



Ephesians 4.14



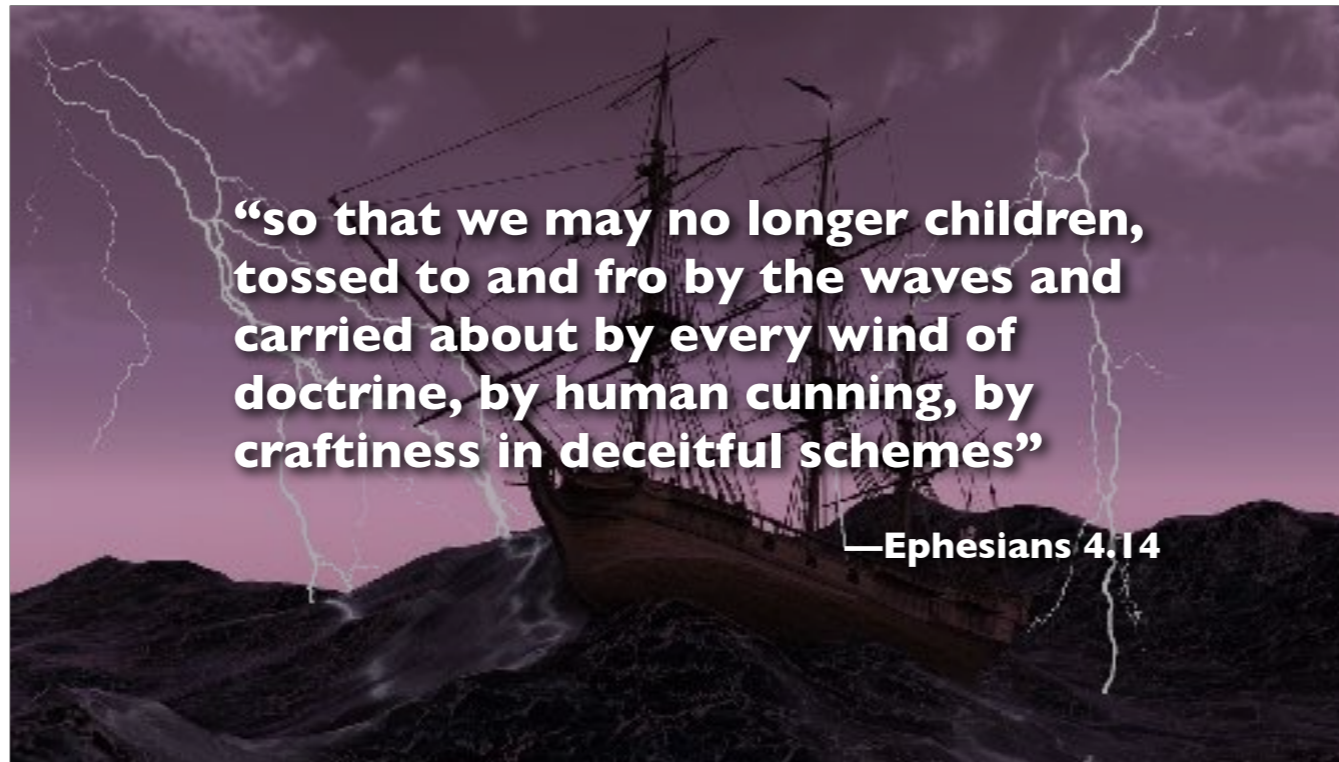
Children are great!

Mt. 18.3: "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."



But we don't let children drive cars. Why?

Immaturity, inexperienced, foolishness



Why is it vital that we (as a congregation) grow up to mature manhood?

Ephesians 4.14: so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.



But the main sense in the Greek is “foolish,” “inexperienced,” or “childish” with no necessary reference to children.



A person is nepios who is immature in conduct,
who shows a foolish confidence in fortune,
who does not take account of reality,
or who does not heed the advice of philosophers.

TDNT, p. 631



Peter Pan Syndrome

(I don't want to grow up).

Is there any danger in not growing up?

Can a believer never grow up and be acceptable to God?

The Saints in Corinth

“But I brothers, could not address you as **spiritual** people, but as people of the **flesh** as infants in Christ.”

—1 Corinthians 3.1

The church in Corinth:

1 Cor. 3.1–2: infants vs. Spiritual

“But I brothers, could not address you as <3> **spiritual** people, but as people of the <2> **flesh**, as <1> **infants** in Christ.”

next slide: 1 Cor. 13.11

The Saints in Corinth

“When I was a child, I **spoke** like a child, I **thought** like a child, I **reasoned** like a child. When I became a **man**, I gave up **childish ways**.”

—1 Corinthians 13.11

1 Cor. 13.11: man vs. Childish ways (speech, thought, reasoning)

“When I was a child, I <2> **spoke** like a child, I **thought** like a child, I **reasoned** like a child. When I became a <3> **man**, I gave up <1> **childish ways**.”

