

13 Signs of the Spiritually Mature Christian

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1. Understands the difference between right and wrong and chooses what is right.

The Bible is a manual for what is right and wrong. Learning God's instructions for recognizing the difference between wrong and right and using it to navigate life is of key importance. As a spiritually mature Christian, we are to know the difference between right and wrong and choose what is right.

So, whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. – James 4:17(ESV)

2. Is Convicted by God's Word to Press On

As we learn more of God's Word and walk in closer fellowship with Him, we begin to develop our beliefs into convictions. Our lives become controlled by our convictions. As the truth of God's Word begins to rest in our Hearts, fill our minds and shape our thoughts, it will produce principles or convictions that we don't want to violate. This is what sanctification is about—being inwardly compelled to obedience.

The Apostle Paul suffered greatly, in many ways, during his ministry—imprisonment, beatings, shipwrecks, and a numerous unfounded accusation from false teachers.

In 2 Corinthians 4, he describes the difficulties that he faced and that we believers may face in our lifetimes:

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. – 2 Corinthians 4:8-11 (ESV)

Every day he faced the reality that he could be killed. In each town he visited to share the Good News, he was persecuted, offended others, thrown out of synagogues and into prison. His whole life was a constant cycle of opposition and oppression.

What made him continue despite the hardship he faced? Quite simple:

In verse 13, he quotes the Psalms, saying, ““I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak.” That is conviction. That conviction shaped Paul's life and ministry. Earlier in 2 Corinthians 1:12, he stated:

For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. – 2 Corinthians 1:12 (ESV)

In Acts 23:1, he says, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” and in Acts 24:16, he says this: “So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.”

Paul’s firm convictions, which are rooted in Scripture, helped him to live a righteous life, with a clear conscience. Are you living your life with a clear conscience with words and behaviors rooted in the truth of Scripture?

3. Is not swayed by false teaching

We are to be so grounded in the truth of God’s word, that we recognize falsehood – what is of God and what is not. Society bombards us with messages to put ourselves first, to listen to this one or that one, but the only teaching we are to cling to as truth is God’s.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. – John 4:1(ESV)

4. Is rooted in love

Our words and actions should demonstrate love to other believers and all of mankind. We are to love as He first loved us. We don’t have to agree with them, we don’t even have to *like* them, but we do have to love them.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. - John 13:35 (ESV)

5. Serves the church

A Christian cannot grow to spiritual maturity without connection and fellowship with other believers. A spiritually mature Christian needs to find where she can serve and find encouragement.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. – Peter 4:10-11

6. Lives with an eternal perspective

The spiritually mature Christian lives with the knowledge that our time on earth is temporary. What is important is not the trials of the day, but the hope of eternal life.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. – Colossians 3:2)

7.Controls tongue

It's hard to always say the right thing at the right time and often, we react before thinking or praying about our response. A spiritually mature Christian speaks with wisdom and knowledge of God and uses words that build up rather than tear down. Most of us can agree how tough this is to do. Yes, we will mess up, that is why we have to continually work toward spiritual maturity.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. – Ephesians 4:29 (ESV)

8.Reflects God's character to the world

When people see you and your words and actions, do they see Jesus? A spiritually mature Christian strives to display God in her words and deeds.

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God...- Ephesians 5:1-2

9.Can see spiritual growth in themselves and don't measure themselves on the highs and lows of life and their faith.

We all have bad days and don't always honor and please God in our words and actions. Just like a football team cannot measure themselves by their worst game or their last fumble or even their best game or touchdown, we cannot measure our spiritual growth by one good day or difficult period in our lives. Spiritual maturity is ever growing, ever evolving.

... so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; – Colossians 1:10 (ESV)

10.Has peace that surpasses all understanding.

Despite bad days, difficult times and stressful moments, a spiritual mature Christian knows that God is in control and has peace that does not make sense to those who are not in fellowship with God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:7 (ESV)

11. Employs regular spiritual disciplines

To be spiritually mature, we need to regularly employ spiritual disciplines including meditation, Bible study, prayer, solitude, worship, community and fellowship, confession,

and fasting. These are non-negotiable practices for spiritual maturity. Please don't misunderstand me. You don't have to do all of these each day and check them off of your to-do list. Continued intimacy with God depends on these disciplines and we are to strive to this intimacy with God. Make them a regular part of your life and your maturity in Christ will grow. People who struggle with consistency in their walk with God then to be the same people that place everything before God – often in the mask of “busyness”.

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness.

– 1 Timothy 4:7 (ESV)

The discipline of putting the truth constantly at the forefront of our minds is crucial.

If we are not, yet, spiritually mature, we must read everything we can that faithfully and accurately explains the Word of God to us. We need to study the Bible and memorize Scripture; we must read commentaries from biblical scholars, listen to sermons from faithful expositors, and read the biographies of godly saints whose lives display the kind of maturity we want to see in our own lives. We must soak our minds in the Scriptures, fueling the Spirit's sanctifying work.

While it may seem simple, it's a step that many believers fail to take. They don't understand why they continue to face and give in to the same temptations and why their love walk with the Lord seems distant. They don't understand that by not growing in the Word of God, they are slowing their spiritual growth or treading water in the same place.

12. Has a Thirst for God's Word

The love of God's Word is a consistent theme throughout the Bible, but particularly in the Psalms. Psalm 119 is beautiful account of the psalmist's love for the truth and his delight in the law. But we also see an exhortation of his love for Scripture in Psalm 19.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul.
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple.
the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart.
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes.
the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever.
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold.
sweeter also than honey

and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them is your servant warned.
in keeping them there is great reward. –
Psalm 19:7-11 (ESV)

David says, in Psalm 19 that God's Word is "more to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb" (verse 10).

As we expose ourselves to the Word, we begin to understand what it says. It begins to form our convictions, and then it becomes our sincere affection and desire to follow God's commands. We begin to thirst and hunger for the Word of God. Peter described it this way:

"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation." – 1 Peter 2:2 (ESV)

To be spiritually mature and to grow in faith only comes when we know the Word, when it shapes our convictions, and when we learn to long for the sustenance it alone can provide.

13.Serves the poor and others in need.

A spiritually mature Christian looks for ways to serve others in word and deed.

You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land' – Deuteronomy 15:10-11(ESV)