

Christ in Me

Mature in Christ

February 8, 2026

Colossians 1:24 - 2:5

Introduction

Talk about learning to play acoustic guitar by ear and imitation, as opposed to learning music. It seems great at first, but it limits your ability to grow. Sadly, I got lazy and never really leaned into learning guitar the right way, staying immature in my abilities. I can play a bit, but only a bit.

This describes many Christians. They're Christians, but not maturing Christians. And yet over and over again, the biblical expectation is maturity. Here are just 2. (2 slides)

- "Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature." 1 Corinthians 14:20
- "Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God... Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity." Hebrews 5:11 - 6:1

And of course we saw this last week in Paul's introduction of himself to the Colossians. He said in 1:28-29, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

Is that how you describe yourself as a Christian? Mature? Desiring maturity? How does one become mature in the first place?

In two marvelously compact verses, Paul gives some guiding principles for maturity and one sort of "measuring stick" to help you and I see if we are maturing. (Slide).

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude. — Colossians 2:6–7 (CSB)

Body

Live Faithfully

(Slide) Paul says in v. 6, "As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk with him."

Receiving Jesus naturally leads to a continual walk with Jesus, and that's because Jesus Christ (the Messiah King) is LORD.

You may have heard Christians separate these two ideas ... Jesus as "Savior" and Jesus as "Lord" ... but the simple and clear biblical teaching is that Jesus saves because Jesus rules. Remember from two weeks ago ... Jesus is supreme and sufficient for creation, the church, and for our salvation. **That applies specifically to my salvation and yours. Because Jesus is sufficient for your salvation because of his life, death, and resurrection, that makes Him SUPREME over the lives of those He saves.** As A. W. Tozer once put it, **"God does not save who He does not command."** Any gospel that avoids His authority in favor of comfort or self-help is no gospel at all.

True conversion acknowledges that Christ has the right to rule over every part of life. Each decision, relationship, and circumstance falls under His command. We'll see this as we go forward into chapter 3. Your church relationships are submitted to Jesus. Your marital relationship is submitted to Jesus. Your parenting relationship is submitted to Jesus. Your relationship to your work is submitted to Jesus. Your relationship with money is submitted to Jesus. Every aspect of our lives is expected to align with the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus. That is godly living. It's living faithfully.

To receive Christ is to submit to Christ. Life "in the Lord" begins at conversion but finds its full expression in obedient daily living.

Grow Deeply

Paul also gives us a second guiding principle. That of spiritual growth. He writes:

(slide) ... being rooted and built up in him ...

The emphasis here is that maturing in the faith is an ongoing process. The "walking" previously mentioned also hints at this, but the Greek is particularly helpful here. The perfect tense ("having been rooted") points to a completed past act—conversion—while the present tense ("be built up") emphasizes continuous growth. **What Paul is saying is that like a seed planted in good soil, the believer's life is meant to expand and flourish.**

But that flourishing is never in or toward something other than where it all started. It all started in Christ, and our growth continues on "in Christ." The same soil that rooted the believer nourishes his growth. Spiritual depth and maturity come not from discovering a new "experience" or some other "superior teaching," but from a richer apprehension of the Christ we already know.

In context, Paul was addressing a false teaching worming its way into the Colossian church (one that he never puts a name on) that, on one hand, agreed with Jesus and the foundational teachings of the church, but then they would argue that maturity in the faith lay in adding on additional things to Jesus. We'll talk about what some of those things were next week in vv. 8-23

and what their modern-day equivalents are. But for now, let's just hold on to Paul's point that maturity in the faith looks like someone who is firmly planted in the person of Jesus, and everything about their life is clearly connected to Him.

Stand Firmly

The last guiding principle that Paul gives regarding maturity in the faith comes from the middle of verse 7.

(slide) ... established in the faith, just as you were taught ...

Paul's third exhortation is intellectual and spiritual: to be established in the faith, meaning *grounded in the truth* that first brought salvation.

Notice that Paul links the Spirit's work not with your feelings or your experiences, but with a relentless hunger to know God's truth. A healthy, stable, growing church possesses as a part of its culture a palpable desire to know the Bible, know the doctrine, and see it apply to our lives.

Illustration

A wonderful natural illustration of what Paul means is found in the redwood tree, particularly the coastal redwood of California.

