



...I write to you dear children because you know the Father. I write to you fathers because you know who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” 1 John 2:12-14

## Maturity Matrix

1 John 2 highlights stages of spiritual development. These stages are exemplified in everyday life – in challenges and opportunities, in learning to activate kingdom reality and live by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26). As the Spirit reveals what is going on in our circumstances, we work out our response in the throne room.

The “spiritual” adjective in Galatians 6 is clearly a reference to those who order their lives by the Spirit, process their lives, and shape it according to the kingdom. The evidence of one such as this reflects the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. When those are not activated and evident in a person’s life, regardless of the challenge, this would indicate further development needed. The use of spiritual language or religious practices or sign gifts is not an indicator of maturity. The chief indication of maturity is found in Galatians 5 where we exhibit the evidence of living above the chaos and 1 John 2 where clear steps are integrated into a person’s life.



| Children  | Young Men/Women  | Fathers/Mothers   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Not Responsible</b>  | <b>Responsible for Myself</b>  | <b>Responsible for Others</b>   |
| Alive in the kingdom  | Living in the kingdom  | Mentoring others in the kingdom   |
| Unaware of spiritual battles (early)  | Personal victories   | Mentoring others toward spiritual victories   |
| Need to be equipped: identity (chosen & beloved), throne room processing, power of scripture for development and revelation, and personal responsibility. | Need to be equipped: spiritual warfare, use of scripture to order life by the kingdom, how to be responsible for others (Rom. 14-15). Doers of the Word (James 1:22-25). For next level must begin to pour into others. Living in identity of chosen and beloved, breaking shame, living beyond feelings and into <u>truth</u> . | Must be looking to next generation development (Paul & Timothy), live in identity, immersed in scripture, and skilled in spiritual warfare. |

## Children

Experience the wonder of forgiveness & God's love

### Indicators of being stuck:

- When we see God as a genie – not Almighty and all knowing, whose ways are above ours. As James says, our prayers can be selfish (James 4:3).
- Relying on grace for forgiveness and therefore never gaining victory - can be described as “cheap grace”. (Rom. 6).
- Battles in the flesh; selfishness, anger, accusing others rather than praying through (throne room/triangle) and hearing what the Father is doing in the moment. Can be based on feelings/experience rather than scripture and is then unstable (Eph. 4:13-16).
- Everyone experiences heartaches and setbacks. “Children” throw a temper tantrum and think someone else is the problem rather than resolving their “stuff” in the throne room. Looking for loopholes to justify disobedience – unwilling to assume responsibility for others (Rom. 13-14).
- Personal bias, preferences run rampant (such as preference in preaching/worship style) and become the foundation for making decisions. (I Cor. 2-3)
- Jealousy, quarrels, choosing sides vs. being a peacemaker (Mt. 5:9).
- Excusing and covering sin & failures (taking no responsibility)

### Indicators of growth:

- Evidence of processing in the throne room/triangle.
- Learning to order and submit their lives to the clear Word of God (forgiveness, money, sexuality, power).
- Realizing the tension is intentional from the Father and leaning into it.
- Quick to confess & repent (I Jn. 1:9, 2:1).
- Learning to use and integrate scripture in their values and decisions.

## Young Men/Women

Recognize the spiritual battle is often disguised in conflict, temptation, barriers, etc.

Strong in using the Word of God and in ordering their lives by the scripture (vs. feelings, convenience, comfort) I Jn. 2:14

Hides Word in their heart. (Ps. 119:11)

Integrating scripture into needs and challenges, such as choosing prayer over anxiety (Phil. 4) or trusting the Father (Mt. 6:33).

Learning to identify and win over spiritual battles within and without (next stage movement).

