Embracing Our Destiny
“We Must Embrace The Path Of Maturity”
(Part 2)

Intro:
• Many people want to experience their destiny from God yet they are not willing to embrace the path to get there. *Ps. 73: 24 “You will keep on guiding me with Your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny.”* (NLT) We must understand that what God calls us too is so important, that we first must be prepared for it. He’s not going to hand us something where we have no idea how to walk in it. He’s not going to entrust us with something until have the maturity to handle it. So, as we embrace our destiny, we must embrace God’s preparation process as well. This is where it breaks down for most people. They want the result without the process.
• We must embrace the path of maturity to experience our destiny? (4 Truths)

We Mature Through The Trials Of Life

James 1:2-4 “…whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.” (NLT)

*Trials in this life are opportunities for us to grow / develop / and mature. Our response to these events determine whether we grow or not. Not all trials produce good results. Not all trials produce maturity. That depends on us!*

Four types of trouble that test our faith
1. Circumstantial trouble
   Things in this life we have no control over. The bad things we experience simply living in a fallen world. (Car accident last year / 6 hrs in Belize airport / root canal / eyes –inflamed corneas /
2. Relational trouble
   Relational conflict at work / home / marriage / kids / neighbor / etc.. Many times relational conflict reveals immaturity. (I Cor. 3)
3. Demonic trouble
   We have a spiritual enemy and sometimes the situations we encounter in this life are demonically inspired. (Especially if you want to pursue your God-given destiny)
4. Self-inflicted trouble
   Many times we just make poor choices and we suffer the consequences of those mistakes.

B. Trails mature us in character
1. What I have discovered is that under stress (heat), the bad stuff boils to the surface. I don’t like this, but when it’s on the surface, I can see it clearly. Trials become the crucible of life for us to see where we need to grow.
2. Trails develop spiritual endurance into us and as a result, we develop strong godly character.
3. Immaturity is revealed when we display a lack of spiritual endurance. Like what?
   When we allow our emotions to overrule doing or saying what is right
   When we allow circumstances to dictate our faith / decisions
   When we demonstrate a lack of patience / lack of love / relationally
   When we allow anxiety and fear to govern our hearts instead of peace
   When we give in to temptation rather than running from it.
   When we give in to the peer pressure / please people rather than God
4. Endurance is developed when we choose to follow God / choose to do and believe what His word says regardless of the events / circumstances in my life.
Obeying God in the midst of the trial!
5. Character is not based upon favorable circumstances. The only way to develop endurance is to keep going when you want to quit. This is what trials do for us spiritually.
6. People quit too soon on God / quit obeying - and therefore never develop endurance or spiritual maturity. They never get to see the blessing that results from obedience and character! They miss experiencing the faithfulness of God!

---

We Mature Through The Knowledge Of God’s Word
I Peter 2:2 “Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.” (NASB)

A. We must intentionally grow in our understanding of God’s word.
1. It’s this basic: God’s word helps us grow / mature in our salvation. If we want to mature spiritually, we must get serious and intentional about increasing our understanding of the word of God.
2. We must be intentional about drinking from the Word ourselves
   • Developing the habit of reading (get a translation you can understand)
   • Utilize a reading help like “Daily Bread”.
3. We must be intentional about drinking from the Word through others.
   • God purposely gifts some people to teach so that believers can grow.
This is why we are developing TNT Night. (Explain –

4. I long for this church to have an increased hunger to learn the Word of God. “It’s not enough for Pastor Dale to know this book; now I want to know it!”

5. As your pastor, I long to share this book with you in ways that I simply can’t on Sun. mornings. God allowed me to go to Bible College and Seminary and to study and teach this book for 20 years. All that God has put into me, I want to give to you!

B. God’s word matures us in knowledge

1. We need to grow up in our thinking about our salvation. Many Christians just have a very basic understanding of what it means to be a Christian. This is a great start, but you will be handicapped if you stay there.

2. It’s a lot like my commitment to keep understanding technology. Not that I have a great understanding of it, but I’m increasing in it. I used to resist it, but now I see the necessity of increasing my knowledge.

3. WHY? Because of the benefits / It helps me do my job better / It’s not just knowledge for knowledge sake, it’s knowledge that is immediately applied in our ministry / life setting.
   - Even something as simple as a cell phone – (Both my daughters have one – they think it’s for them – No it’s for me – Parental Monitoring System - Story at soccer game

4. The reason we increase in our knowledge of the word of God is for the benefit. It helps me live life better. God’s word is the owner’s manual for life, I’d better increase in my understanding of it or I’m going to ruin something!

5. To mature in your knowledge is to eventually see life through God’s perspective. It is to have what we call a Biblical worldview. I look at life through the lens of God’s word. (Foundations class)
   - Without my contacts my perspective of life is distorted.
   - We must increase our knowledge of God’s word and get the lens of His word firmly established in our vision of life.

