

MATURITY & GROWTH

CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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Reference from:

**Hearing of Faith Bible Institute
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BOOK EIGHT

Maturity and Growth

**COMPLETE AND RETURN TO
CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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LESSON 1

. . . WHERE ARE YOU?

WHERE ARE YOU?

Genesis 3:9, And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "WHERE ART THOU?"

The Bible presents us some soul searching and challenging questions.

John, chapter 21, Jesus asks Peter 3 times, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

Matthew, chapter 16, Jesus ask Peter, ". . . whom say ye that I am."

Ezekiel 37:3, the Lord ask Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

1 King 19:9 and in verse, 13, the Lord asks Elijah, "What doest thou here, Elijah."

Genesis 21:17, the Lord speaking to Hagar asks, "What aileth thee, Hagar."

All of these questions have the purpose stimulating us into action, into challenging us to move ahead with purpose, to do some soul searching.

*Perhaps though, **the most profound question asked in the Bible is found in Genesis, chapter 3, where we find Adam and Eve after they had eaten the forbidden fruit, hiding from God in the Garden. In verse 9 it says:***

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "WHERE ART THOU?"

Now God was not asking Adam where he and Eve were because he could not find them or because He did not know where they were. But the Lord asked the questions so that Adam might know where he was in His relationship with His Lord, where he was spiritually.

God is asking you, "**WHERE ARE YOU?**" "Where are you in your relationship and walk with the Lord?" The Lord is asking that you do some **earnest** and **honest** soul searching. He is challenging you to quit playing church and get serious about the work He has for you.

Why? **Why is this soul searching needed?** Why do you need to get serious with the Lord? The simple answer is that **Jesus is Coming.**

The Apostle Paul in Romans 13:11 puts it this way:

And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Knowing the time. Is there any doubt that we are in the last times? All the signs,

- signs concerning world politics;
- signs in the weather;

- **signs in the society of men (the moral decay).**

All of these signs are indicating that the time is at hand!! Jesus is coming SOON!!

Because we know the time, Paul says, "it is high time to awake out of sleep."

Matthew, chapter 25, verse 5, speaking of the 10 virgins in the parable of the 10 virgins, IS A PICTURE OF THE BODY OF BELIEVERS TODAY.

"While the bridegroom tarried, THEY ALL slumbered and slept."

"THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT" The body of believers today is asleep and the call of the Lord is going out "To awake out of sleep" and do some soul searching for the answer to the question of the Lord to Adam. "WHERE ART THOU?"

Where are you in your relationship with the Lord - in your spiritual walk?

Paul continues in Romans 13:11 saying it is important to wake up because **"now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."**

SALVATION here is not speaking of eternal salvation, but rather the salvation which takes place at the time of the Rapture of the overcomers before the tribulation or midway through the tribulation for the carnal believer.

It is the salvation, or the changing of this corruptible, mortal physical body into one that is incorruptible and immortal.

IT IS NEARER THAT WHEN WE RECEIVED JESUS. In fact it is right at the door. Amen!!!

"Where are you?" are you pressing on in your spiritual walk, reaching forth for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The prize is being a part of the company of overcomers when the Lord returns for His bride before the Tribulation.

Or, are you at a place of complacency that is self-satisfied with where you are and what you have and are accomplishing. Having all your ducks in line. If so you need to be reminded that **Paul says,**

Philippians 3:12, " Not as though I had already attained (achieved that status) and again in 3:13, "Brethern, I count not myself to have apprehended..."

Where are you the Lord is asking, IN YOUR:

- **spiritual life**, on a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your spiritual life, that is, your life being a reflection of Jesus would be a 10; your life a reflection of the world being a 1.
- **soul life**, how would you rate your soul life, especially your emotional life - under control being 10; emotionally unstable being 1;
- **physical life** how would you rate your physical life, the lusts of the flesh and lusts of the eyes under control being 10; the lusts of the flesh and lusts of the eyes out of control being 1.

- **relationship with Jesus** - on a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your relationship with Jesus - absolutely, totally, head over heels, breathtakingly in love with Jesus being 10; being in the company of the 5 foolish virgins who did not have a personal intimate relationship with Jesus being 1.

1. WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE?

In-order to help us answer this first question "where are we in our spiritual life on a scale of 1 to 10?" objectively and honestly we want to see from the Bible, 1st of all, the characteristics of the carnal believer and then 2nd, the characteristics of the spiritual believer.

Paul sets up this comparison of spiritual and carnal believer.