Next slide: 1 Cor. 14.20

The Saints in Corinth

“Brothers, do not be children in
your thinking. Be **infants in evil**,
but in your thinking be mature.”

—1 Corinthians 14.20

1 Cor. 14.20

“Brothers, do not be <1> children in your thinking. Be <3> infants in evil, but in your <2> thinking be mature.”

The Hebrew Saints

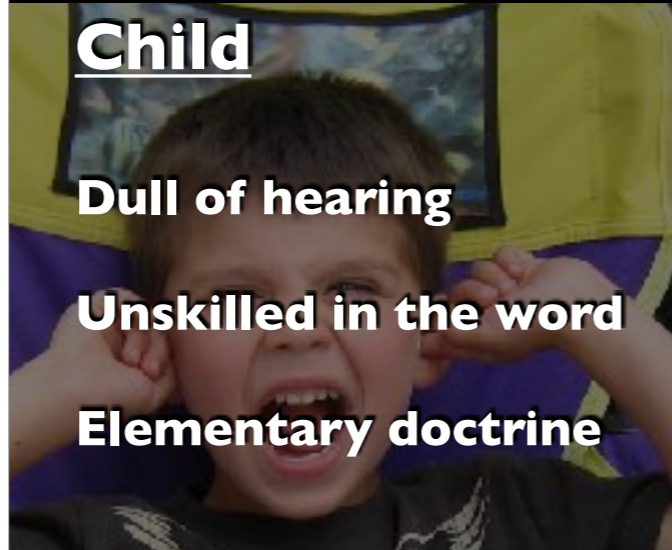
—Hebrews 5.11 - 6.2

Child

Dull of hearing

Unskilled in the word

Elementary doctrine



Hebrews 5:11–14: About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 6:1–2: Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

The Hebrew Saints

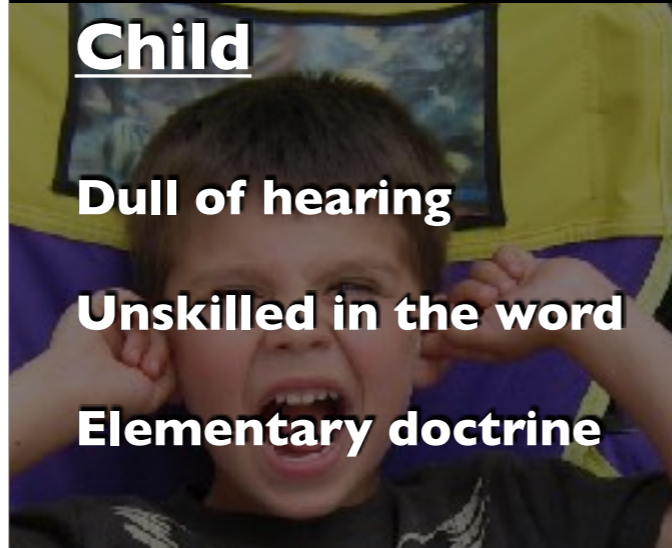
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Mature

“powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil”



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Child (immature) vs. Man (mature)

Flesh v. Spiritual

Speak, thought, reason

Unskilled in word v. Power of discernment trained

Easily Self-deceived about strength.



The danger of remaining a Child



Tossed to and fro by the waves

RWP: to be agitated by the waves

Beet: Instability under external pressure is a mark both of weak faith and of spiritual childishness.

Contrast: Job... despite trials, remained faithful to God!



James 1.6, 8: But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind ... He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways



Carried about by every wind of doctrine

Thayer: to be driven; in doubt and hesitation to be led away now to this opinion, now to that

