

CHRISTIAN MATURITY

- **MATURING IN:**
 - **KNOWLEDGE...**
 - **UNDERSTANDING...**
 - ❖ **WISDOM...**
 - ✚ **APPLICATION**

Only those who are born again are able to understand (discern) spiritual truth. After salvation, God calls us to maturity. This comes through church fellowship, prayer, bible study and “time with God.” However, we must not become distracted by mysteries or knowledge beyond our comprehension.

NOTE: See separate studies entitled [“God Holds Us Responsible”](#), [“Christian Fellowship”](#), [“Prayer”](#), [“Knowing God’s Word”](#) and [“The Transcendent Knowledge and Wisdom of God”](#).

Able/not able to understand (discern)

- Eph 4:11-15 (God’s formula and provision for church sanity) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.
- 1Co 2:9-14 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"- ¹⁰but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- 2Co 3:14-16 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

- Mt 13:14-17 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. ¹⁵For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.
- (Jude 22 Be merciful to those who doubt;)
 Jer 6:10 To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the LORD is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it.
- Jn 8:43-44a Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.
- Jn 8:47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."
- Jn 10:4b-6 his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.
- Jn 10:8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.
- Jn 10:25b-27 The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
- 2Co 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- (Act 5:34-40 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. ³⁵Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. ³⁶Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." ⁴⁰His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.)
- (Act 7:25 Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.)
- Jn 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.
- Lk 24:45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.
- 2Co 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
- Act 16:14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

- Pr 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
- Pr 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- Pr 15:33a The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom,
 (Ps 34:11-14 Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. ¹²Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, ¹³keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. ¹⁴Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.)
- (Pr 8:13a To fear the LORD is to hate evil;)
 (Pr 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.)
 (Job 28:28 And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord-that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'")
- Pr 15:32 He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.
- Pr 28:5 Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.
- Pr 2:1-5, 9-10 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, ²turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, ³and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, ⁴and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, ⁵then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. ⁹Then you will understand what is right and just and fair--every good path. ¹⁰For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
- Jn 7:16-17 Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. ¹⁷If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.
- Jn 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- Rom 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.
- Phl 1:9-11 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.
- Col 1:9-10 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,
- Col 2:2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,
- Eph 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Contrasting viewpoints and responses

- 2Co 5:16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.
- 2Co 2:14-16a But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. ¹⁵For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.
- 1Co 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- 2Th 2:10b They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.
- 1Pe 2:6-8b For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," ⁸and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message-
- 2Pe 3:16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.
- Jn 1:10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.
- Jn 6:36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.
- Jn 10:24-26 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.
- 2Co 6:14-16a Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?
- Rom 8:5-8 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.
- (Heb 11:6a And without faith it is impossible to please God,)

Seek Truth; *obtain* knowledge, understanding, wisdom and discernment

- Pr 23:23 Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.
- (Pr 19:2 It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.)
- (Rom 10:2b they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.)
- Jam 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.
- Pr 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
- Pr 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them.
- Pr 4:7 Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.

- Pr 8:10-11 Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, ¹¹for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.
- Pr 16:16 How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver!
- Pr 15:14 The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.
- Pr 18:15 The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.
- Pr 19:8 He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who cherishes understanding prospers.
- Pr 23:12 Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.
- Pr 24:14 Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.
- Ps 119:66 Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands.

Growing in knowledge of and love for God; its purpose

- Eph 4:11-13 (again, God's formula and provision) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
- 1Pe 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- (1Co 3:1-2 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly-mere infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.)
- Act 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- Eph 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.
- Phl 1:9-11 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-to the glory and praise of God.
- Col 1:9-10 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,
- Col 2:2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,
- 2Pe 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Exhortation to application

- Jam 1:22-25 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-he will be blessed in what he does.

- Eze 33:32 Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.
- Jn 13:17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.
- Jn 14:12a I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing.
- Mt 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."
- Dt 27:26 "Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"
- Lk 6:46-47 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. (Mt 7:24-27, above, is the parallel account.)
- Lk 8:21 He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."
- Heb 5:11-6:1a We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. ^{6:1}Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity,
- 1Ti 6:11-14 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Our responsibility

- 2Pe 1:5-8(9) For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (⁹But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.)
- Col 3:15-16 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.