

“You shall be Holy, for I the LORD your God am Holy”

Getting My Attention



A gardener finds great satisfaction in the sight of beautiful, abundant, fully colored, well formed blossoms.

A vegetable gardener delights in harvesting mature, unblemished, fully developed, tasty vegetables.



The carpenter who makes a piece of furniture has a sense of accomplishment when the end table, shelves or cabinet is completed.

From the planting of the seed, or the drafting of plans for a piece of furniture, the outcome is always in mind, the end result always the goal.

Focusing My Attention

What if the same concept was applied to a person?

From the birth of a child, what outcome is in mind?

– What end result is to be attained?

As you go through life, what outcome do you have in mind for you?

– what end result do you desire to attain?

Speaking of his ministry as an apostle, Paul wrote:

²⁸*[Christ] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

²⁹*For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me.*

– Colossians 1:28

What does that mean – to be “mature in Christ”?

Paul’s desire for everyone to whom he ministered was to “present everyone mature in Christ”.

Is that not the goal of the pastor for everyone under his care in the congregation, to “present everyone mature in Christ”?

Is that your desire for your life, to be “mature in Christ”?

In Leviticus 19, God defines what “maturity” is for each of His people.

God is “mature”, is He not?

God is fully developed in His being, in His character.

When you look at God, you are looking at a Being who is at His “Peak”.

The underlying principles that define how God thinks, therefore defining how God speaks and acts with all other people, are “mature, ripe, complete”, with no further need to develop or grow.

If God is a Being Who is at “Peak” performance in all He says and does, then the best that any other person can do is to become like God!

– the best that any person can do is to learn from God and to trust and put into practice the same principles, same values, that are at the core of Who God is!

The challenge for the Israelites God led out of Egypt, the challenge for all people everywhere, is that we are not conceived and born with God’s principles and values. Our minds are empty, we have no knowledge of God’s principles and values. Our hearts are empty, we have no desire to follow God’s principles and values.

In that emptiness of our hearts and minds, we go our own way, self-centered, focusing on getting what we want for ourselves.

God is not in our minds or hearts, so all we are left with is ourselves.

All every person thinks is about “what I want, what is good for me.”

But, we are not alone in the world. There are other people around us.

To focus only on myself is to ignore others, neglect others.

Listen how God teaches His people to grow out of their self-centeredness, and to grow in their awareness of others:

⁹*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.*

¹⁰*And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard.*

You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

What a practical example of

how to expand self-centered thinking into people-centered thinking!

The people of Israel were chosen by God as His Own possession!

God chose Israel to receive His love and protection in the world,

and to learn from Him and become like Him.

The more Israel became like God,
the more the other nations would see what a wonderful God Israel served,
and the more they would be drawn to Israel's God.

All of the "You shall not..." statements in Leviticus 19 were God's way of saying:

*"You know that empty circle in your mind and your heart,
where you only think about you? You know that circle?
Let others into that circle! Think about others around you!
When you think about what is good for you,...
think also about what is good for others!
Think about what is good for your fellow Israelites!
After all, that is how I, the Lord your God, am!
I think about others in everything I think, speak and do!
So, be like Me! Be like your God!"*



That's "**maturity**"! Not only thinking about you, but others!

The positive way God expressed this is with the words,
"You shall love your neighbor as yourself!"

If you don't want to remember all those "You shall not..." rules,
then focus on the one "You shall" rule: **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself!"**

"You therefore Must Be Perfect, as Your Heavenly Father is Perfect."

Unless you are a "Perfectionist",
those words of Jesus most likely scare you or perhaps intimidate you.
"Come on, Jesus. 'Perfect', I 'must be Perfect'? Nobody's 'Perfect'!"

The word translated "Perfect" here is the Greek word "teleios" (τέλειος), meaning:
*mature from going through the necessary stages to reach the end-goal,
This root (tel-) means "reaching the end (aim)."
It is well-illustrated with the old pirate's telescope,
unfolding (extending out) one stage at a time to function at full-strength
(capacity effectiveness).* [<http://biblehub.com/greek/5046.htm>]

**Jesus is calling upon His followers to be "Mature",
to grow to become like God, – to think how God thinks, to speak and act like God does.**

⁴³*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'*

⁴⁴*But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

⁴⁵*so that you may be sons of your Father Who is in heaven.*

For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good,

and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶*For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?*

Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

⁴⁷*And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?
Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*

⁴⁸*You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

Notice how Jesus teaches His followers, teaches us,
to *"be sons of our Father Who is in heaven."*
Every one loves those who love them. That's a "worldly love".
Godly love is to love all people, to want the best for all people,
to love even those who do not love you.

Love does not have to be earned nor deserved.

Otherwise, love is payment or a reward for the good behavior of others.
Love is given to others freely, love is given to others in all circumstances.
That's how God loves:

*For He [God] makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good,
and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

**So, Jesus teaches His followers to become like God,
and to love others like God loves all people:**

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Application for My Life

Aren't you glad God's love is "mature"?

Aren't you glad God's love is given to you freely, given to you in all circumstances?
You can know that no matter how undeserving at times you may be of God's love,
that God still loves you!

That's your Confidence, your Peace in Christ!

God in His love for you and for the world, put the burden of your sin upon Christ,
then punished Christ for your sin!

God did that so that you would be "DEBT FREE!"

You do not owe God anything for your guilt.

You see "mature" love lifts up the fallen, even the fallen in sin.

"Mature" love builds up the weak, encourages the suffering, supplies the lacking.

**"Mature" love even offers love freely, to enemies,
because "mature" love gives in all circumstances.**

**God's "mature" love for you enables you to live everyday in Confidence,
knowing there is nothing you can do that will cause God to not love you!**

**God's "mature" love for you enables you to live everyday in Peace,
knowing you are "DEBT FREE" in Christ, and have no fear of judgment!**

**God's "mature" love empowers you to leave behind the self-centered love
you inherited from Adam and to grow in the "perfect/mature" love that is yours in Christ.**