Beet: Useless movement hither and thither

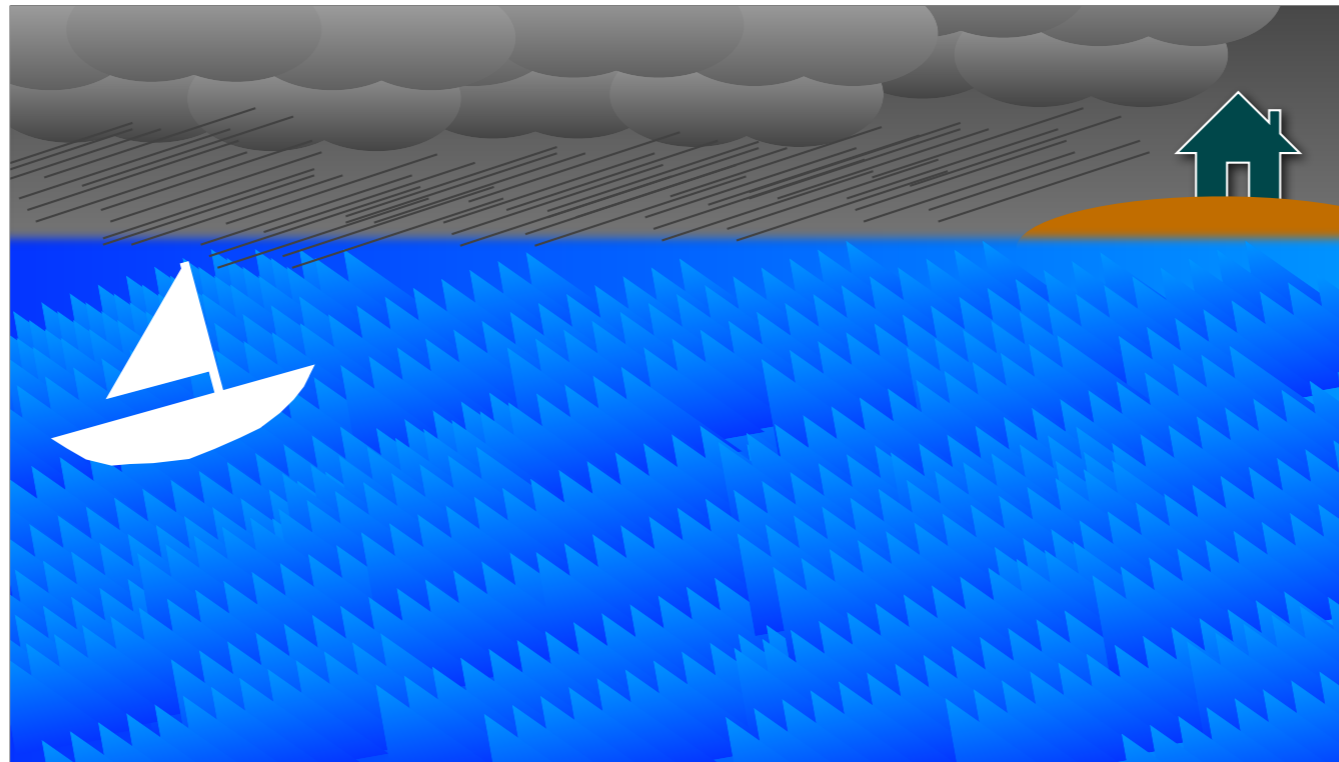
RWP: whirled around

Doctrine = teaching



Ship on the water.

The mature know their destination and know how to arrive there safely.



The childish allow the waves to move them off course and the wind to blow them around.

They are constantly confused, changing, following after what is new or different
never discerning that they are struggling.



How does this happen?

False teachers

But maybe that's over simplified. We think false teachers are always easy to spot.

But what if they are not?



Human cunning (Slight) = dice playing

(gambling, taking chances with the truth)

haphazard

it describes a man whose opinions seem to be the result of mere chance. Barnes



opening the Bible at random (out of context)

John 15.14: You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.

Matthew 27.5: departed, and went and hanged himself

Luke 10.37: Go and do likewise

John 13.27: What you do, do quickly



Rather: careful examination of the Bible and prayer

Or cheating; playing with loaded dice

They know just what to say to draw you in to their trap



Craftiness (cunning craftiness)

False wisdom; do anything to gain one's end

Three card monte: not gambling, it's a con.



Deceitful Schemes

(ASV: wiles of error; KJV: lie in wait to deceive)

Deceitful (lie in wait) = trickery

Schemes (deceive) = wandering, straying about

Evil is organized!



There are some who are trying to deceive you!

How will you know them? Horns? No.



Mt. 7.15: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

**“For such men are
false apostles,
deceitful workmen,
disguising
themselves as
apostles of Christ.”**

— 2 Corinthians 11:13



- They will seem friendly, and genuine, knowledgeable and reasonable.
- 2 Cor. 11:13–15: disguised!
- Children are easily deceived (candy for life)

“I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

— Acts 20:29-30



- Acts 20:29–30 (ESV) 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.
- The biggest problem that the Jews at the time of Jesus faced was not false teachers from outside, but their own brethren.
- Whether Sadducees or Pharisees or scribe, they trumpeted their own knowledge and righteousness
 - The people tried to live up to the standards of truth set ...
 - The people were left harassed and helpless, without a shepherd.
- Saul was one of these fierce wolves

“I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

— Acts 20:29-30



- How did they do this?
 - Remember how they were constantly amazed at the teaching of Jesus
 - You've heard it said vs. I say to you
 - Their traditions vs. commandments
 - But they made it sound like their traditions were the truth and must be followed.
 - washing hands, and sabbaths, and honoring your parents
- The people didn't (dare) question their authority and interpretations: accepted truths
 - How they treated Jesus demonstrates
 - Saul's persecutions, and then being relentlessly persecuted

“These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.”

