

The 5 Stages of Maturity

Session 2: The Infant Stage

1. Review

- Maturity can be defined as: *Reaching my God-given potential in every age and stage.*
- The 5 Stages of maturity are: Infant, Child, Adult, Parent, Elder
- Learn more from: *“Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You,”* by Wilder, Friesen, et al.
 - Also in, *“The Complete Guide to Living with Men,”* by Jim Wilder (out of print).
- Maturity Model serves as a map to help us know where we are, what we missed, and how to grow in maturity.
- Remember! Maturity does not give us more value.
 - *“Our value is inherent, unchangeable, everlasting, and complete”* – Amy Brown
 - *“Maturity does not add to our value; rather, maturity better helps us express and share ourselves with the people we love.”* – Chris Coursey

2. Core Principles

- Maturity is a lot like swiss cheese
- Each stage of maturity has both needs and tasks.
- “Needs” are those things our family and community were meant to provide us.
 - We can ask God to provide the needs we missed.
- “Tasks” are the skills or abilities we were designed to learn at that stage of development.
 - We can grow our maturity by learning the tasks we missed.
- We need to start where we are, not where we wish we were.

3. Infant Level Maturity [Age 0-3]. Primary Goal: Learning to Receive; Live in Joy & Peace

4. Infant Level Needs

- Joy bonds with both parents that are strong, loving, caring, secure
- Quiet together time
- Important needs are met without asking
- Help regulating distress and emotions
- Be seen through the “eyes of heaven”
- Receive and give life
- Others synchronize with him/her first

5. Infant Level Tasks

- Receive with joy
- Learn to synchronize with others
- Organize self into a person through imitation
- Learn to regulate emotions
- Learn to return to joy from every emotion
- Learn to be the same person over time
- Learn self-care skills
- Learn to rest

6. An Adult with Holes in Their Maturity at the Infant Level...

- Will not ask for what they need.
- Won't be able to take care of themselves (or others) emotionally.
- Will often be possessive of relationships, power, possessions (e.g., "Mine!").
- Cannot handle even valid, constructive criticism; it feels like a personal attack.
- May be high-functioning in many areas of life, but due to emotional immaturity will find it difficult to have successful and enduring relationships.

7. Infant Maturity Stage Assessmentⁱ

No	At times	Usually	Yes	
				I have experienced strong, loving, caring bonds with a mother figure.
				I have experienced strong, loving, caring bonds with a father figure.
				My important needs as a baby were met & others synchronized with me.
				Quiet together times calmed me & I know how to rest.
				I can trust others in close relationships & attach to them securely.
				I receive from others without guilt or shame.
				I can regulate and quiet the "big six" emotions without getting stuck in them:
				Anger
				Fear
				Sadness
				Disgust
				Shame
				Hopeless Despair
				Important people have delighted in my unique identity.

8. Immanuel Interaction

- Take 3, slow, deep belly breaths.
- Ask God to bring to mind a time you felt joyful, peaceful, and/or connected.
- Write a prayer of thanksgiving: *Dear Lord, I am thankful for*

- Write a response from God's perspective: Dear child of mine

- Sharing my heart with Jesus: Jesus, what's going on in my mind and heart right now is ...

- Write down the thoughts, words, impressions that come to mind without filtering (you can test it later).

- Jesus' tender response toward me: My dear child...

ⁱ Modified from <https://lifemodelworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Maturity-Skills-Assessment.pdf>. Versions of this assessment can also be found in *Rare Leadership*, by Marcus Warner and Jim Wilder, and *The Complete Guide to Living with Men*, by E. James Wilder.