

## Mature in Christ

“Col 1:28-29 Him 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 1:28-29)

### 1 Corinthians 13

1Co 13:7-13 ESV Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. (9) For we know in part and we prophesy in part, (10) but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. (11) 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. (12) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. (13) So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

A Contrast between three things that “pass away” and these things that “abide”.

Why do prophecies, tongues, knowledge pass away?

Why do faith, hope and love remain?

### A Chiastic structure to 1 Corinthians 13:7-13

...bears all things, **believes** all things, **hopes** all things, endures all things. 1Co 13:8 **Love** never ends.

As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 1Co 13:9 **For we know in part** (ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν) and we prophesy in part,

1Co 13:10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will **be set aside** (καταργηθησεται).

1Co 13:11 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 **set aside** (κατηργηκα) childish ways.

1Co 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. **Now I know in part**; (ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους) then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1Co 13:13 So now **faith, hope, and love** abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

**1Co 14:20** Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

What does the perfect/complete/mature Christian look like according to Paul?

## Discipleship 101 in the early church: Faith Hope and Love in Paul

**Romans 5:1-5:** Therefore, since we have been justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Through him we have also obtained access by *faith* into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in *hope* of the glory of God. (3) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces *hope*, (5) and *hope* does not put us to shame, because God's *love* has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

**1 Corinthians 13:7:** ... bears all things, *believes* all things, *hopes* all things, endures all things. *Love* never ends.

**1 Corinthians 13:13:** So now *faith*, *hope*, and *love* abide, these three; but the greatest of these is *love*.

**Galatians 5:5-6:** For through the Spirit, by *faith*, we ourselves eagerly wait for the *hope* of righteousness. (6) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only *faith* working through *love*.

**Ephesians 1:11-16:** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (12) so that we who were the first to *hope* in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. (13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and *believed* in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (15) For this reason, because I have heard of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus and your *love* toward all the saints, (16) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

**Ephesians 4:1-6:** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, (2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in *love*, (3) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one *hope* that belongs to your call— (5) one Lord, one *faith*, one baptism, (6) one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**Colossians 1:3-5:** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, (4) since we heard of your *faith* in Christ Jesus and of the *love* that you have for all the saints, (5) because of the *hope* laid up for you in heaven.

**1 Thessalonians 1:2-3:** We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, (3) remembering before our God and Father your work of *faith* and labor of *love* and steadfastness of *hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 5:8:** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of *faith* and *love*, and for a helmet the *hope* of salvation.

**1 Timothy 4:10-12:** For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our *hope* set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who *believe*. (11) Command and teach these things. (12) Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in *love*, in *faith*, in purity.

## “Perfection” in the rest of the New Testament

**Jas 1:2-4:** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, (3) for you know that the testing of your *faith* produces steadfastness. (4) And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be *perfect* and complete, lacking in nothing.

**1Jn 4:16-18:** So we have come to know and to *believe* the *love* that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (17) **By this is love perfected with us**, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love, but *perfect love* casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been *perfected in love*.

**Mat 5:48:** You therefore must be *perfect*, as your heavenly Father is *perfect*.

**1Pe 1:14-16, 20-22** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, (15) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (16) since it is written, “**You shall be holy, for I am holy.**”... (20) He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you (21) who through him are *believers* in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your *faith* and *hope* are in God. (22) Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere *brotherly love, love one another* earnestly from a pure heart,

**2Pe 1:3-7:** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, (4) by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become *partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (5) For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your *faith* with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, (6) and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, (7) and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with *love*.

## The centrality of Faith Hope and Love in the mind of Paul

| Faith Hope and Love as the structure of Paul's letter to the Romans   |  |  |
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| Faith: Romans 1-4   | Hope: Romans 5-11  | Love: Romans 12-15   |
| Faith x 31<br>Hope x 2<br>Love x 1  | Faith x17<br>Hope x 9<br>Love x 7  | Faith x 10<br>Hope x 5<br>Love x 8   |
| <p>Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.</p> <p>Rom 3:3 Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?</p> <p>Rom 3:22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.</p> <p>(24)...redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (25) whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. (26) It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.</p> <p>Rom 3:31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith?</p> <p>Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."</p> | <p>Rom 5:2-5 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.</p> <p>Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.</p> <p>Rom 8:24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? (25) But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.</p> | <p>Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.</p> <p>12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, and cleave unto that which is good. (10) Be affectioned to love one another with brotherly love. In giving honor, go one before another.</p> <p>Rom 13:8-10 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. (9) For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (10) Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.</p> <p>Rom 14:15 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love.</p> |
| Structure of the argument   |  |  |
| <p><b>1:16-17</b><br/>The centrality of faith in the life of the Christian</p> <p><b>1:18-3:10</b><br/>The Faithlessness of humanity and the justice of God</p> <p><b>3:21-26</b><br/>God intervenes to bring about faith by his action at the cross</p> <p><b>3:27-4:25</b><br/>Example from the story of Israel</p>   | <p><b>5:1-5</b><br/>The centrality of hope in the life of the Christian</p> <p><b>5:6-8:8</b><br/>The hopelessness of humanity apart from grace</p> <p><b>8:9-39</b><br/>God intervenes to bring about faith by sending his Spirit</p> <p><b>9:1-11:36</b><br/>Example from the story of Israel</p>  | <p><b>12:1-8</b><br/>The Call to "perfection":<br/>Doing God's will, what is good and pleasing and perfect<br/>- Building up the body -</p> <p><b>12:9-10</b><br/>Love, Love, Love</p> <p><b>12:11-21</b><br/>Specific details</p> <p><b>13:1-14:23</b><br/>Specific examples</p> <p><b>15:1-13</b><br/>- Building up your neighbor and being united in Christ -</p>   |

| Chapter titles   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Rom 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from <b>faith</b> for <b>faith</b> , | Rom 4:18 In <b>hope</b> he believed against <b>hope</b> , | 10 Be affectioned to <b>love</b> one another with brotherly <b>love</b> . |

## Conclusion:

Created in the image of God, the “goal” of life is that we perfectly reflect God’s own character. God is love, and so the image of God is most fully expressed in us when we love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Not surprisingly, this is what fulfills the law of God which is an expression of His own character. But love does not stand on its own. It has faith as its foundation. Faith is established at the cross of Christ, where the goodness, mercy and justice of God are clearly displayed in such an astonishing way that God’s wisdom and perfect plan for history are also revealed. Faith, then, establishes hope. Not a fanciful, wishful hope, but one that is certain because God has shown himself to be faithful. With hope established in certainty we are then set free from selfish and vain ambition to love freely, as God has loved us.

## Where we’re going over the next four weeks:

Mature in Faith – Faith as the central issue of the Bible

Mature in Hope – The transforming power of a certain Christian hope

Mature in Love – A new commandment I give you: Love one another.

Building Mature Churches – The church of the Hebrews and the dangers of failing to grow up

## Why does it matter?

Eph 4:1-16 ESV I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, (2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, (3) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (7) But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. (8) Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” (9) (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? (10) He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (11) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (12) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (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, (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. (15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.