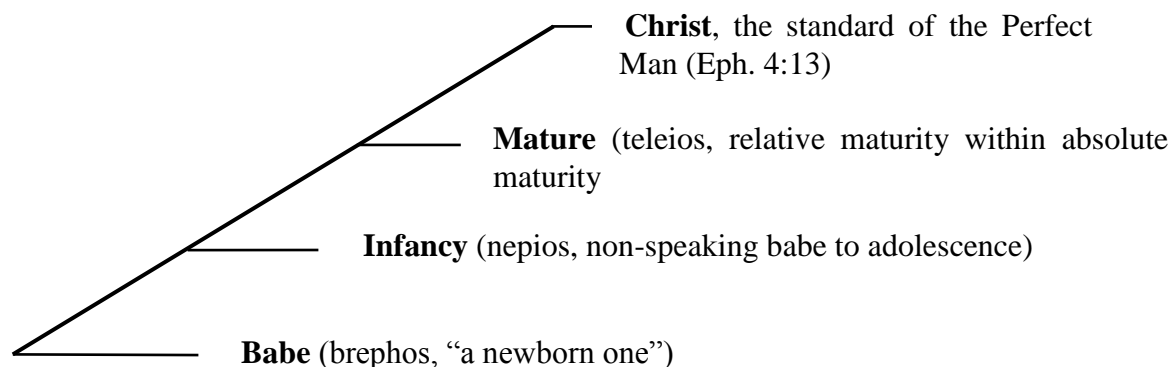


Review: 5 N.T. Words Relative to Christian Growth

1. _____ / βρέφος = a newborn one, a babe: used in 1Peter 2:2 where newly born-again persons are encouraged to desire the sincere milk of God's Word that they may grow (mature).
2. _____ / νήπιος = a babe, a non-speaking toddler to early adolescence: used negatively of the Corinthian believers due to their persistent "babyishness" and carnality in 1Cor. 3:1. Believers are encouraged to grow beyond the *nepios* stage in Eph. 4:14 and Heb. 5:13 (*nepios* is used in both verses, translated *children* & *babe* respectively in the KJV).
3. _____ / παιδίον = a young child, a youth. 1Cor. 14:20 incorporates 3 of the 5 words I am listing here: *Brethren, be not children* (paidia, youths) *in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children* (nepios, babes), *but in understanding be men* (teleios, mature ones). In other words, "GROW UP!" The Corinthian believers are characterized by Paul in general as being very immature and in retrogression, despite the fact that they came behind in no spiritual gift (contrast 1Cor. 1:7 with 3:1-3).
4. _____ / τέκνον = a child of any age (usually parent-child relationship view). Rom. 8:16 states that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the **children** of God. In 2Tim. 2:1, Paul calls Timothy "my son (teknon)." Paul was the spiritual father of Timothy because he was the one who led Timothy to the Lord.
5. _____ / τέλειος = a mature person, hence perfect or complete. In understanding, believers are to think maturely, as *teleios* ones, 1Cor. 14:20 (see #3 in this listing). Paul in Philippians 3:15 encourages mature believers to think through the values that Paul has arrived at in the context, Philippians 3: 4-14. In the book of Hebrews, it is translated "full age" in 5:14 and "perfection" in 6:1.

Maturation Scale



$$M = KOT + AOT + Time$$

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Maturation = | <u>K</u> nowledge <u>O</u> f <u>T</u> ruth (The Word of God, Doctrine): 2Tim. 3:16-17 | + | <u>A</u> pplication <u>O</u> f <u>T</u> ruth to real life situations (Experience in "Truthing It"): Jam. 1:4; 1Cor. 14:20 | + | <u>T</u> ime: Quality Time (time logged in fellowship with the H.S.): Jam. 1:4; Eph. 4:11-16 |
|---------------------|--|---|---|---|--|

Some Marks of Christian Maturation

➤ _____: Capacity to assimilate more and more of God's Word and to appropriate it to life situations, 1Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:11-14.

➤ _____: A sense of competence, contentment, and sufficiency in Christ and His grace even under adverse circumstances, Phil. 4:11-13; 2Cor. 9:8.

When Paul says in Phil. 4:11, "I learned in whatever condition I am to be content" (written while in jail or under house arrest!), he is not expressing conceit or arrogance; rather competence and contentment in Christ and His will. **THIS HE HAD TO LEARN!** Learning includes a positive acceptance of life with its privileges and responsibilities. Exercising faith-rest in the doctrines of the Word of God is also a learning experience.

➤ _____: Acceptance for the responsibility of one's actions and reactions to real life situations. A mature believer does not dodge the issue of personable accountability to the Lord for how he handles his life. Nor does he practice self-justification when in the wrong!

➤ _____: Self-extension through love guided by truth (of God's Word). This includes love for Christ and God, love for the believers, love for the lost.

➤ _____: Management of one's time, energies, and capabilities so that Jesus Christ gets maximal glory from the sum total of one's life. A mature believer lives for Christ, not for his own selfish pursuits.

Conclusions and Applications

- ❖ Every believer begins his/her Christian life as a new born babe in Christ.
- ❖ Believers are not only expected to grow, they are commanded to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ, 2Pet. 3:18.
- ❖ Growth or maturation requires the intake of truth and application to life and both of these require time. There is no shortcut to growth.
- ❖ Maturation means that we handle our lives responsibly before God.
- ❖ Maturation brings with it the capacity to enjoy and to live life at its fullest.