We Mature Through Practicing Biblical Principals

Heb. 5:14 “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice, have their sense trained to discern good from evil.” (NASB)

Spiritual maturity is the result of practice

1. When I was playing B-ball in HS, we had practice. In practice we would run our plays over and over and over again. We would run them so much you could do them in your sleep. WHY? So we could win on game day!
2. Spiritually, biblical principals must understood and then be practiced repeatedly for us to mature spiritually. We must be able to live out biblical principals in the game of life.

3. The great thing about life is that we get lots of opportunity for practice. Take the principal of “casting your anxiety upon God” so we can experience His peace.

4. The only way that truth will ever become a reality in my life is if I choose to practice it every time I experience fear / stress / anxiety / what do I do with it? Internalize it or Cast it!

5. If I don’t practice these things in daily routines of life, when the big games come (The Crisis / The tragedy / overwhelming circumstances / being wronged / things that just don’t make any sense) it takes us out of the game!

6. One more thing about practice. Practice implies that we don’t do it right all the time. That’s why it’s called practice! Practicing Biblical principals can get discouraging. “When am I going to get this!”

7. God has enough grace / forgiveness for practice. Your job is to just not quit. Try it again!

B. Practice matures us in spiritual wisdom

1. Practicing biblical principals in real life trains our spiritual senses so that we have spiritual wisdom. What is wisdom? It is the correct application of knowledge guided by the Holy Spirit in a given situation.

2. There are those who know God’s word well; then there are those who know it well and can apply it accurately in real life.

3. It’s the difference between those who have read a book on Steelhead fishing and those who can consistently catch steelhead. You’ve practiced fishing so much your senses are trained. (trained to read the water / trained to have your drift feel just right / trained to feel when a fish picks up your bait) Your senses are trained

4. The more we practice biblical principals from God’s word, the more our spiritual senses are trained and the more spiritual wisdom we live out. We know more then the book knowledge, now we begin to see how it’s accurately applied in life.

5. Just like a fisherman who knows how to read the water, now you know how to read life! (We must to do this in our marriage / relationship / stress / at work around unbelievers/ in conflict / in crisis /

6. The more you practice biblical principals the more spiritual wisdom the Holy Spirit develops in your life. This is essential because God is not going to give us more of our destiny without spiritual wisdom.
We Mature Through Following Jesus Every Day

Matt. 4:19 “And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’” (NASB)

Spiritual maturity is a relational pursuit
1. Notice Jesus didn’t call them to a class at the synagogue or to a Bible college / Seminary / or to a conference on spiritual growth He was leading at Jerusalem. He called them to follow Him!
2. It was through the process of following Him that HE would make them into something they were not.
3. What we have done is taken the path of maturity (which is highly relational) and made it into a formula. We’ve turned it into “10 steps to discipleship” / Take these classes on maturity / Go to Bible College / Seminary to get equipped to serve God.
4. Classes are good and have their place (I’ve encouraged you to go), but every class should only enhance the relational aspect of our faith not just increase our knowledge.
5. It would be like reading every marriage book out there / going to every marriage conference / Watching Dr. Phil every day / and then not spending any time with your spouse. (Wasn’t the point to improve your relationship?)
6. Yet, this is what many believers do. They take all kinds of classes and yet not connect relationally with Jesus.
7. Maturity is a result of spending time relationally with Jesus. This was Jesus’ model for growing His disciples to maturity. He spent 3 years with them in close relationship.
8. Later, after Jesus was resurrected, the religious leaders noticed by their words and behavior that they had been with Jesus. It was obvious! They talked like Him / acted like Him / WHY? They spent time with Him!

Following Jesus matures us experientially
1. Jesus’ method for maturity hasn’t changed in 2000yrs. It is still a relational pursuit and we still can experience the reality of Jesus with us today.
2. Maturing experientially means that we are growing in our experience with Jesus. We are growing in following Him (hearing his voice / experiencing His presence / drawing on His power / recognizing His direction / applying His truth / becoming channels for His resources.
3. Is this not what our hearts really long for. We long for the spiritual not the religious; not the mechanics / not the liturgy / but for a real spiritual experience with the One who made us.
4. To embrace the path of maturity is to embrace growing in your experience with Jesus. To open your life up to experientially follow Jesus.
This is the path I want to challenge you all to embrace. Let’s embrace God’s path of maturity this year like never before!

- Let God mature us through the trials
- Let God mature us through knowledge of His word
- Let God mature us through Practicing Biblical Principals
- Let God mature us through Following Jesus

The only way for us to experience more of our destiny as a church is for us to experience more maturity. Please believe the process is worth the destination!