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## Maturing in Christ

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### **Memorization Verse: *Romans 12:2***

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”**

Today’s world is characterized and captivated by many inventions and technologies which meet people’s needs quickly and easily: fast foods, computers, smartphones, a host of wireless devices, cloud storage, and an enormous amount of information in general at our fingertips. Christians must remember, however, that there is no such thing as “instant maturity” in the Christian experience. Being a Christian begins a lifelong adventure of knowing God better and loving Him more.

### **MOVING TOWARD MATURITY**

1. You took your first step toward spiritual growth and maturity when you put your faith in Christ. List here the important points of the gospel message, with Scriptural references.

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2. Read Ephesians 4:11-16.
  - a. What is God’s desire for you? (v. 13,15)

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- b. What are some characteristics of immature Christians (“children”)? v.14

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3. Contrast man’s old nature with the Christian’s new nature. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

<b>OLD NATURE</b>	<b>NEW NATURE</b>

4. Consider 2 Corinthians 3:18.  
 a. Into whose image are you being changed?

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- b. Who brings about this change?

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- c. Are you completely changed all at once?

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5. What do the following verses in Romans tell you about your relationship to Christ?

- a. What has already happened to you? (Romans 5:8-9)

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- b. What should you be doing now? (Romans 6:19)

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- c. What can you expect in the future? (Romans 8:16-18)

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**These three aspects (Biblical doctrines or teachings) of salvation in Christ are helpful in understanding God’s plan for believers:**

Justification	Past tense – You are saved from the PENALTY of sin.	My <i>position</i> is in Christ. I am legally declared RIGHTEOUS (right before God).
Sanctification	Present tense – I am being saved from the POWER of sin.	My daily <i>practice</i> and <i>condition</i> is to become more like Christ.
Glorification	Future tense – I will one day in heaven be saved from the PRESENCE of sin.	My <i>expectation</i> is to like Christ.

6. Think carefully about Colossians 3:2-4. How do these verses relate to the preceding chart?

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7. Examine Colossians 2:6-7. How did you begin your life in Christ?

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How should you continue to grow?

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8. Consider Romans 5:1-5. Because of your justification by faith in Christ, what practical benefits are yours to experience?

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9. Read Ephesians 1 and list several things which you have "in Christ."

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10. An interesting parallel exists between our physical life and our spiritual life. What can you learn about this parallel from the following references?

1 Thessalonians 1:11 –

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1 Timothy 4:8 –

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Hebrews 5:13-14 –

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1 Peter 2: 2-3 –

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What other illustrations of this parallel do you know?

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11. What things listed in Romans 5:17 can you receive?

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What will this enable you to do?

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12. Meditate on Romans 6:11-13.

a. What should you count as true about yourself? (v.11)

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b. What should be your present relationship to sin? (v.18)

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c. What must you NOT allow? (v.13)

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d. What action should you take? (v.13)

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e. How would you explain the truth of Romans 6:5-6?

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13. God intends for you to reign in life (Romans 5:17), not for sin to reign in your life (Romans 6:13).  
What application do these verses suggest for your life?

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14. Paul stated that Christians are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), but your relationship to God does not end there.

a. According to Ephesians 2:10, what are you?

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b. Is God still working in you? \_\_\_\_\_

c. What is God doing? (Philippians 1:6) \_\_\_\_\_

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**As you reflect on your life, be thankful for all that God is doing in you. Conflicts in your life should encourage you because they indicate that God is still working in you, changing you to be like Christ. Take a moment to express your gratitude to God for what he has done, is doing, and will do for you.**

15. What guidelines for your life as a Christian do you see in these verses:  
Romans 8:4:

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2 Corinthians 5:7:

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Ephesians 5:2:

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1 John 2:6:

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16. Using 1 John 1:6-10, contrast those who walk in fellowship with God and those who do not.

PEOPLE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD	PEOPLE NOT IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

17. What attitude should a mature Christian possess?  
Philippians 3:13-15

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18. Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. While awaiting eternity with Christ, what should Christians be doing?

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What fact can motivate you to do this?

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19. What are some areas in which you can experience spiritual growth?  
2 Peter 3:18

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20. Consider 2 Timothy 4:7-8. What statement was Paul able to make concerning his earthly walk with Christ.

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What did Paul expectantly await in the future?

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**Thoughts to remember:**

- God intends Christians to mature and become like Jesus Christ. God has saved Christians from the penalty of sin. They are presently engaged in a conflict with sin, but can anticipate a sinless future with Christ.
- Faith in Jesus Christ marks the beginning of Christian growth. The believer has God's resources available to him/her to help with daily growth.
- Spiritual growth is similar to physical growth. It takes time as God works in the believer's life. Christians should reign in life, recognizing that God is bringing to fulfillment the work he began in them.
- Growing in Christ is similar to walking. Led by the Spirit, Christians are to walk in faith and love and in fellowship with Christ.
- A mature Christian is one who continues to follow Christ, abounding in His work and experiencing His grace and love. God does not forget the work of the believer and will one day reward him.