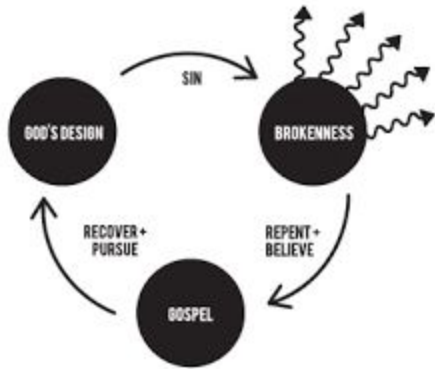


Sermon as Prepared for Barrett Berry, Lead Pastor
Empowered Living Church
September 8, 2019
Series: Life on Mission
So You Think You're Mature

BIG IDEA: Our world does not simply need people who know more facts about God, but rather people who are falling deeper in love with who God is.

Hebrews 5:11-14 NIV ~ 11 *We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

CONTEXT: There is a thing in life called doing adult. After years of growing up living in our parents' home, eating dinners prepared by our dads, and listening to the wisdom of our moms each time we come home after the street lights came on, we find ourselves living in with a stranger now connected to us via wedding vows. Or perhaps you are no longer receiving that weekly stipend for taking out the trash, cutting the grass, and helping Big Momma carry her grocery bags in the house. And, now you find yourself working a job you can't quit, because you need the funds to pay the light bill, new school clothes, and car note. We call this new way of life doing adult or living mature lives. But, are we actually living mature lives?



LESSON #1: THE SUPREMACY OF GOD - God is supreme.

Colossians 1:15-18 (NIV) ~ 15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. **17** He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

If we believe that God is supreme, then we are in a good position to mature spiritually. When we trust with all sincerity that God is King and that is not only King, but He is King of Kings, Lord of Lords and that He is able to do what He says He will do.

Isaiah 55:8-11 (NIV) ~ 8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. **9** “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. **10** As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, **11** so is my word

that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

As we seek to mature, we must consider the supremacy of God and be drawn to reflect upon the attributes that make Him supreme.

Queen Esther came to the understanding of God's supremacy once she arrived at the point that her people needed her to save their lives from the destruction of the king of her country. When she finally appreciated God's omnipotence she committed to going before the king and declared with all courage, If I perish, I perish!

Have you matured in your understanding of God that you will put yourself in uncomfortable situations for your family, your friends, your church, and more importantly, your God and say with all maturity, If I perish, I perish?

LESSON #2: THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD - God is sovereign.

Romans 8:28 (NIV) ~ 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Walking through the messiness of mission with the right perspective can act as a breeding ground for spiritual maturity. At times we review our lives and feel like we are not at the stage of life we envisioned. Your family is not the one you envisioned when you sat at your parents' dinner table. Your business is not where you thought it would be after years of working long, late, and hard hours. When you look at your spouse you think to yourself, this is not the person I married. It is in these moments, if we are faithful, that we can trust we are right where we are supposed to be.

James 1:2-4 (NIV) ~ 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **4** Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Jonathan McReynolds song "God is Good."

May your struggles keep you near the cross

And may your troubles show that you need God

And may your battles end the way they should

And may your bad days prove that God is good

And may your whole life prove that God is good

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f9uGdJYPeA&list=PLssZy5BJs9Bcn03tXwql-Z1k61iB3t1jN&index=10>

LESSON #3: THE LOVE OF GOD - God is love.

John 3:16 (NIV) ~ 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

At some point in our lives we have heard this scripture. We have heard so many times, we often take it for granted and disregarded the victory in the statement. The passage continues . . .

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

God is love. God loved us sooo much that he not only sent his one and only Son into the earth to prove His love for us, but he sent Hlm to save us when He knew were going to one day live, love, and enjoy sin.

As Jesus continues to transform our hearts and as we submit our sinful nature to the Holy Spirit's work, spiritual immaturity will be consistently present. Our maturity develops by:

- Consistently reading and meditating on scriptures
- Regularly spending time with God in prayer
- and, serving the poor, the marginalized, the despised, and the imprisoned.

CONCLUSION: TRUE BELIEVERS BEAR MUCH FRUIT

Galatians 5:22-25 (NIV) ~ **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Spiritual maturity is achieved when we start displaying the fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives. When we walk alongside God, chasing after God, and abiding with His Spirit we will give forth evidence of His presence in our lives with the fruit we manifest. That is, love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

John 5:8 (NIV) ~ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

As believers, as true believers, we are to glorify God by bearing much fruit and showing ourselves to be His true disciples. If we live lives built on Spiritual fruit we will also bear physical fruit in the form of people giving their lives to Christ, by leading people to Jesus, and discipling people into becoming saved.

Colossians 1:19-20 ~ 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Hebrews 6:1-3 (NIV) ~ 6 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, **2** instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. **3** And God permitting, we will do so.

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