strength will arise by the Spirit of God and say, Lord, this cannot happen in my life. And until this rises up within you and in your home, you are destined to continue in spiritual immaturity. Destined.

Spiritual immaturity lets the winds of life govern you. But maturity rises up, feels the wind pushing this way, and says, No! Father doesn't want us to go that way. Feels the pressure to do this.

Maybe you even feel the pressure of other people. Your own children might want this and want that. It's time, parents, that we arise in the meekness of Christ and say, This is not good for you.

No! Brothers and sisters, if we do not find this quality walking in us by God's grace, we're going to be under and controlled by the Spirit in this age. How many have found this second point to be a real, real battle in your life? Absolutely. Okay.

Number three. Character qualities. As we had mentioned in an earlier message, in 1 Corinthians 13, we won't go there.

But we saw in 1 Corinthians 13 that the Holy Spirit showed us that when I was a child, I thought like a child, I acted like a child, I reasoned like a child. In other words, I had the character of a child. The qualities of being a child and we're going to have to find in Jesus Christ the grace to begin to demonstrate the character qualities of maturity.

Now listen, please. I want you to turn to John chapter 21. We've read this before.

I believe even other brothers have read this before. But I have no problem repeating these things. Because each time we hear them, new light comes.

Are you ready? The words that we're about to read follow the time when Jesus and Peter had a conversation. And Jesus asked Peter, do you love Me? And Peter said, Lord, I like You. That's the meaning of the words.

Jesus asked Peter, do you love Me with that God love that is willing to give Your life and to sacrifice everything for me? And Peter said, well, Lord, I like You. We're buddies. I mean, we've hung out together.

We did a lot of things together. But I just denied You three times. I would be a fool to say yes.

But it was good because Peter was getting honest. You see, the Lord can't do anything in our life until we're honest with Him. Did you know that? Did you know the Lord is continuously getting us to where we need to be honest? You see, before this incident, what was it that Peter said to the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper? Though all men forsake You, I won't, might have been sincere, but he was sincerely deceived.

So the Lord couldn't do much in Peter's life until He brought what? Brokenness. Brokenness. We won't go into that now because I want to read this part.

So Jesus asked him two times, do you love Me? Peter said, I like You. And then the third time, Jesus said, and He changed the Greek word, and He said, oh, Peter, so you only like Me? And Peter said, Lord, You know all things. You know I like You.

Jesus was basically saying, that's good, Peter. It's okay. It's okay.

Because you're being honest with Me. I can work with you, Peter. And now watch what He says.

Verse 18, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, immature... Listen. Listen. Listen to the qualities that characterize the features that characterize an immature soul.

Thou girdest thyself. Thou walkest whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

And of course, Jesus here was speaking of the death that Peter would experience in relation to how He would glorify the Lord. But there is a much deeper meaning to this Scripture than simply pointing to an event where Peter died by stretching out his hands and was crucified. This Scripture reveals to us as the Holy Spirit bursts it open that there is a distinct difference being made between Peter as a young man, as an immature man, versus Peter as one who is old or one who comes into maturity.

The former is characterized by doing what you want to do. Retaining your rights. Making your own decisions.

Girding yourself with what you want. You see, we want to gird ourselves with honor. We want to gird ourselves with being seen of men.

We want to gird ourselves of being great ones in the eyes of others. We want to go where we want to go. We usually choose places that are comfortable for us.

We usually choose places that are good to accomplish our agendas. But when you are old, when you come under my hand of maturing, you will stretch forth your hand. In other words, you'll give up that right and you'll be led by another.

The great quality of maturity, the overwhelming, all-surpassing feature of a truly maturing child of God is that they are not living their life according to their own tastes. But they are stretching forth their hand and they're being governed by another. They're being led by another.

They've given up the rights of doing their own thing their own way. But they've come to see the Crucified One and they've come to say, Lord, whithersoever You would lead me, I will follow. Wherever You want me to go, I will go.

Putting off childish ways. Taking on character qualities that represent maturity is a very real dealing with the Lord. Stripping us from that tendency to demand our own way.

How many of us are willing to clothe ourself with dishonor? This is more than just putting on our clothes. No. This is clothing ourself, making ourself.

How do you want to look in the eyes of men when you're led by another? You no longer care. It no longer is a concern. If God wants to lead you to be a servant, you'll be a servant.