— Colossians 2:23



- Appearance of wisdom — but no value

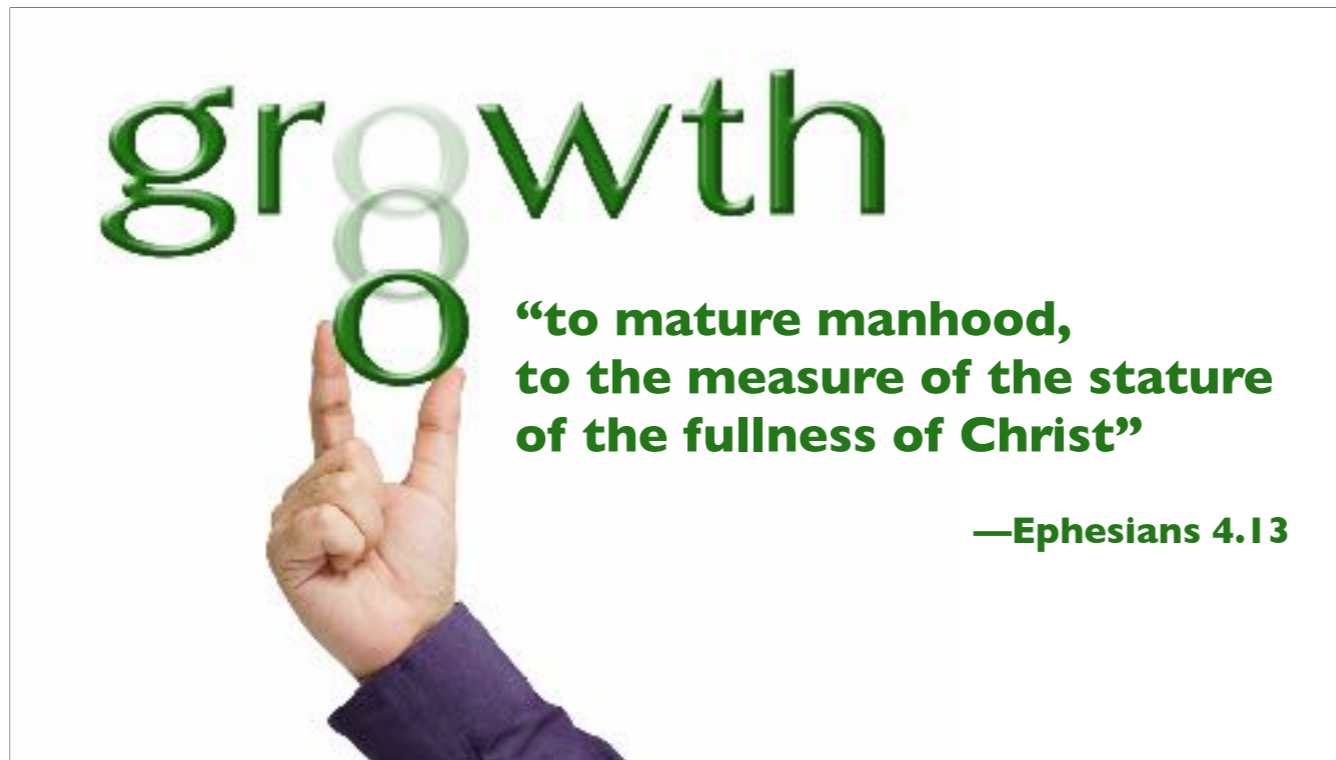
- Colossians 2:20–23 (ESV) 20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

“These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.”

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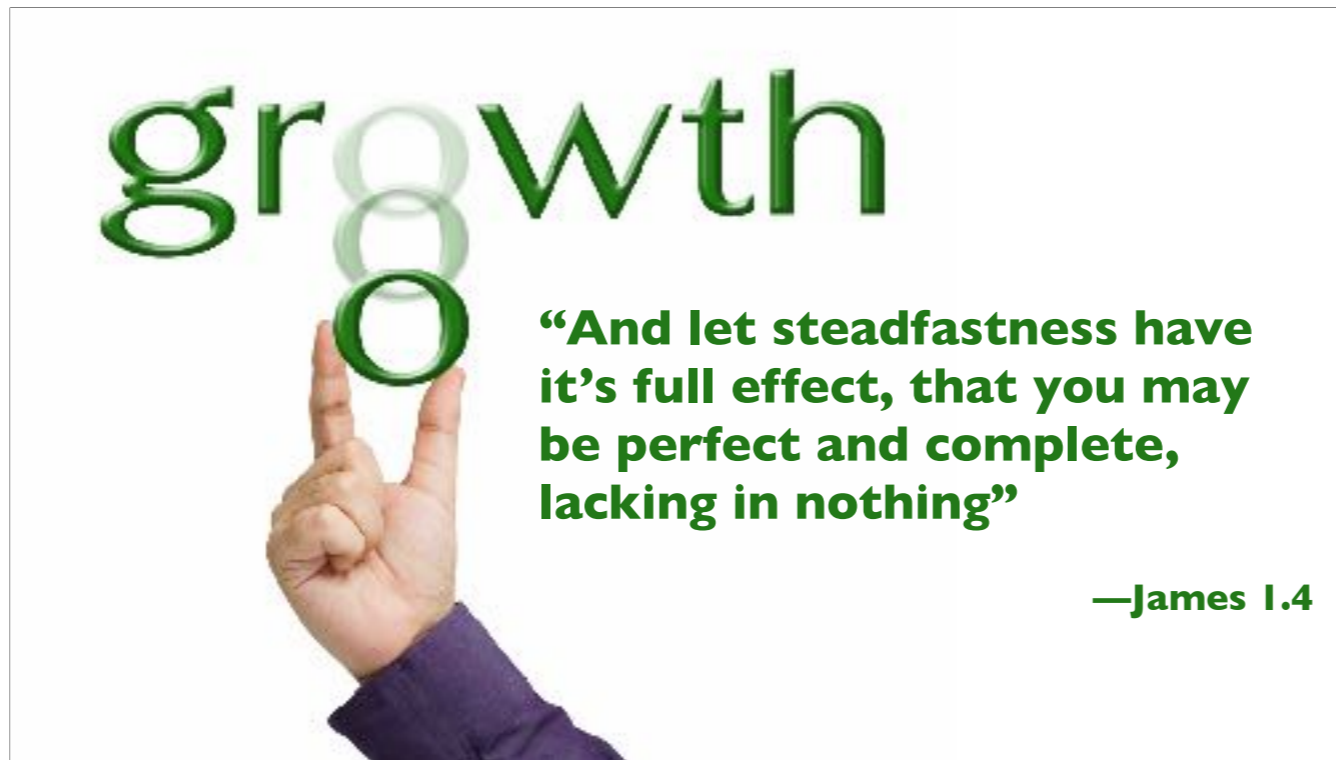
- That same problem exists among us:
 - rote answers
 - lack of deep bible study
 - failing to question what we've always been taught
 - not just to challenge it
 - truly understand what our Father wants