### Indicators of being stuck:

- Knowledge beyond experience. Knowing scripture (knowledge puffs up) but not integrating/ordering their lives by the Word.
- Pride/arrogance/condescension
- Fighting spiritual battles with earthly weapons
- Can become harsh, Pharisaical, debate doctrine but not becoming more loving (II Tim. 1:5).
- Unhealthy responsibility – assuming all responsibility rather than one's part

### Indicators of growth:

- Exhibit self-control (able to deny self for greater good)
- Honest/vulnerable in spiritual walk
- Submissive/Respectful of those in authority over them
- Exhibiting more of the fruits of the Spirit – Gal 5

## Fathers/Mothers

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Spiritually mature people who bring the kingdom to the moment (the kingdom would mean seeing a challenge or circumstance in the light of His majesty and holiness [good and pure], His promises and destiny). Chaos and crisis become accelerators in the kingdom destiny and development. | Protect the young without removing all challenges and tension. They disciple or “father/mother” by leading the young to order their lives in the kingdom and recognize spiritual battles (overcome the evil one).   |
| Parents who are mature, responsible, developed in the foundations of the kingdom and therefore pour into (disciple) others.  | Fathers/Mothers “know”, which indicates intimate knowledge and awareness of the Lord, experiential reality of Presence of the Lord.   |
| Live in intimacy with the Father (practice the throne room triangle)   | Higher levels of revelation and responsibility that also brings higher levels of attack, culture of greater servant verses culture of privilege and personal preferences.   |
| <b>Indicators of being stuck:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of vulnerability</li><li>• Arrogance</li><li>• Teaching but not practicing the kingdom reality</li></ul>  | <b>Indicators of growth:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to allow growth tension that is crucial for development of others, rather than removing it</li><li>• Able to discern character, maturity, &amp; next steps in development of others</li></ul> |

## USING THE MATURITY MATRIX

**The maturity matrix is a tool, not a weapon.** It is not intended to be a weapon of shame, but a tool to discern and cause reflection as well as provide direction for next step development.

### Using the maturity matrix could look like this:

A leader who has been given entry and passport into another’s life would, after building relationship, explain the various levels of spiritual maturity, highlighting how one lives at each level. When appropriate the leader would push the matrix to the person and ask them to reflect on the different stages of spiritual development and discern where their next step might be. The leader processes the other’s discernment and supports by asking how they might help them walk toward the next level of development/maturity.

Only in rare and trusted relationships would the leader challenge the discernment and steps of the other. Spiritual development moves at the pace of the other, not the leader. Shame or disapproval of any kind is not a motivator into higher ground. The other person must be trusted to discern the voice of the Lord and trusted that even if they are off in their discernment, the Spirit will enlighten and call forward. We are joining Jesus in the development of another (I John 5:19).

Once this process is established and a high degree of love and trust is established, a leader may highlight from time-to-time opportunities to activate the next level, such as seeing them using scripture to order their lives in a painful, seemingly trapped moment (this would be an indicator of adulthood “the Word of God is strong in you.”). If the relationship can bear up under the discussion, they may also discuss the next steps, where possibilities could have been taken but were missed.

Maturity is a developmental process and spiritual maturity encompasses all of one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength. As these steps are rooted in life, maturity becomes a natural outgrowth. The steps may seem challenging early on and we may experience disappointment in ourselves while all of the time the reflection and processing of the next level steps can be rooted more deeply.

We have attempted to highlight these steps to maturity in the progressive manner as John laid out (I John 2). Maturity is an ongoing ebb and flow process that must be seen as such, celebrating the positive progress, and learning from the stumbles and falls. Take heart, we CAN learn to develop into those the Father would trust to reproduce, to mentor and develop for eternity!

## MOVING PEOPLE THROUGH THE MATURITY MATRIX

If these targets are revealed in the Word, then the strategy for leaders is to create opportunities for progression.

- Define/point out each level
- Equip by establishing patterns (as in throne room processing, practicing kingdom reality relationally, etc.)

- C. Realize life will be the raw material, the experience to practice next level kingdom reality. For instance, when we are awash in shame that is the moment to declare or activate identity “sonship”/” daughtership”.
- D. Fathering/Mothering (I Jn. 2, I Cor. 4, Paul to Timothy) happens over time (Circle of Influence 2 relationships).

With intentionality we can accelerate development for those willing to be submissive to the mentoring; those willing to do the hard work of bringing the kingdom to the moment.

The leader (Father/Mother) must not allow “Sunday centric” programming to monopolize time, prayer, and dreams, but rather shift to intentional Circle 2 development of spiritually mature leaders.