At first glance, you'd expect a tree that can grow over 300 feet tall to have roots plunging deep into the earth. Yet, surprisingly, redwoods have relatively shallow root systems, often only 6 to 12 feet deep. Their strength doesn't come from a single deep taproot. Instead, it comes from the way their roots spread wide and intertwine with the roots of other redwoods.

Beneath a redwood grove, the roots form a vast, living network—interlocking, sharing nutrients, stabilizing one another when storms come. It's a picture of strength through connection. One redwood cannot withstand centuries of wind alone, but a forest of redwoods—rooted together—can.

That's a gospel-shaped metaphor for the Christian life.

- **Deep in Christ:** Our roots must draw life from Him, not from moral effort or cultural success. The deeper our roots go into Christ's grace, the more stability we have in joy and suffering.
- **Wide in community:** Like the redwoods, we grow strong not in isolation but in the shared soil of the Body of Christ. Faith that stays rooted in Christ naturally spreads outward to others, giving and receiving spiritual sustenance.
- **Built up together:** As Paul says later in Colossians, we are "knit together in love" (Col. 2:19). A forest of believers bound by the love of Christ weathers storms far better than a lone tree trying to stand tall by itself.

Gratitude as a Measure

So, packed into these verses Paul gives three guiding principles for maturity in our faith: godly living that keeps pressing through the pursuit of truth.

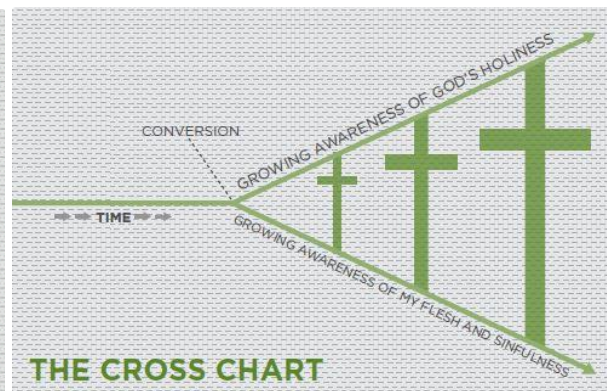
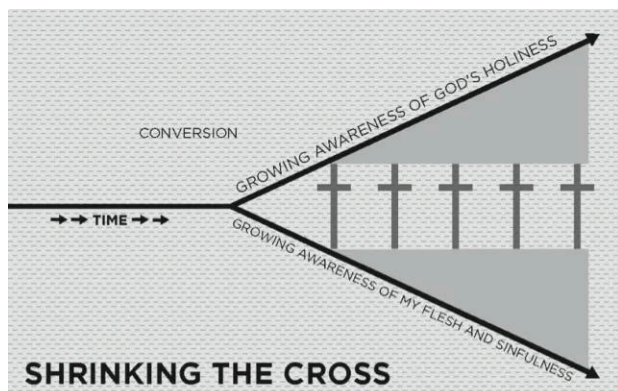
Which then begs the question: how do I know if I am maturing? The answer is at the end of verse 7.

(slide) ... overflowing with gratitude.

The measuring stick for maturity is gratitude; more specifically, gratitude for the thing that you are walking in, rooted in, being built up in, and being taught – the gospel. The work of Jesus on your behalf.

Gratitude is really a form of worship ... a form of praise. It's our heart's constant acknowledgement that because of Jesus, we are always better than we deserve. And that gratitude for Jesus and His work on your behalf overflows into gratitude as a general state of mind or state of being.

Illustration - Shrinking the Cross *(2 Slides)*



Segue to Communion

(Title Slide) And that takes us to communion. When we come to the Lord's Table, we are not starting something new; we are continuing in Him, just as we were taught. This table is a living reminder of what we first received: Christ Himself, crucified and risen, the One who redeemed us by His blood and made us His own.

To partake is to say with our actions what Paul urged us to say with our lives: "As we received Him, so we live in Him."

At this table:

- We reaffirm His Lordship, submitting afresh to His rule.
- We renew our growth, drawing nourishment from the same Christ in whom we were rooted.
- We rejoice in the truth we were taught, letting gratitude overflow from hearts filled with thanksgiving.

Communion, then, is the visible expression of Paul's call to live a life "overflowing with thankfulness." As we eat and drink, we remember that every grace, every growth, every good thing comes from Him—and that His cross remains both our beginning and our center.

So as we come, let's do so with thankful hearts—remembering that the only thing we bring to this table is our gratitude, and the only thing we receive is Christ Himself, our life and our Lord.