Real solution is maturity!

And our measure of maturity is Jesus himself.

Ephesians 4:13: until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.



James 1:4: And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Or as translated by J. B. Phillips: "...and you find you have become men of mature character, men of integrity with no weak spots."

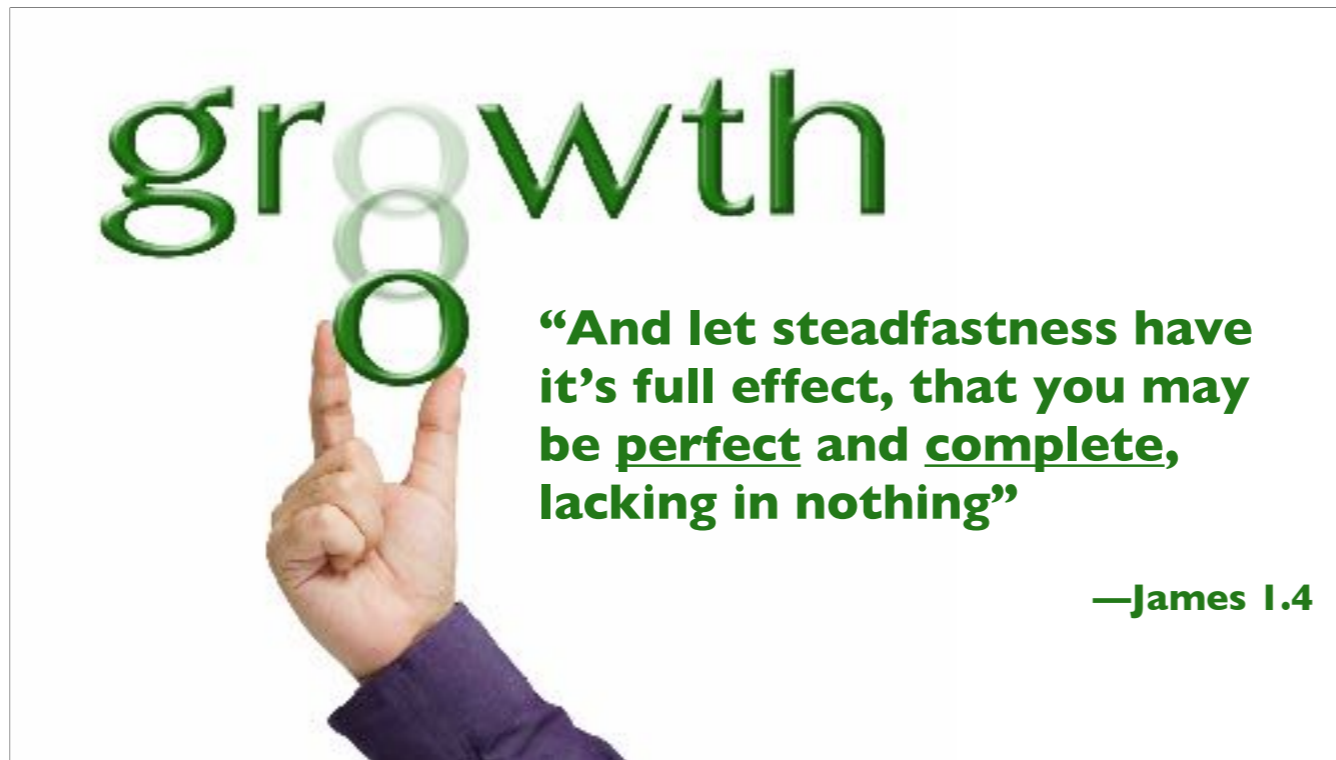
growth



**“And let steadfastness have
it’s full effect, that you may
be perfect and complete,
lacking in nothing”**

—James 1.4

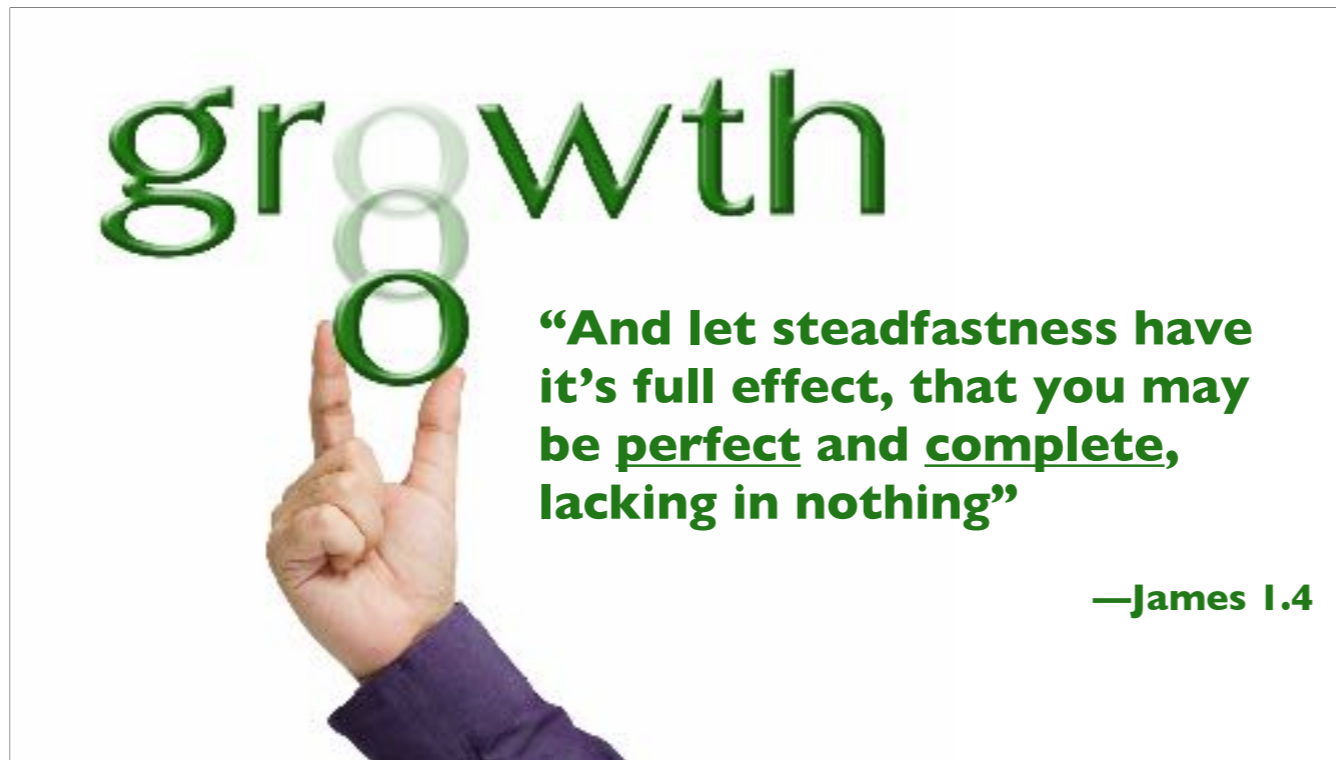
Perfect: brought to it’s end, finished; of men, full grown, adult, of full age, mature



Complete: complete in all it's parts, in no part wanting or unsound, complete, entire, whole

Not everybody who grows old, grows up; there is a vast difference between age and maturity

The result is problems -- problems in personal lives, in homes, and in churches...



