

## What Does “Mature” Look Like

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*  
Romans 12:14-21 (NIV)

### 1. Love others. Be a servant who is not “status” conscious

- *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*
- *Do not be proud, be willing to associate with people of low position.*  
(Your Father) causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matt. 5:45 (NIV)  
God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (NIV)

### 2. Love and serve even those who resist or persecute

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.  
Matthew 5:43-44(NIV)

- *Do not repay anyone evil for evil.*
- *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*
- *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath. "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*
- *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse*
- *If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if thirsty, give him drink.*

### 3. Develop empathy for others and serve them according to *their* needs

**Empathy** – def: “The capacity for participating in another’s feelings or ideas.

(In other words, the ability to feel what others are feeling.)

- *Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.* (Limited of course by what God says is “right”).
- *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* (Limited by others’ motives and relational health)
- *Do not be conceited.* (Limited by a lack of self-awareness)  
*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment.* Rom. 12:3b (NIV)

### 4. Empathy → The inner gyroscope God placed in each of us

*In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.* Matthew 7:12 (NIV)

*"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? **If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?"***  
Matthew 7:9-11 (NIV)

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up **according to their needs**, that it may benefit those who listen.* Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

### 5. Growing in empathy takes:

- Intent** – I need to *want to* understand so I can care and serve
- Attention:** We must listen well on all levels (more than words!)
- Time** – We must often **s-l-o-w d-o-w-n** to check the gyroscope. (Ask...how would I feel if placed in this situation given their reality)
- Practice** – Individuals differ in “EQ”. For some it is quite natural while some others must work hard to develop empathy