If God wants to lead you to sell everything you've got and be a fool, that's exactly what you'll do. If God wants to lead you into a place of dishonor, not through a moral act or an immoral act, but a place of dishonor where you're misunderstood, it doesn't matter. If you're clothed with misunderstanding, it won't matter.

It won't matter. You see, because you're led by another one now. And I tell you, brothers and sisters, you don't have this in yourself and neither do I. Only God can work this in us.

But I'm telling you, God's heart is searching and the tears of Christ are falling as He longs to see these kinds of awakenings come into the body of Christ. The day of chasing after things and having a good old jolly Christian time while we're doing our own thing and we're serving God in our own way are coming to an end. God is raising up a church, a people, a company of people who under the hand of God's Spirit are coming to know maturity.

And they're making themselves available to God without conditions. Lord, I'll serve You, but don't do this. Okay.

I have got ten, which I'm not going to go into now. Ten character qualities that represent maturity. That we will save for our next time together.

But now, I sense that we can... I want to close this message and just give time for the Holy Spirit to take what has already been given and just speak into our hearts and confirm His Word. Now, in closing, I'd like to read Revelation. Revelation 14.

It is not my intention this morning to give an interpretation to this portion of Scripture. Who is it talking about? Now, we're not interested in that at this time. The purpose of the Holy Spirit this morning is to catch a hold of the heart attitude of this Scripture.

Because this is our starting point. This is where it starts. This is where all of these things begin to happen.

Now listen closely. Verse 1, chapter 14, Revelation. And I looked, and lo, a lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads.

And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder. And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and they sung as it were a new song before the throne and before the four beasts and the elders. And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.

These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. Now here's what I want to capture. These are they which follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth.

Let's bow our hearts now. Father, these are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Lord, I pray that You will grant to each of us a heart that is able to say along with this Scripture, I will follow the Lord by His grace wherever He goes.

Lord, give us the heart that hears Your voice whispering to us, it is time for spiritual growing up. Help us not to resent the work of brokenness. Help us not to resent the work of having to redeem our time.

And help us, Lord, not to resent the character qualities that must be formed in us to the road of maturity. We want to commit this into Your hands now, Lord, and ask for these next few moments You would speak to us and guide us to Yourself. We're going to quietly, the girls and Norman, we're going to quietly worship Jesus and sing the potter's hand.

And all I want to say from the Lord is this, listen to Him this morning. Whatever He says to you, do it. If you want special prayer this morning and you feel that God has spoken to you, you might not even understand what He's saying, but you know He has spoken.

I want to make myself available as a brother to agree with you that the Great Shepherd Himself will touch you. All you have to do is indicate it by raising your hand or if you want, you can come forward. So let's listen.

As we worship, the Shepherd will speak to you. Perfect plan You gently call me Into Your presence Guiding me by Your Holy Spirit Teach me, dear Lord To live all of my life Through Your eyes I'm captured by Your holy calling Set me apart I know You'll join me To Yourself Lead me, Lord, I pray Take me Mold me Use me Fill me I give my life To the Father's hand Call me You guide me Lead me, Lord, beside me I give my life To the Father's hand You gently call me Into Your presence Guiding me by Your Holy Spirit Teach me, dear Lord To live all of my life Through Your eyes I'm captured by Your holy calling Set me apart I know You'll join me To Yourself Lead me, Lord, I pray Take me Mold me Use me Fill me I give my life To the Father's hand Call me You guide me Lead me, Lord, beside me I give my life To the Father's hand Call me Mold me Use me Fill me I give my life To the Father's hand Call me You guide me Lead me, Lord, beside me I give my life To the Father's hand Call me Use me Lead me I give my life To the Father's hand I give my life I give my life To the Father's hand I give my life Touch us, Lord Oh, Lord, do the work by your Holy Spirit It's Your work, Lord We offer ourselves to You I give my life All that I adore is in you Lord I give you my heart, I give you my soul I live for you alone Every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake Lord have your way in me This is my desire To honor you Lord with all my heart I worship you All I have within me I give you praise All that I adore is in you Lord I give you my heart, I give you my soul I live for you alone Every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake Lord have your way in me Lord I give you my heart I give you my soul I live for you alone Every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake Lord have your way

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