**“And let steadfastness have
it’s full effect, that you may
be perfect and complete,
lacking in nothing”**

—James 1.4

Problems in these areas are caused by immaturity more than by anything else

If Christians would just grow up, they would become victors instead of victims

The Hebrew Saints

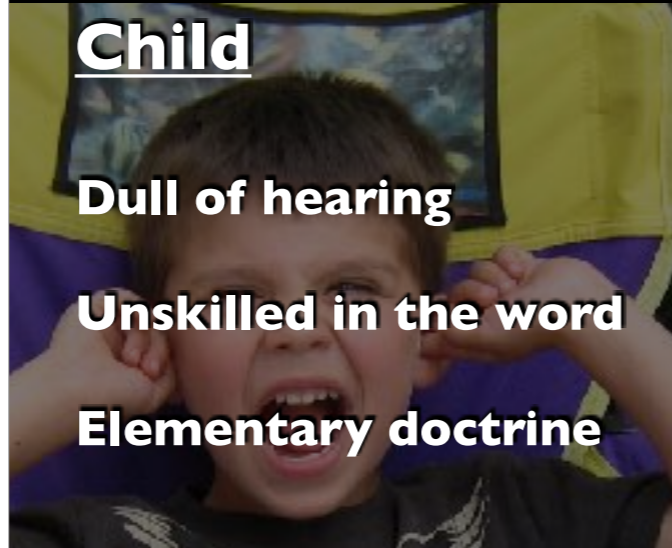
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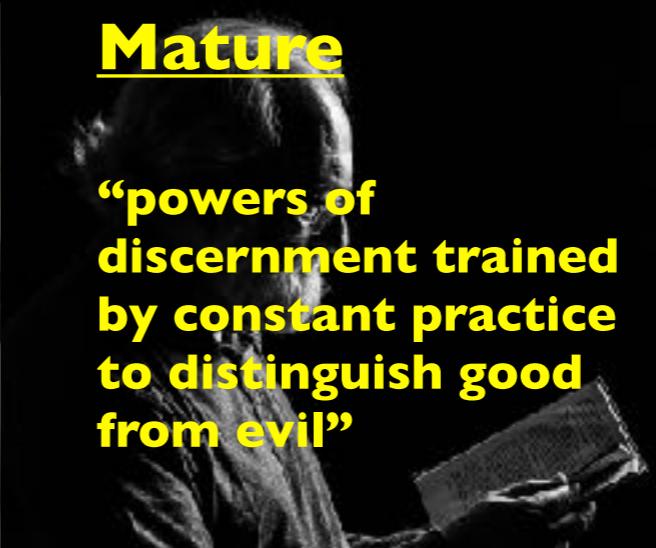
Unskilled in the word

