

DOCTRINE OF MATURITY

January 26, 1988

I. Hebrew vocabulary.

- A. The adjective תָּמִים, tamim, translated "blameless" in the New American Standard version, is used of the mature believer (Gen.6:9; Job.1:1; Gen.17:1).
1. It is derived from the verb תָּמַם, tamam: to be perfect or blameless.
 2. It is used to describe an entire day (Josh.10:13), a healthy vine (Ezek.15:5), or an acceptable animal sacrifice (Lev.22:21,22).
 3. Speech which is tamim (Amos.5:10) corresponds to what is entirely in accord with truth and fact. Elihu assured Job, "*My words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you*" (Job.36:4).
 4. In the fullest sense, Yaweh's (יְהוָה) acts (Deut.32:4; 2Sam.22:31) and Law (Ps.19:7) are perfect.
- B. In Old Testament theology, this word group is used in connection with believers to include:
1. Assertions that the speaker is innocent of particular crimes laid to his account.
 2. General professions of integrity of purpose.
 3. Maturity.

II. Greek vocabulary.

- A. The adjective, τέλειος, teleios, occurs 19X: complete or perfect; used of maturity (Jam.1:4).
1. It is derived from the verb τελειόω, teleioo, and occurs 24X: to make perfect (Phil.3:12).
 2. The noun τελειότης, teleiotes, is used of maturity in Heb.6:1.
 3. The verb τελεσφορέω, telesphoreo, occurs 1X: to bring forth fruit to maturity (Lk.8:14).
- B. The adjective ἄμωμος, amomos, occurs 7X: blameless; it is used of maturity (Jd.24; also compare the other adjective ἀμεμπτος, amepmtos, Phil.2:15; ἀμώμητος, amometos, 2Pet.3:14).
1. This word is used to translate tamim in the LXX to describe the mature (Job.2:3) or innocent believer (Ps.18:23; 37:18,37; 64:4; 101:6; 119:1; Prov.2:21; 11:5,20).

III. There are three adjustments that God requires of every person.

- A. The salvation adjustment involves faith in the person of Christ, resulting in eternal salvation (see Doctrine of Salvation).
- B. The rebound adjustment restores the believer who sins to fellowship, enabling the believer to glorify God in the flesh (see Doctrine of Rebound).
- C. The maturity adjustment involves "growing in grace and knowledge" over an extended period of time.

IV. There are three stages or levels of spiritual growth as seen in the parable of the maturation of grain (Mk.4:26-29).

- A. It is also seen in the three levels of human development: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (cp. 1Jn.2:12-14).
- B. Some doctrine is only going to be assimilated by the mature Christian (Heb.5:11-14).

V. Maturity is commanded, Heb.6:1 "Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God."

VI. Essential ingredients in the attainment of maturity for the believer.

- A. Consistent face-to-face teaching under right Pastor over the long haul (Heb.10:25; 2Pet.3:18).
- B. Maintenance of the filling of the Holy Spirit versus domination by the old sin nature (see Doctrine's of the OSN/STA and Rulership of Life).
- C. Application of doctrine of faith plus works, as there is no maturity adjustment apart from works (Lk.8:14; Jn.15; Jam.2:14-26).

VII. The maturity adjustment does not demand sinless perfection (1Kgs.8:46; Prov.20:9; Eccl.7:20).

A. This should not lead to rationalization or indifference to sinful activity on the part of believers (1Jn.2:1).

B. While mature believers sin and recognize it (Job.42:6), they do disclaim all fellowship with the wicked (Ps.1) from whom they expect to be distinguished in the course of providence.

VIII. Testing and the maturity adjustment, Jam.1:2-4 "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

A. The believer must focus on doctrine in order to have happiness under testing.

B. Passing tests develops the quality of patience.

C. Patience or endurance over the long haul eventuates in maturity.

D. A wide variety of testing on the glory road awaits each believer (see Doctrines of Testing and Suffering).

E. The alternative is reversionism, of which the Hebrews were in danger (Heb.10:32-39).

IX. Some examples of mature believers from the Old Testament.

A. Enoch walked with God (Gen.5:21-24).

B. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen.6:8,9).

C. The tests of Job (Job.1:2; 2:3).

D. Abraham (Gen.17:1).

E. Hebrews 11 presents a roster of spiritually mature heroes and their exploits in the Angelic Conflict.

X. Some characteristics of the mature believer.

A. Is informed with respect to the realm of doctrine (Rom.15:14). Roman saints were mature in their understanding.

B. Has an abundance of divine good production (2Tim.3:16,17).

C. There is a Sarah's daughter designation for the ladies (1Pet.3:1-6).

D. Separation from the negative and wicked (Ps.1; see Doctrine of Separation).

E. Places a higher premium on relationship with God than people or things (Gen.22).

F. Demonstrates control of the tongue (Jam.3:2).

G. Keeps God's commands (Gen.26:5).

XI. Blessings associated with maturity (Ps.119:1).

A. Deliverance and protection (Prov.13:6; 28:18).

B. God smoothes the way (Prov.11:5).

C. Inherits temporal blessings (Gen.24:1; Prov.28:10).

D. Is God's delight (Prov.11:20).

E. God honors them (Ps.101:6).

XII. Maturity is to be the objective of the ministry of the local church, Col.1:28 "*And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.*"

XIII. The Son of God attained maturity, Heb.5:9; Lk.2:52; Jd.24 "*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy*".

Reviewed: November 8, 1989

Reviewed: August 31, 1994

Reviewed: April 1998