

Maturity In Christ

"Brethren, be not children in your understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Corinthians 14:20). Paul's admonition proceeds his discussion of the necessity of various spiritual gifts. They were not all to seek the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues. They needed to be mature in order to understand the role God had given to all of His miraculous gifts. Only through maturity would they realize that God purposed all spiritual gifts for the ultimate edification of the body of Christ.

Maturity is still sorely needed today. Many problems arise in congregations because of a lack of maturity. Some problems arise because of a lack of doctrinal maturity. Some brethren simply do not know the scriptures and apostasy is the result. The struggles over institutionalism or divorce and remarriage illustrate this point. On the other hand, some problems arise because of a lack of mental maturity. Some brethren get their feelings hurt or some matter does not go their way so they pull away from everyone else and refuse to take any further part in the work of the church.

Both types of immaturity are wrong. Those who are mature are so because they have their senses trained through long use and habit of study to discern between right doctrine and erroneous doctrine (Hebrews 5:14). They will not be led astray by a "strong delusion" delivered by a well-known or eloquent preacher (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

Jesus said concerning mental immaturity, *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"* (Matthew 18:15-17). Clearly the burden is upon those who have a difficulty with others to resolve the problem. This is often not done primarily because the ones who have the problem know they are being childish in the first place! The only way for the church to grow is to have members who are mature both in doctrine and in mind.

Kyle Campbell