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CARNAL BELIEVERS

1 Corinthians 3:3, For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?
Hebrews 5:11-13, Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Luke 21:34, overcharged (*burdened down*) with . . . cares of this life

From these Scriptures we see that the characteristics of a carnal believer are:

- **envy (jealousy);**
- **strife (quarreling);**
- **divisions (standing apart from others);**
- **dull of (spiritual) hearing (of understanding spiritual truths); and**
- **lacks skill in applying God's Word to his life and conduct.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL BELIEVERS

2 Peter 1:5-7 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

2 Peter 1:5-7 not only sets forth the characteristics of the spiritual believer but is also the **gauge/ measuring rod** by which one determines where he is in his spiritual life.

A spiritual person is one who is giving diligence to his spiritual maturing by adding to his faith:

- **virtue or integrity** - He is a person whose life both in public and in private is one of honesty, sincerity and truth.

Rom 13:13, Let us walk honestly, as in the day;

1 Corinthians 5:8, . . . keep the feast . . .with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.

- **to virtue he adds knowledge** - He is a student of the Word, growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:15, Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge

Proverbs 29:18, Where there is no vision (divine revelation), the people perish:

- **to knowledge he adds temperance or self-control** - He is person who in times of temptation has learned to say:

Luke 22:42, Father . . . not my will but thine be done.

Galatians 5:16, *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

- **to temperance he adds patience** - He is a person who perseveres in times of trials.

James 1:4, (letting) patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

2 Cor. 5:7, For we walk by faith, not by sight:

- **to patience he adds godliness** - He is a person who is becoming more God like in his life, he doing what is right (good).

Hebrews 5:14, . . . those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- **to godliness he adds brotherly kindness** - He is a person who in submission and humility desires to be of help and service to his brothers and sisters in the church, full of compassion and forgiveness for those who wrong him.

Ephesians 4:32, And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

1 Peter 5:5, . . . all be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

- **to brotherly kindness he adds charity** - He is a person who gives his love unselfishly and self-denyingly expecting nothing in return.

Ephesians 5:1-2, Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Now taking into consideration the distinction between what the Bible says about a carnal believer and spiritual believer, ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10 "WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE"?

2. WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR SOUL LIFE?

In respect to our soul life, let us keep in mind that we are a 3-fold being, having a having a spirit, soul and body. And since we are a 3-fold being, **salvation is likewise 3-fold**. **Salvation accomplished**, this refers to the eternal salvation received when you were born again; **salvation which is the process of be accomplished (progressive salvation)** - this refers to the salvation of your soul; and **salvation yet to come** or the salvation of your body which will take place when Jesus returns for us.

Beloved your soul is not yet totally and completely saved, delivered from the things that are in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life; nor will it be in this life, even as the Apostle Paul says,

Philippians 3: 12 & 13, Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect . . . I count not myself to have apprehended . . .

Your spirit is already conformed to the will of God; your soul is being conformed to the will of God.

Now your soul consists of your mind, will, and emotions.

The **MIND** of the **carnal soul** says, I am in control of my own destiny. Knowledge/education is the key/answer to man's problems.

The **WILL** of the **carnal soul**, says I will do what I what, the way I want to do it. I am a free spirit. God wants me to be happy, and I am happy when I can have my way.and do what I want to do.

The **carnal soul** is controlled by how he feels, by his **EMOTIONS** -

- anger
- frustration
- self-pity
- disappointment
- doubts
- worry
- fear
- and other negative emotions
- condemnation

God is working in your soul, both the willingness/desire and the doing of His good pleasure. That is to say bringing your soul into submission to the spirit; rooting out these negative feelings of anger, frustration, self-pity, disappointments doubts, worry, fear, condemnation and etc., so that your emotions will be expressing, love, joy, peace, thanksgiving and the like.

Now what are you to do when these negative feeling rise up in you? When as Paul says in Galatians 5:17,

"the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the that ye would."?

The answer to the question "What are you to do when these negative feeling rise up in you?" is seen in the following Scriptures.

2 Corinthians 10:5, Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Ephesians 4:26, Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Proverbs 3:5, Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Psalms 118:8-9, *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.*

Psalms 116:7, Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

James 1:2, My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Romans 8:1, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Colossians 3:15, And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Once again the question. Where are you in your soul growth, soul salvation?

The gauge/measuring rod for making this determination is seen how effective you are in:

- taking every thought captive;
- not letting the sun go down on your wrath;
- counting it all joy;
- trusting in God and not your own understanding or in others;
- letting the peace of God rule in your heart;
- speaking to your soul;
- letting who you are in Christ Jesus direct your thinking, your desires and your emotions (an identity crisis opens the door for negative emotions)

Using the above measure rod for determining where you are in your soul life, *WHERE ARE YOU on a scale of 1 to 10 in your SOUL LIFE?*

3. WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR PHYSICAL LIFE?

God is challenging you to examine yourself as to how well you are caring for your physical body. Does your physical body and its wants, desires, lusts have a lot of control over your life or do you have your body under subjection. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:27 says,

I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Concerning your physical body, keep in mind that you, as a child of God, belong to God, this includes your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Your body is not yours do treat and do with as you please. You are to glorify God in and with your body.

