

BECOMING MATURE IN CHRIST

The Keys of Spiritual Development

How Scripture Brings Maturity

2 Timothy 3: 16

Intro: In the last few messages we have focused on the nature and profitability of the Bible. In this study we will direct attention to how the Bible is used by God in the process of bringing us to spiritual maturity. There are three words and a phrase that explain this process to us:

- I. Teaching (Doctrine): That which is taught, the subject matter of the course of instruction.
 - A. The Bible covers many topics. Peter explains (2 Pet 1:3) that through the experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ we have everything we need pertaining to life and godliness. Our statement of faith proclaims (regarding Scripture) *it is our final authority for all faith and life.*
 - B. ALL OF LIFE: What kinds of things may be learned through studying the Bible?
 1. Values, self image, wisdom, understanding human nature
 2. Romance, marriage, family, parenting, covenant
 3. Business, partnerships, employees and employers, inventory management, finance
 4. Neighbors, community, national life, law enforcement, restitution
 5. Dealing with depression, oppression, poor health, failure, dying, death, grief
 - C. ALL OF FAITH: What kinds of things may be learned through studying the Bible?
 1. Creation, human origin, purpose, nature of life and value
 2. Sin, sin nature, lostness of humanity, consequences of sin and separation from God
 3. Salvation, forgiveness, redemption, restoration, eternal life and eternal judgment
 4. Person and nature of God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, angels, demons, the devil
 5. Human history and the end of human history, world judgment, heaven and hell
- II. Reproof (Conviction): The personal work of the Holy Spirit in our life through the Word.
 - A. Jesus says in his last lengthy instruction that the ministry of the Holy Spirit will be to convict of sin, righteousness, & judgment (John 16:8). James explains that looking into the Word is like looking into a mirror and seeing what we are really like (James 1:23-25).
 - B. The goal of Scripture is not merely to educate us, but to transform us. It is a living Word empowered by the Holy Spirit (Heb 4:12-13) to discern even our very motives and bring us to genuine repentance before God.
- III. Correction (Restoration): Once convicted, the Bible explains the right attitudes & behavior.
 - A. The goal of Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is not to merely educate us, but to transform us into people who think and act differently, godly, in Christ Jesus.
 - B. The Bible not only explains what is wrong with us, corporately and individually, but what godly behavior looks like instead. By way of contrast it brings correction.
- IV. Training in Righteousness: Through this process the Bible develops Christ-like behavior.
 - A. In some ways this is an endless cycle, but it is not static (just going around in circles) for the person in pursuit of God; it is an upward spiral growing every smaller and higher, like a road up a mountain, reaching up to God.
 - B. For the process to continue, we must be in the Word continuously always inviting the Holy Spirit to teach us and relying on Him to empower us toward God.

Conc: The Bible is not a static book, a book you can read like a novel and put on the shelf. It is a guide in the hands of the Holy Spirit to teach us all through life how to live, what to do, and even how to die. It is able to speak to us in every kind of situation, bringing beauty out of ashes.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
(2Ti 3:16-17 NAU)

...seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.
(2Pe 1:3 NAU)

"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;
(Joh 16:8 NAU)

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.
(Jam 1:23-25 NAU)

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
(Heb 4:12-13 NAU)

