

Taking a Closer Look

What does the Bible say?

“Let no one cause me trouble for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” – Paul, Galatians 6.17

Over the last few studies we have looked at things that mark disciples of Jesus – what sets them apart? We have seen that they are marked by their new identity in Christ, their commitment to character, and by the presence of the Holy Spirit living in them. In this study we will examine another mark of a disciple: *their commitment to spiritual growth and maturity.*

Spiritual Growth

The apostle wrote a personal mission statement in Colossians 1.28-29:

“We proclaim [Jesus], warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”

- How many people did Paul try to warn and teach?
- What was the goal of his warning and teaching?
- What do you think it means to “present” someone? (see also 1 Thessalonians 2.19-20)
- How much energy did Paul put into helping others become mature in Christ? What does this say about how important spiritual maturity is?

Check out Galatians 4.19.

- What was Paul laboring to accomplish? How does this relate to spiritual maturity?

Read 2 Peter 3.18.

- How are we commanded to grow according to Peter? What are practical ways you can do this?

Means for Spiritual Growth

Fill in the following chart from Matthew 7.24-27:

Wise Man	House on the rock	Hear the Word + _____	Result:
Foolish Man	House on the sand	Hear the Word - _____	Result:

What principle(s) of spiritual growth can you draw from these verses?

Thinking it Through

What does the Bible mean?

Spiritual Maturity

We need to *grow* spiritually so that we can *become mature* spiritually. But what does maturity look like?

Maturity = Be Like Jesus

- What does Luke 6.40 say about what maturity looks like for a disciple?
- How does 1 John 2.6 shape your idea of maturity?

Maturity = Way of Thinking

- What does 1 Corinthians 14.20 teach you about maturity?

Maturity = Able to Teach

Read Hebrews 5.11-14.

- What showed that they were still immature?
- What does verse 14 say about how we become mature?

Making it Count

How do I live what I've learned?

Things that are alive grow. Growth is a normal part of life, including spiritual life. What we are growing toward is maturity. Spiritual maturity for a disciple of Jesus is to become like the Master!

- How would you describe your growth spiritually over the past few weeks and months?
- What are some signs that a person is growing spiritually? Can you see a person's growth?
- Are there any things in your life that are blocking your spiritual growth? If so, what choices or changes can you make to make spiritual growth a priority?
- What is one area where you would like to grow in your spiritual life right now? Who could you share this with who would encourage and challenge you to pursue growth?