

Doctrine of Maturity

I. Hebrew vocabulary.

- A. The adjective תָּמִים, (TAMIM) and תָּם (TAM), translated "blameless," 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. The fundamental idea of the verb is completeness. It is used to describe an acceptable animal sacrifice (Lev.22:21-22, Num. 6:14; 19:2).
 3. Speech which is תָּמִים (TAMIM) corresponds to what is entirely in accord with truth and fact ("integrity"-Amos.5:10).
 4. It may be used to refer to manner of life (Psa. 15:2, Prov. 28:18).
 5. In the fullest sense, God's (יְהוָה) acts and Law are perfect (acts: Deut.32:4; 2 Sam.22:31, law: Psa.19:7).
- 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 (Col. 1:28, James 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 (Heb 6:1).
 3. The verb τελεσφορέω, (TELESPHOREO), occurs 1X: to bring forth fruit to maturity (Lk.8:14).
- B. The adjective ἄμωμος, (AMOMOS), "blameless" occurs 7x. It is used of maturity (Col. 1:22, Jude 1:24).
- C. Other terms: the adjective ἀμemptos, (AMEMPTOS- "unblameable": 1 Thess. 3:13); the adjective, ἀμώμητος, (AMOMETOS- "blameless": 2 Pet.3:14).

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. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Acts 16:30-31 "and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus..."
- B. The rebound adjustment restores the believer who sins to fellowship, enabling the believer to glorify God in the flesh. 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- C. The maturity adjustment is commanded and involves "growing in grace and knowledge" over an extended period of time (2 Peter 3:18).

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- IV. There are three stages or levels of spiritual growth as seen in the parable of the maturation of grain (Mark 4:26-29).
- A. Blade = spiritual infant.
 - B. Formed head = believer in early stage of growth.
 - C. Mature grain in the head = spiritual maturity.
- V. It is also seen in the three levels of human development: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (cp. 1 John 2:12-14).
- A. In this passage John is not just addressing three physical categories of males in the church; he is referring to three separate levels of spiritual growth (Elsewhere John calls all believers his little children. So John establishes a metaphorical use of children in 1 John).
 - B. Little children (verse 12): This refers to the first level of spiritual growth. (He is not writing to literal small children.) This category is composed mainly of new converts. One of the first things that new converts must be completely assured of is that their sins are forgiven. John uses the perfect tense to deal with their conversion and the forgiveness related to the cross.
 - C. Young men (νεανίσκος –NEANISKOS, young man, adolescent). This refers to the intermediate stage of growth in believers who are no longer spiritual infants but who have not yet reached spiritual maturity.
 - D. Fathers speaks of the mature man or woman (females are included in all three categories).
- VI. Some doctrine is only going to be assimilated by the mature Christian (Heb.5:11-14 cp. 2 Peter 3:16).
- VII. Essential ingredients in the attainment of maturity for the believer.
- A. Consistent intake of sound doctrine (face-to-face teaching) under an adjusted Pastor (Heb.10:25; 2 Pet.3:18).
 - B. Maintenance of the filling of the Holy Spirit versus domination by the OSN (Gal. 5:16ff).
 - C. The application of sound doctrine as there is no maturity adjustment apart from Divine good production (i.e. good works- Luk.8:14; Jn.15; Jam.2:14-26).
- VIII. The maturity adjustment does not demand sinless perfection (1 Kings 8:46; Prov.20:9; Eccl.7:20).
- A. However, this should not lead to rationalization or indifference to sinful activity on the part of a believer (1 John 2:1).
 - B. Mature believers adjust their mental attitude after they sin (Job.42:6).
- IX. Testing and the maturity adjustment, James1:2-4 "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 (cp. Col.1:24).
 - B. Passing tests develops the quality of patience (ὑπομονή - HUPOMONE = patience with circumstances).
 - C. Patience or endurance over the long haul eventuates in maturity.

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- D. A wide variety of testing and suffering in phase 2 awaits each believer (Phil. 1:29, 1 Peter 4:12-13 cp. Col. 1:24).
- E. Those who continue to endure under testing through the application of doctrine have an incredible reward (James 1:12).
- F. The alternative is reversionism, of which the Hebrews were in danger (Heb.10:32-39).
- X. 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. Elijah (2 Kings 2:8).
 - D. Abraham (Gen.17:1).
 - E. Hebrews 11 presents a roster of spiritually mature heroes and their exploits in the Angelic Conflict.
- XI. Some characteristics of the mature believer.
 - A. He is informed with respect to the realm of doctrine (Rom.15:14).
 - B. He has an abundance of divine good production (2 Tim.3:16-17 cp. Eph. 2:8-9).
 - C. There is a Sarah's daughter designation for women (1 Peter 3:1-6).
 - D. Separation from the negative and wicked (Psa. 1:1ff).
 - E. Places a higher premium on pleasing God than people (1 Thess. 2:3-6, Heb. 11:5).
 - F. Demonstrates control of the tongue (Jam.3:2).
 - G. Consistently obedient to God's commands (Gen.26:5, cp John 14:15).
- XII. Blessings associated with maturity adjustment (Psa.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; Job 42:10-17, Prov.28:10).
 - D. Those who make this adjustment are God's delight (Prov.11:20).
- XIII. Maturity is to be the objective of the ministry of the local church (Col. 1:28).

James Allen

5/25/06