

The 5 Stages of Maturity

Session 5: The Parent Stage

1. Review

- Maturity can be defined as: *Reaching my God-given potential in every age and stage.*
- Remember! Maturity is valuable, but it does not give us more value.
 - o “Our value is inherent, unchangeable, everlasting, and complete” – Amy Brown

2. Core Principles

- Maturity is a lot like swiss cheese
- Each stage of maturity has both needs and tasks.
- We can ask God to provide the needs we missed.
- We can grow our maturity by learning the tasks we missed.

3. Maturity Model Overview

STAGE	AGE	PRIMARY TASK
Infant	0-3	Receiving; Learn to Live in Joy & Peace
Child	4-12	Taking care of self (1); Develop Individual Identity
Adult	13 +	Taking care of two people (2); Develop Group Identity
Parent	Birth of 1st child to launch of last	Taking care of children sacrificially with joy.

4. Parent Level Needs

- To give life without requiring anything in return.
- An encouraging partner.
- Guidance from elders.
- Peer review from other fathers or mothers.
- A secure, orderly environment.

5. Parent Level Tasks

- Building a home.
- Protect my family.
- Serve my family.
- Enjoy my family.
- Mature my children.
- Synchronize with the needs of: children, spouse, family, work & church.

6. What about Singles as Parents?

- Paul was a spiritual father
 - 1 Timothy 1:2 *“To Timothy, my true son in the faith...”*
 - 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 *“...just as a nursing mother cares for her own children...we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children...”*
- 3 Levels
 - Supplemental – assist with training, introduction to the community, protection, etc.
 - Stand-in – when a parent is unable to be available for whatever reason at given times.
 - Replacement – when there is a permanent loss of a parent.

7. Singles as Spiritual Parents:

- God is the One who calls you to this.
- Needs to be done as part of a community.
- Focus on your same gender.
- Have parenting coaches.
- Be aware of the power of bonds.
 - Sexual circuits are located next to the brain’s bonding center.

8. Parent Level Maturity Holes:

- Family members may be put at risk, deprived, or feel unimportant.
- Children may be ‘parentified’ – having to take care of parents – which actually blocks their maturing process.
- Children may be vulnerable to peer pressure, unhealthy group bonds (e.g., cults, gangs), and be less likely to succeed in life’s goals.
- Parents may be overwhelmed and fueled by stress (fear) instead of joy.
- Hopeless, depressed, disintegrating family units develop.

9. Parent Maturity Stage Assessment¹

No	Sometime	Usually	Yes	
				I pour life into others & stay committed over time even when it is hard and exhausting.
				I sacrificially take care of my children making decisions in their best interest—and my schedule, checkbook and decisions reflect that. I can give to my family without needing to receive from them.
				I receive support, guidance, and input from others, seek needed resources, and listen to the wisdom of those ahead of me.
				I am protective of my family and have established a secure home base where my family members feel heard and safe.
				I am present with my family and take time to enjoy them.
				I am a student of my children & see them as God sees them—as cherished people created for God’s special purposes. I pay attention to their unique identities, helping them flourish as the people they were created to be.
				I work on my own maturity and personal healing, so I can model maturity and recovery to my children.
				I allow and encourage my children to have close relationships with other mentors and spiritual parents.

¹ Modified from ‘My Personal Maturity Map’ handout, by Anne Bierling with contributions from Nik Harrang.

				I am able to bring my family through difficult times— remaining relational and bonded even when in crisis or conflict.
				I can wisely balance the needs of my spouse, children, work & community.

10. What To Do With My Maturity Holes

- Ask God to show me the relationships He has for me to grow in maturity
- Identify 1 or 2 tasks to prayerfully begin to work on (and ask God for opportunities)
- Find others who have that skill or ability and ask them to tell you stories.
- Talk to Immanuel about maturity: yours and others.

11. Other Steps: Grow Your Joy Bucket

- Your 'Joy Center' is the same part of your brain as your 'Identity Center'²
- Plug the holes³
- Seek to fill your Joy Bucket regularly through positive relational interactions with God and others.
- It can grow larger through the ABCs of Building Bounce⁴
 - o Appreciation
 - o Beliefs
 - o Connections

12. Immanuel Interaction

Begin by asking 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

² For more information, see the Deeper Walk E-Institute Course, "[Whole-Brain Living](#)." Also see chapters 3 & 8 in, *Rare Leadership* by Marcus Warner and Jim Wilder.

³ A helpful resource is, *Understanding the Wounded Heart*, by Marcus Warner.

⁴ *The ABCs of Building Bounce* by Marcus Warner is due out in April 2020.

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...
