



MAY 8

CHRIST, CULTURE, AND THE CROSS

HOW DO YOU MEASURE MATURITY?



GETTING STARTED

This weekend we continued in our new series, *Christ, Culture, and the Cross*. So far, what we have seen as the core problem of the church in Corinth is that, in many ways, they are *following the way of their culture rather than the way of Christ and His cross*. In Paul's intro to this letter, he reminds them who they are in Christ and God's vision for their lives.

As you begin this study, take a moment to pause and reflect on this amazing promise:

He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:8–9



STUDY QUESTIONS

1) This weekend we learned that *Spiritual Growth . . . Is Not Automatic*. When we come to Jesus, God's vision for our lives is not simply that we are saved, but also that we are transformed to be like Jesus by the power of His Spirit. But for this to happen, we must learn to "put off" our old identity and "put on" our new identity in Christ. To explore this principle, read the following passages from Paul's other letters and jot down any insights in your journal.

- Ephesians 4:17-24
- Colossians 3:5-14

- Carefully reread Ephesians 4:17-24. What role does our **thinking** play in our transformation? How does it need to change if we want to experience the new life Jesus came to give us?
- What does Paul challenge us to put off and put on (Ephesians 4:22-24)? What do you think he means by this?
- In Colossians 3:5, Paul tells us to *put to death* whatever belongs to our earthly nature. What does this include?
- In Colossians 3:10, Paul challenges us to *put on the new self*. How does he describe this "new self"?
- What does it look like to put on this "new self" (Colossians 3:12-14)?

2) In the introduction to I Corinthians, Paul tells the church in Corinth they are called to be his *holy people* (I Corinthians 1:2).

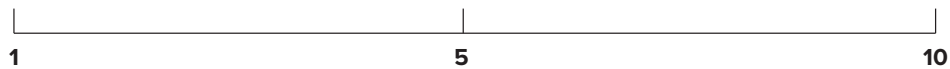
- a. What do you think it looks like for a believer to live a holy life?
- b. Do you see this reflected in your own life?
- c. How would living holy lives set us apart from the culture?

3) As we learned this weekend, it is possible for us to come to Christ, go to church for 10, 20, or even 30 years, and yet never grow up spiritually because we have never learned to think like Jesus. We are still living our lives with the values and mindset of the culture around us, which impacts every area of our lives. In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul challenges us be transformed by the renewing of our minds so we can experience God's will for our lives. Read Romans 12:1-21.

- a. What is the first step towards transformation (Romans 12:1)?
- b. What has to happen if we want to experience God's will in our lives (Romans 12:2)?
- c. This chapter paints a picture of what it looks like to live a transformed life in terms of our values, attitudes, emotions, priorities, mindset, and so on. What are some of the instructions you find most insightful, inspiring, or challenging?
- d. Which of these values are most at odds with our culture?
- e. As you evaluate your life today, are you aware of any areas that might be influenced by today's culture and values? Explain.
- f. Do you feel pressure to compromise to conform to today's culture? Explain.

4) At the end of his message, Michael asked a very important question: *How Do You Measure . . . Spiritual Maturity?*

- a. How did you answer this question?
- b. Often, we measure our spiritual maturity based on our Biblical knowledge or theology, acts of service, level of church involvement, or even our own spiritual gifts and experiences. These are all good things, but the best way to measure our maturity is by our character, obedience, love for God and others, and the fruit of the Spirit. Read Galatians 5:22-26 and list the fruit of the Spirit.
- c. On the scale below, how would you measure your maturity based on this list?



- d. Which "fruits" in your life are stronger? Which ones are weaker?

Spend some time in prayer over your answers and ask the Lord to help grow you in these areas. Write down any steps He reveals to you and be sure to listen and follow.