

Introduction: Spirituality and the pursuit of hope

- For many, finding and experiencing lasting HOPE in external success, rewards, fame, and wealth have proved futile.
- For others, seeking lasting HOPE in a person or persons has proved painful and disappointing.
- As a result, the vast majority of people on the earth (all non-atheists) seek lasting HOPE via some pathway to spiritual development and maturity.

The Question: How do we pursue HOPE in a world filled with pseudo-spirituality?

The Answer:

Philippians 3:12-16

The Context: Paul's hope is knowing and experiencing Christ's power, suffering, and transformation.

Philippians 3:10-11

Paul defines authentic spiritual maturity

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Philippians 3:12 (NIV)

¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

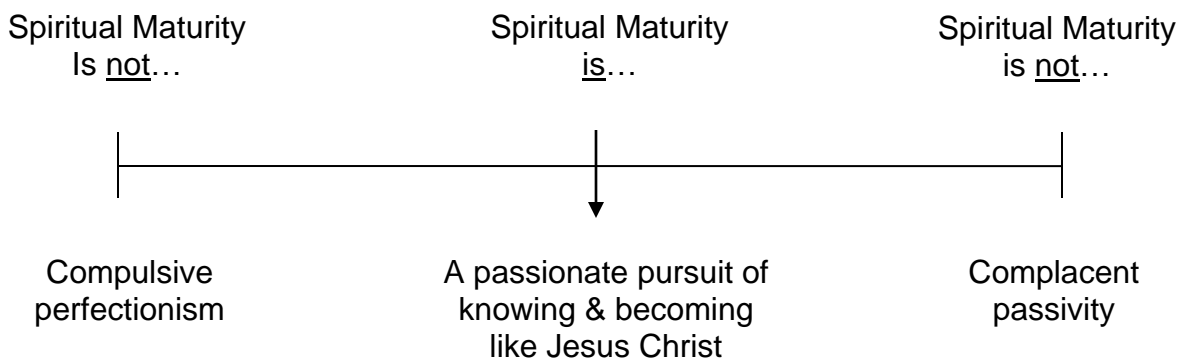
¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

Philippians 3:15-16 (NIV)



3 Takeaways concerning spiritual maturity:

1. Spiritual maturity does not mean we are _____ (or will ever be in this life).

Philippians 3:12

2. Spiritual maturity does mean our lives are characterized by a _____ of **knowing** and **becoming** like Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14

3. Spiritual maturity does mean our lives will exhibit significant _____ within and without.

Philippians 3:15-16

Discussion Questions:

1. List some common misconceptions about what it means to be “spiritual.” Where did these misconceptions come from?
2. Why is it critical to remember that spiritual maturity is a process? What are some common pitfalls when we fail to realize this?
3. What has most helped you grow in your passionate pursuit of knowing and becoming like Jesus? How has this changed your life?
4. What failures do you need to “forget” because they bring condemnation? Who could help you on that journey?
5. What successes do you need to forget that breed complacency? Who could help you on that journey?
6. Is there a specific action step of faith you sense God would have you take to mature in Christ?