



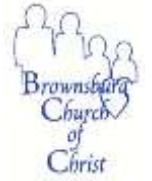
Matured by God

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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June 15, 2014

AM Assembly



Introduction:

What does a mature Christian look like? What is the goal of growth in God? There are all kinds of passages we might look to in order to help us look at this. No doubt, from different perspectives, we might each look at different passages to summarize this. I think that **Psalm 16:2** provides the definitive statement of godly maturity. When we can say what David said here and live it, we will have become mature disciples. What did David write? "I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.'" Notice five aspects of this statement to understand that maturity the God Filled strive for.

Discussion:

I. The mature know every good we have comes from God.

- A. The immature believe they can take their good to God and try to impress Him with it. The mature, on the other hand, know that any good we have actually begins with God. Consider David and Israel when they did the good work of providing for the soon to be built temple in **I Chronicles 29:10-16**. Certainly it was a good work the Israelites were doing. But they understood they were only able to do that good work because of the blessings and empowerment from God.
- B. Further, the mature understand that any good thing that happens to them should be attributed to God. As **James 1:17** says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (ESV). Is there anything good in your life? Give thanks to God. Are you breathing today? Are you eating today? Are you clothed today? Are you married today? Are you employed today? Do you have a home today? Did you have a victory over a sin? Are you healthy? Did you learn something today? Give thanks.
- C. This is such a strong point that we need to understand that while only the mature realize all these good things are from God, every good thing anyone experiences is a blessing from God. As **Matthew 5:45** explains when even the evil and unjust eat it is because God sent the rain and sun to grow their crops.

II. The mature know everything from God is good.

- A. When the mature recognize that they have no good apart from God, they understand that everything that is from God or that God allows is ultimately good, at least for those who love Him. That doesn't mean it necessarily feels good in the moment. But it is good. When we tie together **Romans 8:18** with **Romans 8:28**, we may suffer, but God works everything together for good. If God is allowing us to go through it, it will be for our good. We may not see how in the moment, but we can trust God that He will use it that way.
- B. Paul demonstrates this in **II Corinthians 12:7-10**. I understand that Paul says the thorn in the flesh came directly from Satan, but he learned that God would use even this for his ultimate good. The mature recognize that what God lets us go through will be for our good and we can count even the hardships with thanksgiving because we know that what we suffer produces endurance and ultimately hope (cf. **Romans 5:3-5**).

III. The mature know anything apart from God is not good.

- A. The other side of this coin is that when the mature recognize they have no good apart from God, they understand that anything apart from God simply isn't good. Everything else is a distraction from what is most important. Consider Paul's example in **Philippians 3:7-11**. Anything not of God was simply not worth it to Paul. He counted it as rubbish, refuse, trash.
- B. The immature continue to try to straddle the fence. In part of their heart, perhaps even most of their heart, they long for God, but in some part of their heart they long for other things as well. They are in a constant battle over the "rules and regulations." They want to pursue worldly things as far as they possibly can, constantly arguing how someone can't prove a certain action is a sin. They want to ride the lines, that is, trying to figure out with razor sharp accuracy exactly what God's line for every issue is and then argue vehemently about their rights and freedoms to rub up close to the lines. The mature, however, are interested in drawing close to God. They aren't as worried about lines because they don't want to enjoy even partially what isn't from God. Note how important this is from **Psalm 66:18**. If we cherish iniquity, longing for it, delighting in it in some part of our heart, we lose the fellowship with God we so desperately need.

IV. The mature want the Giver more than the gifts.

- A. The mature understand that the greatest good is God Himself. Taken at its most literal, this statement says that nothing apart from God Himself is good to the psalmist. Obviously this is a hyperbole, an exaggeration for effect. But the point is clear. Of all that is good and holy, God is the best.
- B. The immature see God as merely a means to gifts. Let me ask you a question. What do we call a woman who marries a man not for the relationship but for his money? We call her a gold digger, and we say it with disdain and contempt. And yet, many Christians get into a relationship with God not because they want a relationship with God but because they merely want God's gifts and blessings. They are looking for "their best life now." These get upset if someone else seems to get more of the gifts than they do. Someone else has more ability, more resources, more blessings (especially material ones), and these immature get bent out of shape. It is not enough for them to have God because what they want most is God's gifts.
- C. **Psalm 37:4** says, "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (ESV). Sadly, many look at this verse as the key to get whatever they want. "Awesome!" they say, "If I delight in the Lord, I'll get the house I want, the car I want, the money I want." The problem is whatever it is that you are expecting to get if you delight in the Lord is actually what you delight in instead of the Lord. The point of this verse actually is that if we grow to delight in the Lord we'll get more of the Lord and we'll be delighted. I hate to quote such a rank Calvinist as John Piper, but he says some really great things. One of my favorites is the statement I wish I had come up with on my own: "God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him." The God Filled mature want the Giver more than the gifts.

V. The mature long for God's eternal presence more than God's eternal treasures.

- A. This is an extension of the last point, but one I feel is important to understand. The immature see God merely as a means to the "good life" in eternity. They are willing to put up with poverty here, but in heaven they will get to know how the other half lives. They are satisfied with just a cottage below, but in eternity they better get a golden mansion that is silver lined. What excites them about heaven is not the presence of God, but the luxury they think they will experience in their servant run mansion, sunbathing by the heavenly pool in their backyard, riding down streets of gold in their Lexus, Cadillac, Corvette (whichever car floats their boat).
- B. The mature, however, know that God Himself is the greatest good. What makes heaven so great is it is God's dwelling place. Going along with this is **Psalm 73:25**. "Whom have I in heaven but you: And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you" (ESV). When the mature consider heaven, what most excites them is God's presence. Don't misunderstand. I'm not saying we aren't allowed to be excited about other aspects of heaven like having comfort (see Lazarus in **Luke 16:19-26**) or being welcomed by those who have gone before us (see **Luke 16:9**). But the mature long most for the eternal presence of God.
- C. Which is why what they long for most even now is the presence of God. This is why they conduct themselves not based on what can be proven about rules and regulations but about what will most improve their relationship with God, drawing them closer to Him. When this life is over and all this physical and material is removed either in death or in judgment, they long to be near God. They see nothing else as so good as God Himself either now or in eternity.

Conclusion:

I'll admit it. I'm not completely there yet. I continue to struggle with other delights and too often they pull me away. But, with Paul, I am pressing on for this goal of God Filled maturity. I pray that God will be with us as we strive to delight in Him above all things. May we grow to say to God along with David, "You are my LORD; I have no good apart from You."