Elementary doctrine



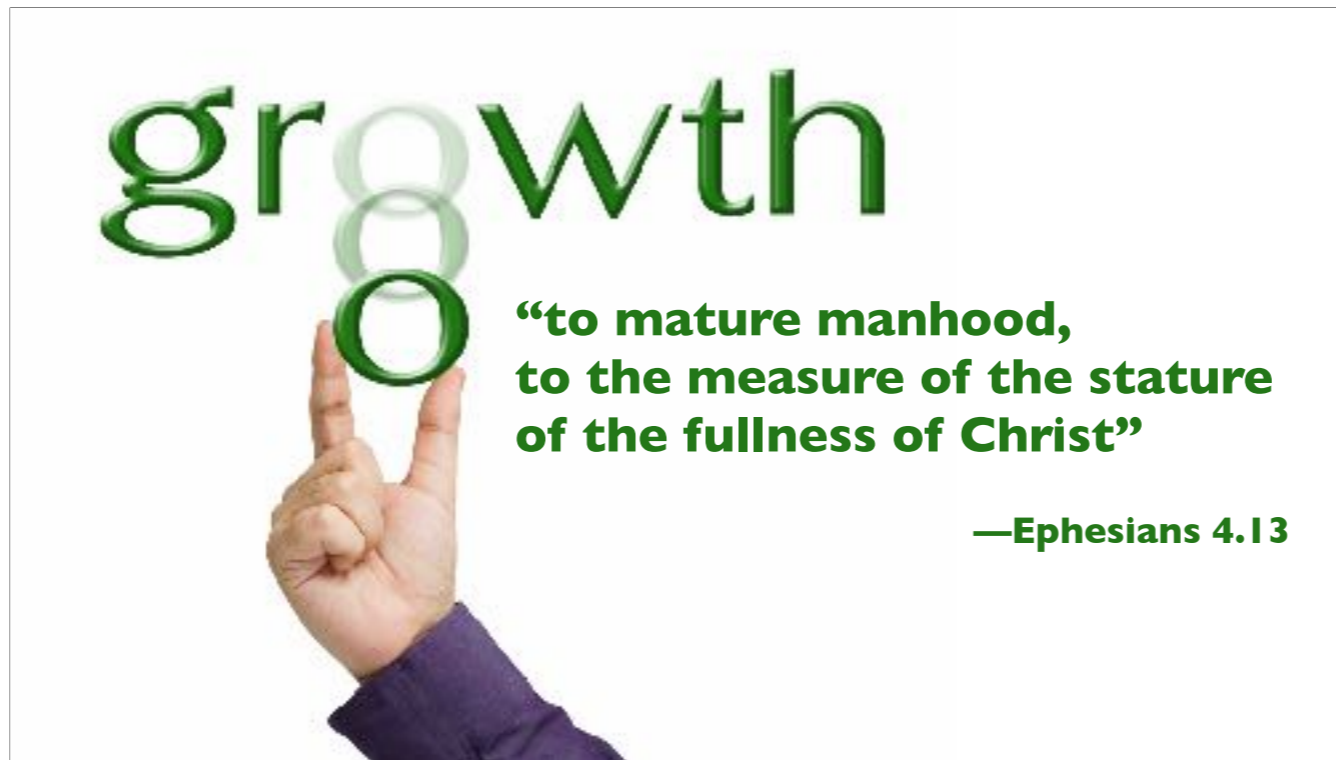
Mature

**“powers of
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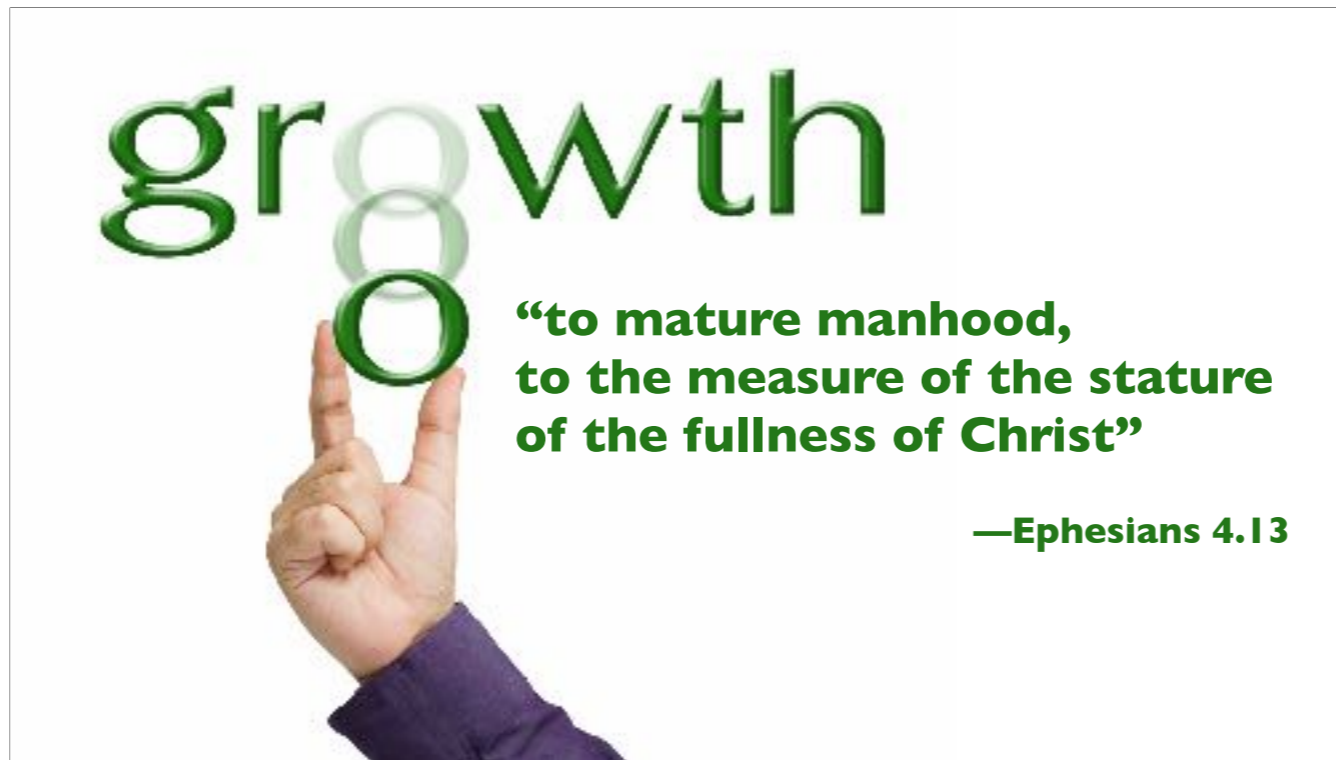
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Too often we confuse outward acts of service (attending services, etc.) with true growth in Christ.

Service is vital, but not a measure of growth.

Easily becomes ritual, habit, meaningless: pharisees.



Or we assume that holding the right understanding on certain issues makes us mature.

Or perfect following of our traditions and rules.

(As the pharisees constantly pressured Jesus and his disciples)



“and taking a towel, tied it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.”

—John 13:4-5

Our measure of maturity is Jesus himself.

John 13:12-17: When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Call to Action

church of Christ



*we
preach
Christ crucified*

www.churchofchristmiranda.com

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Muscle Man Arm: iStock_000004707356

Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: <http://leaveitlay.blogspot.com/2011/10/tuesday-sheep-among-wolves.html>

Washing feet: http://www.artbible.net/3JC/-Joh-13,01_The%20feetwashing_Le%20lavement%20des%20pieds/20%20VRIES%20ANNE%20LE%20LAVEMENT%20DES%20PIEDS.jpg

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Miscellaneous 2024

#05

Compiled and Presented by:
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2024 July 21
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No Longer Be Children

Ephesians 4:14

Synopsis: Paul reminds us that the danger of remaining a spiritual child results in being spiritually unstable. This lesson reminds us that there are false teachers out there and that we must be wary of false teaching. (Revised from a prior lesson "It's Time to Grow Up" - "No Longer Be Children" 2024 March 21)

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"Let all that you do be done with love."