

Philippians 3:12-21

Christian Maturity



1. Overview of the message:

Following the mention of maturity in verse 15, Tim asked 'What is Maturity?'

It is not just experience or a role, but a way of thinking. Following verses 1-11, this points to finding our value and acceptance through Jesus rather than our own behaviour, and treasuring Him above everything else.

Right behaviour follows from putting our trust in Jesus. However, there can be a disconnect: "not that I have already obtained all this" (verse 12). Paul is telling us how to press forwards into what God calls us to (verses 13-14).

The way he shows here is through the power of example (verse 17). Tim encouraged us to look for ways in which others can inspire us, as well as sharing our own experiences of God which can help others.

2. Follow-up in your group

This is a great opportunity to put the message into practice immediately. Here are some ideas; please do whatever seems best for your group.

- Ask people to speak of who encourages them, and why. Don't be frightened to name individuals – public affirmation is often very helpful. (Be sensitive to people who may be insecure about this, ready to give affirmation yourself to those who may be missed out. [1 Cor 12:22-24])
- When people are named, you could ask them to say why they are like that. For example, if George has been affirmed for his reliability in serving, you could ask him what inspires him to serve like this.
- Ask people to tell stories of how God has helped them. Maybe there are events years ago when God proved himself to them. We need to hear these things, over and over! Maybe you could ask some people privately in advance to share their stories.
- Ask people to share God's goodness in the last week. (This may need a little encouragement, but even seemingly ordinary things – I have had food every day – are parts of God's goodness to us.)
- Let the sharing of God's goodness lead into praise and prayer.

For the future: this kind of affirmation and sharing testimony can become a normal up-building feature of your group. Can you regularly include telling stories of God's work in your lives as part of your meetings? How can you go on affirming and encouraging one another?