

Brian Chesemore
SESSION 2 | CHRIST-LIKE LIVES

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.” 2 Peter 3.18

Class Overview

Week One: Understanding our Goal: Growth in Grace

Week Two: Christ-like Lives: The Marks of Growth in Grace

Week Three: God’s Provision: The Motives and Means for our Growth in Grace

Week Four: The Local Church: The Context for our Growth in Grace

CHRIST-LIKE LIVES: THE MARKS OF GROWTH IN GRACE

I. Two Metaphors of Maturity

A. Psalm 1 | The Fruitful Tree

Psalm 1 provides an invitation to live a devoted and fruitful life.

As a believer learns to devote himself and delight himself in the Word of God, meditating on it, obeying it, a life of health emerges. The roots start to run deep, the trunk grows broad and stable, and beautiful fruit, delicious fruit of wisdom starts to show itself.

B. Matthew 7:24-27 | The Stable House

Matthew 7 provides an invitation to stability in the midst of storms.

In preparation for the disorienting and discouraging trials that inevitably confront a believer, God calls us to lean on his promises. As we hear the Word and put it into practice, a life of stability emerges.

II. Defining Marks of Maturity

A. Hunger | Desiring More of God’s Word

Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. (Ps. 119.97)

More to be desired are they than good...sweeter also than honey. (Ps. 19.10)

- Is this the way I view the Word? Are the Scriptures my meditation?

“A godly man’s heart is the library to hold the Word of God; it dwells richly in him.”¹

“Think in every line you read that God is speaking to you.”²

- What most influences how I think about life?
- When I am tempted to sin, where must I go? (Ps. 119.9,11)

“What sums of money the martyrs gave for a few leaves of the Bible!...When we want direction, do we consult this sacred oracle? When we find corruptions strong, do we make use of this sword of the Spirit to hew them down? When we are disconsolate, do we go to this bottle of water of life for comfort? Then we are lovers of the Word!”³

- We don’t outgrow our need for the Word of God.

When you come, bring the cloak...also the books, and above all the parchments. (2 Tim. 4.13)

B. Affection | Enjoying Fellowship with God

As the deer pants for flowing streams so my soul pants for you, O God. (Ps. 42.1)

- The Example of Mary

...few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. (Lk.10.42)

- The Testimony of Paul

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (Phil. 3.8-12)

¹ The Godly Mans Picture by Thomas Watson (The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA.) pg. 61.

² Worldly Saints by Leland Ryken, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids MI) pg. 155.

³ The Godly Man’s Picture, pg. 65

C. Perspective: Interpreting Life through a Biblical lens

The Life of Joseph ⁴

Joseph's vantage point: Betrayed, maligned, forgotten.

The Divine Perspective: Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept live as they are today. (Gen. 50.19-20)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Ps. 23)

- God is completely Sovereign
- God is infinite in Wisdom
- God is perfect in Love

A firm trust in God's sovereignty, wisdom, and love produces stability and joy.

D. Security: Resting in God's Gospel Love

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Ro. 8.28-30)

A reformed understanding of our faith declares, "Everyday I am persevering, secure in the union I have in Christ. Even through my failures and troubles I can trust in him."

E. Humility: Rightly Assessing Ourselves Before God

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. (Ps. 131.1)

"Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness."⁵

"At every stage of our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, pride is the greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend."⁶

⁴ This Section is taken from Chapter 12 of Growing Your Faith by Jerry Bridges. The chapter title is "Trusting God". Pgs. 141-153.

⁵ Humility: True Greatness by C.J. Mahaney (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc.) pg. 22.

⁶ Quote from John Stott found in Humility: True Greatness, pg. 29.

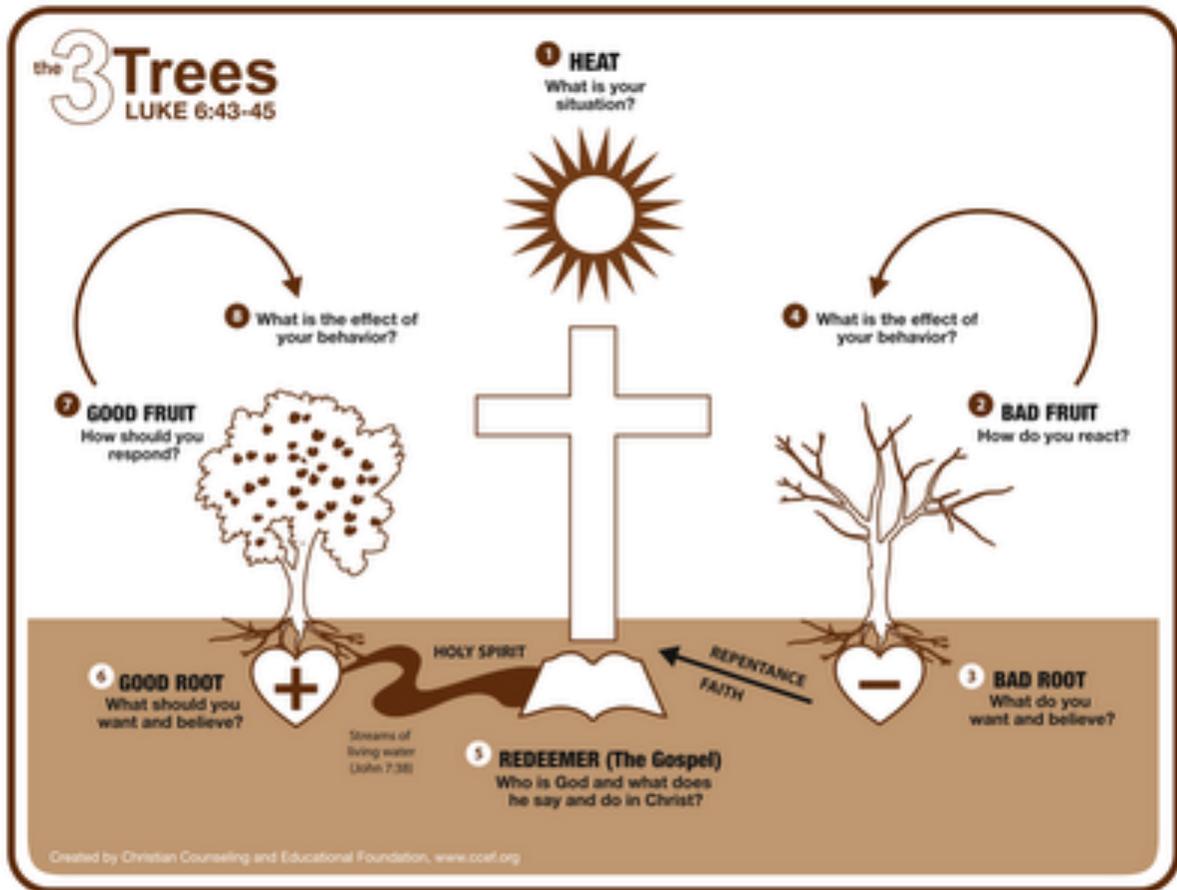
F. Anticipation: Longing for the Joy of Heaven

A significant mark of increasing maturity in the Christian life is found in a longing for Christ’s return. We see that this world has nothing of lasting value and what it esteems is perishing.

...waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ... (Titus 2.14)

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 20.22)

III. The Three Trees | A Model for Change



An Assignment: Write down in a few paragraphs where you’ve seen God grow you since your conversion? In which of the “marks of maturity” do you believe God is calling you to grow? What specific ways do you need to think and live differently?