



Building a Life of Maturity
September 4-5, 2021

Philemon – Paul wrote this to a slave owner named Philemon, about his slave Onesimus who had escaped and crossed Paul’s path while he was in Rome. Paul led Onesimus to faith in Christ, then advocated for him to Philemon, asking him to forgive his wayward friend and employee. This book shows how intensely personal the Bible is.

Hebrews – the unknown author of Hebrews does nothing to shake our confidence in the authority of its powerful message that is clearly from God. Hebrews lays out the priesthood of Jesus proving he is both divine God and completely human. Jesus became the greatest of all the Priests and the only sacrifice for our sins. This book teaches us only one person deserves the primary place in our lives.

James – James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote this amazingly practical book. James did not believe Jesus was the Savior while Jesus was alive. But after his resurrection, James not only believed Jesus was the Savior, but became a great Apostle and the church leader of the church in Jerusalem. This is the New Testament book of wisdom, like Proverbs in the Old Testament. James teaches every believer that God wants us to move from infancy to maturity, which won’t be fully complete until we get to heaven.

Character that leads to maturity:

1 **Forgives.**

Philemon 1:10-12, 17-18 (NLT)

I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison. Onesimus hasn’t been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart... So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me.

Why? Because we are completely forgiven by God through Christ.

Hebrews 10:17-18 (NLT)

“Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

2 **Chooses to grow in times of trouble.**

James 1:2-4 (NLT)

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

3 **Loves everybody without prejudice.**

James 2:3-5, 8-9 (NLT)

If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, “You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor”—well, doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives? Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn’t God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren’t they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? ... Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.

Hebrews 12:14a (NIV)

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone...

4 **Shows faith by obeying what God is asking me to do right now.**

Hebrews 11:2, 7 (NLT, TPT)

Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation... Faith opened Noah’s heart to receive revelation and warnings from God about what was coming, even things that had never been seen. But he stepped out in reverent obedience to God and built an ark that would save him and his family. By his faith the world was condemned, but Noah received God’s gift of righteousness that comes by believing.

Hebrews 11:8 (TPT)

Faith motivated Abraham to obey God’s call and leave the familiar to discover the territory he was destined to inherit from God. So he left with only a promise and without even knowing ahead of time where he was going, Abraham stepped out in faith.

James 2:21-22 (NLT)

Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.

5

Measures every word carefully.

Hebrews 10:24 (NLT)

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

James 3:2-6 (TPT, NLT)

We all fail in many areas, but especially with our words. Yet if we're able to bridle the words we say we are powerful enough to control ourselves in every way, and that means our character is mature and fully developed. Horses have bits and bridles in their mouths so that we can control and guide their large body. And the same with mighty ships, though they are massive and driven by fierce winds, yet they are steered by a tiny rudder at the direction of the person at the helm. And so the tongue is a small part of the body yet it carries great power! Just think of how a small flame can set a huge forest ablaze. And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.

6

Fights selfish desires by committing to trust God's wisdom.

James 4:1-3 (TPT)

What is the cause of your conflicts and quarrels with each other? Doesn't the battle begin inside of you as you fight to have your own way and fulfill your own desires? You jealously want what others have so you begin to see yourself as better than others. You scheme with envy and harm others to selfishly obtain what you crave—that's why you quarrel and fight. And all the time you don't obtain what you want because you won't ask God for it! And if you ask, you won't receive it for you're asking with corrupt motives, seeking only to fulfill your own selfish desires.

James 1:5-8 (NLT)

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

7

Points others to God's saving grace.

James 5:20 (NLT)

... you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

Hebrews 10:10-12 (NLT)

For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand.

Memory Verse for September, 2021**1 Corinthians 9:22 (NIV)**

To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.



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