

Seven Skills A Mature Christian Ought To Have 05-21-17 AM

A recent article from Business Insider listed eight skills that an 18 year old ought to have to enter the world¹. The list was compiled by a dean of Stanford University, and appeared in a book "*How to Raise an Adult*" by Julia Lythcott Haims. That list was:

1. An 18-year-old must be able to talk to strangers
2. An 18-year-old must be able to find his way around
3. An 18-year-old must be able to manage his assignments, workload, and deadlines
4. An 18-year-old must be able to contribute to the running of a household
5. An 18-year-old must be able to handle interpersonal problems
6. An 18-year-old must be able to cope with ups and downs
7. An 18-year-old must be able to earn and manage money
8. An 18-year-old must be able to take risks

A list like this is not necessarily perfect, but it represents an excellent way to measure the growth that a teenager ought to be achieving. The Scriptures reveal that Christians are to grow in grace and knowledge. Growing can be difficult if there are not measurements of growth, or benchmarks of what a Christian needs to achieve. In Hebrews 5:12 the writer tells the audience that "for though by this time you ought to be teachers". This indicates that there is a point of growth where a Christian ought to be able to teach another person the principles of Christianity. Are there other such benchmarks we can find in Scriptures for spiritual Growth?

1. A Mature Christian should be totally submitted to God for direction - James 4:6-7. This means all aspects of our life are in Christ. Christianity is not one part of our life, it defines all aspects of our life and lifestyle. Every decision we make is in Christ. We are failing at maturity when we need to be pushed to do the right thing and we need to agree with Scripture before acting.

2. A Mature Christian should be mindful of how important a prayer life is - 1 Timothy 2:8. Christians need to commit themselves to prayer. This means that they pray without ceasing. This means that they pray in spirit and in truth, and with understanding. We are failing at maturity when we only pray in difficult times, or when we say "*all I can do is pray*".

3. A Mature Christian should have learned to think of others first - Philippians 2:1-4. Selfishness is the most natural behavior of a worldly person. When we come to Christ, a part of us dies. We need to constantly put others first, particularly our brethren. We are failing at maturity when we miss the assembly of Christians for our preferences or we hold bitterness against each other.

4. A Mature Christian should be able to handle the Word accurately - 2 Timothy 2:15. Many times in the NT Christians are told to study the Word. We need to be ready to find an answer from Scripture. We are failing at maturity when we cannot teach the truth or when we are not ready to give an answer for our hope.

5. A Mature Christian should be able to control their emotions - 2 Peter 1:5-7. Emotions such as anger, jealousy, envy, or bitterness need to be under our control as mature Christians. No decisions are made

¹ <http://www.businessinsider.com/former-stanford-dean-shares-the-8-skills-everyone-should-have-by-age-18-2016-4>

by anger, and we remove all bitterness and wrath from our lives. We are failing at maturity when we are given to outbursts of emotion and we feel sorry for ourselves.

6. A Mature Christian should be committed to the idea of endurance - Hebrews 12:1-3. Christians understand that we must be committed to be successful as Christians. This means we expect hard times and good times. We need to be ready for both. We are failing at maturity when we are easily distracted or overcome, and we need constant admonition or attention from our brethren in order to remain faithful.

7. A Mature Christian should be prepared to change - Romans 12:1-2. Christians are supposed to be constantly examining themselves and testing themselves. We need to be ready to change when we are wrong, or when we can improve ourselves. We are failing at maturity when we won't consider that we might be wrong and when we don't constantly examine ourselves.

This list is certainly not comprehensive. We might add the fruit of the spirit (Galatians. 5) or aspects of wisdom. Conversely, there are other indicators that we have not matured properly (such as the works of the flesh in Galatians 5). It is simply meant to cause us to understand that there are things to measure spiritual maturity by, and we need to be doing this.