

Mature Love

Eph. 3:14-19; 1 Cor. 13:4-7, 11.

-Maturity in Christ is *always an expression of the love of God in and through us.*

- This is *not about me "trying"* to love like God and live in continual fleshly frustration and defeat.
- This is about *yielding to Him, and so abiding in His love, that same love abides in and is expressed through us.*

Mature Love

Song 1:4 (Young's Literal Trans.): *"Draw me: after thee we run, The king hath brought me into his inner chambers, We do joy and rejoice in thee, We mention thy loves more than wine, Uprightly they have loved thee!"*

Song 1:4 (Latin Vulgate): *"He brought me into the winepress and set love in right order within me."*

-Song of Solomon is about bringing a soul into union with God and the process of transforming our love into His.

-**Mature Love** – *God's own love being expressed in and through me.*

Mature Love

"Mine" must become "His".

-In the beginning, the passion of the Lord's heart for us is revealed to us, along with His beauty, power and gifts.

▪We respond to Him, but it is with *immature, self-centered love* – love that has US at the center and not God.

▪**Song 2:16:** *"My beloved is mine, and I am his..."*

-Everything, including biblical truth, is *interpreted as to how it relates to SELF and not Jesus.*

Mature Love

"Mine" must become "His".

-This state is not allowed to remain long as His goal is to make us like Himself and extend His presence, glory and power through us.

-So begins the journey of discipleship (training and discipline in His love), that can sometimes last for extended periods.

- The **soul must learn to submit to Him as Lord.**
- The soul begins to **become more conscious of Him and what I can be to Him instead of what He can be and do for me.**

Mature Love

"Mine" must become "His".

-The development of His love in us **goes through a purification process and is set in right order.**

- Song 7:10:** "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me."
- This is mature love**, which means we are fully abiding in Him and His fullness is abiding in us.

Mature Love

There is no BECAUSE in the love of God.

-Until we, like Job, come to a place that we love and serve God with no selfish "because" we are not like Him.

- We love **BECAUSE** we have experienced His love, period.

-**Tozer talks about three dimensions of love in the life of a believer:**

- Gratitude love** – love because of what He does.
- Excellence love** – love because He's holy, worthy, altogether lovely, etc.
- Selfless Love** - love that loves those who cannot or will not love back.

Mature Love

Eph 1:18: "...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, **what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...**"

–Are we more concerned with gaining our inheritance or Him gaining His?

- Paul's continual concern for the body of Christ is to grow up and let Him have full sway in and through our lives, becoming the extension of Himself in the earth.

- **This happens when our love is set in right order.**

Mature Love

Gethsemane.

–The Lord leads us to a place where friends, loved-ones and circumstances inflict pain and adversity upon us not because of sin, **but to deal with SELF.**

–The purpose is to **bring forth the purified wine of selfless love** for His honor and sake alone.

–It's possible to even enter into this selfishly...

- We **focus on enduring to get through** to the resurrection, deliverance, joy, restoration, etc.

- **We're still at the center!**

- Joy **becomes a reward instead of something we share with Him in the journey.**

Mature Love

Gethsemane.

–**Heb. 12:2:** "...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

- "**Set before**" means it was "**continually present in His mind,**" continually sharing Abba's joy **as He endured**, not as a reward afterward.

- It's a **love that brings joy NOW.**

- **Life is no longer one big test of endurance, but a continual experience of love and joy in the midst of enduring tests.**

Mature Love

Song 7:10-11: *"I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages."*

–When we finally become fully His, and **His love becomes our driving force as it is with Him, we become concerned with Him and His interests, and find communion, life, power and joy wherever we are.**

–**We only want Him and what He wants for His sake.**

▪ **This becomes our greatest joy!**
