



making disciples

Maturity

What advice would you give the 15 year old version of yourself? If you can't remember that far back (!), try advice you'd give yourself from 10 years ago.

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Welcome to the second week of our 'Making Disciples' series. The passion that we're looking at tonight is 'Maturity'. Remember, *Our Prayer is to See a Flood of Lifelong Disciples across the North Edge of Brisbane and Beyond*. The words *lifelong disciples* are carefully chosen to point to the fact that we're about growing faithful, persevering, maturing disciples, and not just about numbers of disciples. Quantity AND quality! And so we're going to look at what it means to be passionate about maturity.

The reality is that we've all grown in different ways in our journeys through life. The fact that we can look back at ourselves from years gone by and know that we've moved on and grown since then shows that we've matured, at least a little! Some of us graduated from school, got a job, moved out, learnt how to drive, had kids etc.

But what does maturity and progress look like as a Christian? And what do we do collectively as a church to grow lifelong followers of Jesus? That is the topic of our study today.

Maturity in Christ

The letter to the Colossians should rank as a favourite when it comes to learning about maturity. It would be a perfect book to read with a new Christian. Take a look at these key verses in the introduction of Colossians:

*⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **Col. 1:9-13***

Paul's desire for the Christians in Colossae is clearly spelt out in his prayers.

1. What is the basis or foundation for a life worthy of the Lord (v10)?

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2. What is the result of being filled with this knowledge?

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3. How active is God in this process?

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Knowledge and understanding is foundational to life as a disciple of Jesus. Paul's desire is that Christians would be filled with it! But how does one become filled with this knowledge?

Take a look at these verses and note down what you find:

Colossians 1:28-2:4

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Colossians 3:16

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There's no doubt that proclaiming Christ to each other is a big part of how you mature as a Christian. And it involves listening to teaching and singing. That means it involves each other! It's not only for pastors.

4. Where do you see teaching and proclaiming Christ happening around our church?

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Our lives and Maturity

The word will do its work in our lives as we have a steady diet of good bible teaching and come to it hungry to know God better through it. But it's not only about head knowledge. The word must change the way we live. Our attitudes and actions. Our hearts and our hands.

Split into smaller groups and take a look at these verses and note down what you learn about maturity in these areas of life:

Col. 3:1-4

Col. 3:5-14

Col. 3:15-17

Col. 3:18-25

Col. 4:2-6

Our Thinking	
Our character	
Our family and home life	
Our work life	
Our church life and relationships	
Our mission and evangelism	
Our prayer life	

You could summarise all of these things under 5 C's:

Conviction: The beliefs and truths about Jesus that undergird our faith - who he is and what he's done for us. Grounded in what we learn from God's word, the Bible.

Character: The ingrained habits, attitudes and motivations that shape who we are, and the relationships we have around us.

Community: Sense of belonging together in Christ for the purpose of teaching and encouragement.

Courage (in evangelism): Our outward orientation to the world and the desire and boldness to be ready to preach and promote the gospel.

Competency: Our service toward others. We want to be good stewards of our time and our talents, which ought to include growing in ability to serve competently.

The last three: Community, Courage and Competency will be addressed in more depth in following weeks as we look at Membership, Mission and Ministry. But focus on the first two today. Our hope is Paul's prayer: that we would be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:9). This comes as we hunger for God's word. Knowing the truth about Christ allows us to respond in lives that are worthy of the Lord.

Our Growth Groups and Maturity

We call these weeknight gatherings Growth Groups because we want to be encouraging each other to grow and mature in these areas of our lives. We want our Growth Groups to be places where we can share our weakness, frailties, joys and accomplishments and encourage each other to grow as followers of Jesus.

On that note, this year we've developed a worksheet that your group will discuss over the term. The goal is to take the worksheet away and do some thinking and reflection of your own on those 5 "C" areas. Then discuss it with your Growth Group leader and come up with a plan to grow in these areas. Intentionality and planning can be half the battle to growing in Christ! If you feel comfortable, you could share some of what you're hoping to grow in this year with the group.

Our Sunday Gathering and Maturity

On Sundays, we dedicate a large chunk of time toward hearing a Bible talk. Reflecting on Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly",

5. How can you get the most out of each Sunday's teaching moment?

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6. How can you help teach others on Sundays?

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Getting clear on Maturity

At Christ Central, we generally work systematically through the Bible, working through a book at a time, in order to allow God to set the agenda of our lives. We don't want to hand select verses or only teach topics as this can result in twisting God's word to suit ourselves or gravitating toward our own hobby horses. Every section of Scripture is set within a context of a book. And every book is set within the context of the unfolding story of God's redemption of the world, which finds its fulfilment in Christ.

On the other hand, sometimes maturity means knowing how to live radical, Christlike lives in the world we live in. And that means being able to see what the whole Bible says about a particular topic. And that's where our Crosstalks come in. Sometimes topics aren't directly addressed by Scripture so we need to do some thinking about how to live based on what we do know from Scripture. A good example of this was when we looked at Gender and Sexuality where we unpacked what the Bible has to say about this and applied it to the current debates about gender dysphoria and homosexuality. This year, we're hoping to look at topics like Entertainment, Refugees and the marginalised, Spiritual Affections and life as a physical being.

7. What topics do you think Christians need to be equipped on in our current age?

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Our first Crosstalk will be on Sunday night 29 April.

Prayer

Spend some time praying for each other, giving thanks for how God has grown each other so far and praying that 2018 would be a year in which we would grow together. You might also like to take a moment to give thanks for those who teach and lead our church as well as to pray that your Growth Group would be one where you spur each other in to maturity in Christ.

Maturity Teams

As a church we want you to be a partner in the ministry of making disciples and this will involve serving in teams. These teams will serve to champion the various 'M' passions across our church, including at a new congregation planned for later in the year. At the end of this 5 week series, we want to get people to indicate the teams they want to be involved in. In the area of Maturity, see opposite for the various teams we wish to grow.

Matt Fong is heading up Maturity at Christ Central. But in the meantime, if you'd like more information you can contact Matt, **0413 067 702** or **matt@christcentral.org.au**



Maturity Pulse Check

Over these 5 weeks we're taking the opportunity to take stock and gauge how we're going at growing disciples of Jesus. Of course it's only God who brings the growth, but He uses the means of our leadership, our efforts, resources and prayer. If we're going to be more effective for God in making disciples we believe it will be healthy to do some honest assessment and then act on it! In fact we'd like to do this Pulse Check every year from now on at Christ Central. If you haven't yet filled out the Maturity Pulse Check, take time tonight to fill it out. You'll find it here **christcentral.org.au/pulse**



Meet Ben, Loving God's word

I gave my life to Christ at a youth outreach. Even though I have always believed the gospel and never looked back, at some point along the way I picked up this idea that my standing with God was sort of based on my outward devotion. Prayer, Bible reading, moral cleanliness were signs of a good Christian and therefore someone who was "righter" with God. The problem was I had no drive or desire to do those things. I've experienced isolated times of passion for God, but not consistently. I enjoyed reading Christian stuff even theology, but really only on an intellectual level. Since coming to Christ Central, I've experienced an awakening I suppose. I am so much more motivated by a love for God, his Word and his people. Instead of doing Christian stuff to look good, now I just want too because I love it.