



Just Grow Up!

James - A Manual for Maturity

Week 1—Developing Unshakeable Faith

1. Pastor Rick gave us two simple statements that define whether or not you grow spiritually, what were they? In what way is being spiritually healthy the same as being physically healthy? In what way are they not the same?
2. Who was James? Why is it significant that he believed Jesus was God, the Messiah?
3. What is the character trait of a mature Christian that we see in chapter one? Read 1:2-4. James says we should “consider it pure joy” when we go through trials. Does this mean I have to be happy when I am in a trial? What is the difference between happiness and joy? According to these verses, why should I consider trials a joy? What do you think perseverance has to do with spiritual maturity?
4. Read 2:1-9. According to Pastor Rick, what four characteristics of an immature person do we see in this passage? Have you ever had another Christian treat you this way? What would happen if a Christian treated unbelievers this way? In this passage, what is the characteristic of a mature Christian?
5. Read 3:1-12. What is the third characteristic of a mature person found in this passage? What physical things does this passage compare our tongue to? Discuss how the tongue is like each of these. Which one best describes how you use your tongue? Share a time when what someone said to you discouraged or devastated you, then share a time when what someone said encouraged you and put you on cloud nine. Why do you think what people say to us has such an impact?
6. Read 4:1-3. What is the fourth characteristic of a mature person? What does this passage say is the reason that you have fights with other people? Honestly, if someone were to describe you, would they say you are a peacemaker or a fighter? If I am a person who is always getting into verbal (never any reason for a physical fight) fights with people, what issue do I have?

ANSWERS

1. The two statements Pastor Rick said are the measure of your spiritual maturity are: “Will I do what I know” and “Will I live what I say I believe”. Being spiritually healthy is like being physically healthy in that there are certain things you have to do habitually to be healthy. You have to eat, you have to exercise, you have to avoid unhealthy habits. There are spiritual habits you must practice to grow spiritually. You might want to ask your members what these habits are: 1. Be in God’s Word daily (eating); 2. Pray constantly; 3. Apply God’s Word to your life (exercise); 4. Give sacrificially of your time and treasure. The way they are not alike is that once you were born, physical growth was automatic, you did not have to think about it. Spiritual growth is a choice, it does not happen automatically.
2. James, the author of the book, was Jesus’ brother, he grew up with Jesus. He did not believe in Jesus as God until after the resurrection. The fact that his own brother believed he was God is a strong argument that he was God because James would have known him intimately. If you can convince your family members you are God, that is quite the achievement.
3. The first character trait of a mature Christian is that they can continue to have a positive attitude even when life is hard. Joy and happiness are not the same thing. Happiness is an emotional response to whatever circumstances are occurring in your life. Good things happen, we are happy. Bad things happen, we are unhappy. Joy is a choice you can make regardless of your circumstances. Joy is the confidence that no matter how bad things might be, everything will be okay at the end because God will use even the bad things to cause us to grow spiritually and it will be for our best. Trials should cause joy because the result is that I will learn perseverance from the trials. You have to be able to persevere if you are going to grow spiritually because you need to learn to never give up even when things get difficult in life.
4. The four characteristics of an immature person from this passage are: A. Showing favoritism to someone for whatever reason; B. Judging other people based on outward appearance; C. Insulting people who are different from you; and D. Exploiting other people in order to gain something from them for yourself. It is when immature Christians treat unbelievers this way that Christians get the name of “hypocrite”. Unbelievers reject Christianity and God because of the way immature Christians act. The characteristic of a mature person in this passage is that we treat others with love and respect.
5. The third characteristic is that a mature Christian has mastered his mouth, he can control the words that come out of his mouth. Our tongue is compared to: A. A bit in a horse’s mouth B. The rudder on a ship C. A spark that starts a fire and D. A fire that destroys everything it comes into contact with. What people say has such a dramatic impact on us because we all want to be liked and thought well of. Someone once said that the words we use are the greatest magic we have, they have the power to heal or destroy.
6. The fourth characteristic is that a mature Christian is a peacemaker. According to this passage the reason we have fights with people is that they will not give us what we want: it is selfishness that is the cause of all fights. We want what we want and when we do not get it we fight in order to get it. If I am always getting into verbal, or physical, altercations with people, it is because I am selfish. If you argue that you are not selfish, it is because you do not want people to think you are.