

## Spiritual Maturity In The Book Of James

### “If You Wish To Be Complete”

### God Expects Us to Mature

- Babes in Christ do not arise from the waters of baptism spiritually mature. **Romans 6:3-4**
- God expects maturation to take place. **Hebrews 5:12**
- Comes because of conscious choice. Jesus said, “IF you wish to be complete...” **Matthew 19:21**  
“wish” – an active determination on our part – **not a passive acquiescence** (Strong’s).  
The young man didn’t! **Matthew 19:22** – any concerns if it doesn’t happen? **Luke 8:14**  
“**Press on to maturity**” Hebrews 6:1

### What does “perfect” or “complete” mean?

- From the Greek word “teleios” –
- “Denotes **that which has reached its maturity** or fulfilled the ‘end’ contemplated” (Vincent’s Word Studies )
- “having reached its end... **finished, complete** perfect... **fully grown, mature**” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
- cf. Ephesians 4:12-13; Colossians 1:28; Luke 13:32

### Spiritual Wisdom

The desire to obtain and the ability to distinguish and apply spiritual wisdom.

- James 1:5-8; “... **if any of you lacks wisdom...**”
- James 3:13-18, “**the wisdom from above**” versus the wisdom which is not from above.
- cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18-29; Acts 26:24-25

### Spiritual Wisdom

- The **spiritually mature** will...
  - Turn to the word of God for wisdom, not only in how to please God, but in how to deal with all aspects of life. **Daniel 2:20; Proverbs 2:1-12**
  - Understand that God’s wisdom and the wisdom of the world are diametrically opposed to each other. cf. **James 3:13-18; Acts 26:24-25.**
- The **spiritually immature** will...
  - Allow the wisdom of this world to guide their thinking and decision making.
  - Seek counsel from sources other than God.

### Distinguish the temporal from the eternal

The ability to distinguish between the temporal and the eternal & put fleshly pursuits, circumstances and prosperity in a proper perspective.

- James 1:9-11, “**the brother of humble circumstances...**”
- James 4:1-3, **your pleasures**, your pleasures, your pleasures.
- James 5:1-6, **the rotting of your riches.**

### Distinguish the temporal from the eternal

- **The spiritually mature** will...
  - Not trust in the temporal riches of this life.
  - Understand that what is real is what is not seen. 2 **Corinthians 4:16-5:5**
  - The mature will make wise investments. **Matthew 6:19-21**
  - Understand the best is yet to come!
- **The spiritually immature** will...
  - Continue to chase after that which will not last. 2 **Peter 3:10-14**
  - Fail to understand that the temporal is but vanity. **Ecclesiastes 2:10-11**

### Understanding trials & temptations

A proper understanding of trials, tests and temptations.

- James 1:2-3, it's part of **what makes us complete**.
- James 1:12-15, **we're not tempted by God**.
- James 5:10-11, role of **patience & endurance**.

### Understanding trials & temptations

- **The spiritually mature** will...
  - Understand that the eternal reward doesn't come without tests & trials. 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-13
  - Compare the reward to the trials faced. Romans 8:18
  - Not blame God when we are tested. Job 1:20-22; 2:10
- **The spiritually immature** will...
  - Lack the depth to cope with the trials and temptations and faint. Matthew 13:20-21
  - Lose sight of, and faith in, the glory to be revealed.
  - Blame God when misfortune befalls them.
  - Imitate Adam & Eve and Aaron and blame someone else; Genesis 3:12-13; Exodus 32:21-24

### Control of our Tongue & our Speech

Careful use and control of our tongue and speech.

- James 1:10-21, "...**slow to speak**..."
- James 1:26, a **bridled** tongue
- James 3:1-12, a **tame** tongue?
- James 5:12, a **yes means yes**

### Control of our Tongue & our Speech

- **The spiritually mature** will...
  - Listen and think before the speak
  - Strive to keep controls over his speech. Psalms 141:3
  - Understand the great harm and good that can come from our words. Proverbs 18:21
- **The spiritually immature** will...
  - Speak before they listen or think
  - Make no effort to control their words
  - Give no thought to the damage that their words can cause.

### Defined by Action

Based on our actions – “doing” based on faith and conviction.

- James 1:22-25, an **effectual doer**
- James 2:12, “So speak & **so ACT**...”
- James 2:14-26, a “**perfected**” faith.

### Defined by Action

- **The spiritually mature** will...
  - Follow through and persistently act upon that they have been taught and believe. Matthew 7:24; Ezra 7:10
  - “effectual doers” – they bear fruit.
- **The spiritually immature** will...
  - Profess faith and allegiance but fail to continue to act upon what they’ve heard or even believe. Matthew 7:26.
  - Be hearers only.

### Sin & Its Consequences

A proper understanding of ALL sin and its consequences.

- James 2:9-11, we **can’t just keep part** of God’s word.
- James 4:8-10, better now to realize the **misery of being in sin**.
- James 4:13-17, sin also involves **not doing what we know we should**
- James 5:15-20, the need to **confess**.

### Sin & Its Consequences

- **The spiritually mature** will...
  - Understand the seriousness of unrepented sin. Romans 3:23; Acts 5:1-11; Romans 6:23
  - Never treat sin lightly. Matthew 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11
  - Understand both sins of omission and commission.
- **The spiritually immature** will...
  - Not take sin seriously
  - Not mourn or confess their sins.
  - Not reflect on the retribution of those who die in sin. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

### Proper Application & Use of Prayer

Consistent and proper application and use of prayer.

- James 1:5-6, ask in **faith**.
- James 4:3, ask with **proper motives**.
- James 4:15-16, ask with **humility**
- James 5:15-18, for **ourselves and others needs** – physical and spiritual.

### Proper Application & Use of Prayer

- **The spiritually mature** will...
  - Pray in faith
  - Pray according to the Lord’s will. 1 John 5:14-15
  - Pray unceasingly and persistently. 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1
- **The spiritually immature** will...
  - Doubt
  - Pray according to selfish motives
  - Pray intermittently & inconsistently.

### The Future - What Lies Ahead

A proper perspective on what lies ahead.

- James 4:13-16, don’t be **arrogantly presumptive**.
- James 5:7-8, **be patient**, the Lord will come again.

### **The Future - What Lies Ahead**

- **The spiritually mature** will...
  - Take each day at a time and not be anxious – they live for today. Matthew 6:34.
  - Understand the need to prepare for a time which they do not know. Matthew 24:36, 42-44
  - Be “dressed in readiness” Luke 12:35
- **The spiritually immature** will...
  - Speak and act arrogantly about the future.
  - Plan to repent and obey “someday” Hebrews 4:6-7; Luke 13:23-25
  - Put off the coming of the Lord. Amos 6:3

### **Spiritual Maturity is Defined by:**

1. **The ability to distinguish and apply spiritual wisdom**
2. **The ability to distinguish between the temporal and the eternal and put fleshly pursuits, circumstances and prosperity in proper perspective.**
3. **A proper understanding of trials, tests, and temptations.**
4. **The careful use and control of our tongue.**

### **Spiritual Maturity is Defined by:**

5. **Being people of action – “doing” based on faith and conviction.**
6. **A proper understanding of all sin and its’ consequences.**
7. **Consistent and proper application and use of prayer.**
8. **A proper perspective on what lies ahead.**