Let's identify some of the problem areas in the physical life which can keep one from glorifying God in their body. These problem areas can be classified under two headings as seen in 1 John 2:16,

"For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes . . ."

1. Lust of the flesh - inordinate desires of the flesh - that is to say "lacking restraint or not under control"

a. **Sexual sin**, such as:

1. pornography - Pornography leads to actual sexual sin.

1 Corinthians 15:33, Be not deceived: evil communication corrupts good manners.

Romans 13:14, . . . make not provisions for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Eph 4:27, Neither give placeto the devil.

2. fornication - Fornication is defined as any sexual act which is done outside of the marriage bed. That is to say, any sexual act which is not done between a man and woman who are married to each other is fornication.

1 Corinthians 6:15-16, 18, Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh . . .Flee fornication. . . he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

Exodus 20:14, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Lev. 18:22, Thou shalt not lie with man-kind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

Leviticus 20:15-16, And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.

Rom 1:26-27, For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

b. **Overeating** - surfeiting (over eating), gluttony, obesity are a big problem among believers.

Luke 21:34, And take heed to yourselves. Lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with **surfeiting . . .**

c. **Drunkenness** - addictions of all types

Luke 21:34, And take heed to yourselves. Lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with . . . **drunkenness . . .**

2. lust of the eyes, seeing something and wanting it. This has to do with:

a. **coveting and greed**

Exodus 20:17, Thou shalt not covet . .

1 Timothy 6:8-9, And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

b. **envy/jealousy**

Rom 13:13, Let us walk honestly, as in the day . . . not in . . . envying.

1 Corinthians 3:3, For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying . . .

Galatians 5:19-20, Now the works of the flesh are . . . emulations (jealousies).

WHAT TO DO TO KEEP THE PHYSICAL BODY IN CONTROL:

1. Pay attention to yourself as to what you are doing, or not doing - examine yourself.

Luke 21:34, Take heed to yourself . . .

2. Bring/Keep your body under subjection, that is to say, do not let the appetites of the body control how you live, what you do, eat, drink, or wear.

1 Corinthians 9:27, But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

3. Not placing yourself in situations of temptation.

2 Corinthians 2:11, lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Eph 4:27, Neither give place to the devil.

Romans 13:14, . . . make not provisions for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

GAUGING YOUR PHYSICAL LIFE!

The gauge for determining where you are in your physical life is **CONTENTMENT**. To the extent you are content when you are taking heed to yourself by . . .

- keeping your body under control/subjection, not allowing the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes to have their way;
- not placing yourself in situations of temptation;
- not making provisions for the flesh;

. . . will determine where you are in your physical life. **WHERE ARE YOU in your physical life on A SCALE OF 1 - 10?**

4. WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?

Now concerning our relationship with Jesus we want to understand that it is a two-fold relationship.

This is seen in the parable of the 10 virgins - Matthew 25:1-12. All ten were believers, but the 5 foolish did not have an intimate relationship with Jesus.

First of all as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a **positional** relationship with Jesus? We are in Him and He is in us. Amen! So let

us understand without any doubt that through the positional relationship with Jesus we have eternal salvation full and free - we did not do any thing to earn it nor can we do anything to lose it.

Ephesians 2:8, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 1:5, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

John 10:28-29, And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

Secondly, we have a *provisional* relationship, and where you are in your provisional relationship is determined by your *love for and intimacy with Jesus*.

The Bible tells us,

Luke 10:27 to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind and with all of our strength. . .

***Are you absolutely, totally, head over heels, breathtakingly in love with Jesus*; or perhaps you must say with Peter, Lord, I have a great affection for you?**

Is your love for Jesus constraining you to live unto Him and not yourself?

Now, what ruler or standard is there by which to determine, gauge *HOW MUCH YOU LOVE JESUS*.

Ephesians 5:30-32, For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

1 Corinthians 12:12, For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

Ephesians 5:29, For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Romans 12:5, So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

1 John 3:23, And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

What is the standard for measuring your love for Jesus? **Is it not your love for your brothers and sisters in the body?**

Now what is the standard/gauge of our love for one another?

1 Corinthians 13:1-8, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether *there be prophecies*, they shall fail; whether *there be tongues*, they shall cease; whether *there be knowledge*, it shall vanish away.

YOU DO NOT LOVE JESUS ANY MORE THAN YOU LOVE HIS BODY WHICH IS MADE UP OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN JESUS!!!!

WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?