

This week, Dr. Graham Twelftree presents the second installment in the 6-part series on Vineyard Values. Dr. Twelftree begins by reminding us that most Christians are seeking to be spiritually mature. There are numerous examples of spiritually mature believers, and he highlights three for purposes of illustration. One is a Catholic monk who served 16 years in a leper colony until he himself succumbed to the disease. The second was Eric Little, who was the subject of the Hollywood movie "Chariots of Fire." The third was one of the subjects in a documentary that followed three people diagnosed with terminal cancer. As Dr. Twelftree explains, each person placed his belief in the goodness of God and the fact that his life and its purpose was in God's hands, above the pressures and obstacles of the situation in which he found himself. They demonstrated spiritual maturity in their approach to life.

As you seek to become spiritually mature, there are myths about "maturity" that can hinder your growth. These myths are prevalent in society. They would seem to make sense, but, in fact, they are far from the truth. The first myth is that spiritual maturity will somehow happen "automatically" and requires no effort on the part of the believer. The truth is that maturity requires deliberate cooperation with the Father and your decision to place your life in His hands every moment.

The second myth is connected closely to the first. Spiritual maturity will come instantly when you manage to find the "key." The truth is that "maturity" is the result of a process and that the process takes time. A newborn baby doesn't suddenly become a mature adult by learning a key concept; it takes the life processes of growth and practice to mature. Christianity is a relationship, and, as such, it takes spending time getting to know God.

The third myth is that "spiritual maturity" is reserved for a few "mystical" Christians. The truth is that "spiritual maturity" is both possible and practical for every believer. It comes as a result of developing spiritual habits and practices that nourish it. Dr. Twelftree discusses several of these in detail.

A fourth myth is that you achieve spiritual maturity by "knowing more." Once again, this is false. Spiritual maturity is measured more by servant behavior than by "beliefs," or by long lists of facts. It's putting your faith into practice that matters. It is being able to "do" what God desires of you. Maturity is a result of allowing the relationship you have with Jesus to color and control the daily life you lead. It is not "what" you know; it is "who" you know in this case.

The fifth, and last, myth discussed by Dr. Twelftree is the myth that "spiritual maturity is a personal and private matter." As a Christian, you are part of the body of Christ. It is dangerous to think that you can find out what God wants for you without involving anyone else. Christians need each other in order to grow. God uses others to guide and encourage us, just as He uses us to do the same for others.

Have you fallen for any of these myths, or for any like them? Spiritual maturity is not an unobtainable goal. God says that, if you draw close to Him, He will draw close to you. Maturity comes through relationship and through the effort of obedience. Where will you be spiritually 5 years from now?

