

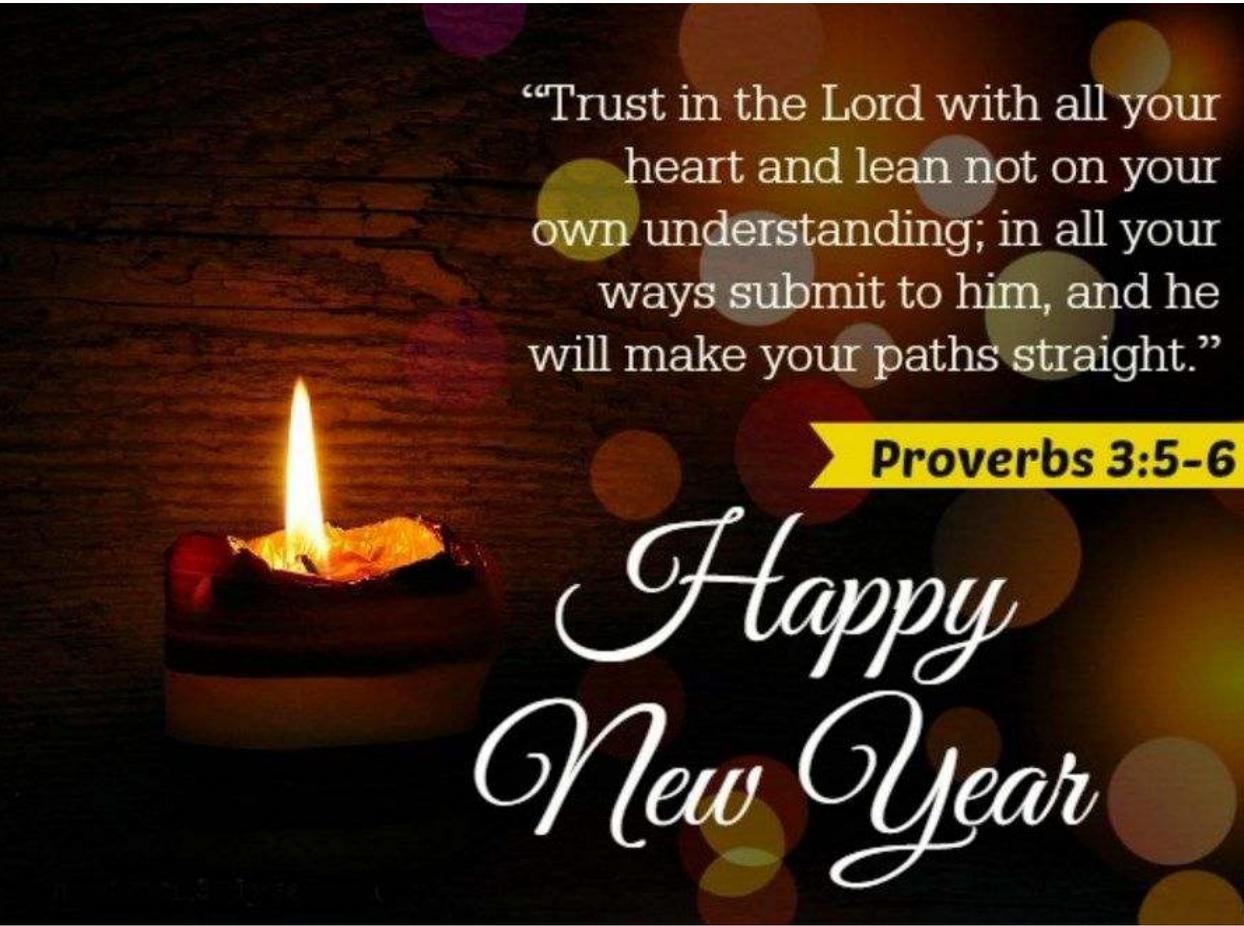


Today's Sermons
 Morning: HAPPY NEW YEAR
 Evening: Prayer Service

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	25
Sunday AM Worship	37
Sunday PM Worship	23
Wed. Bible Study	23
Offering	\$1321



“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

*Happy
 New Year*



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Times of Services:
Sunday
 Bible Study:... 10:00am
 AM Worship:...11:00am
 PM Worship:...6:00pm
 2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday
 Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
 Sunday:.....7:30am
 “Back to the Bible”
 AM 580 WSKS
 93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm & Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

Spiritual Maturity
 Randall Caselman

Jesus admonishes us to: "Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He is not expecting God-like perfection, but that we grow toward that perfection, become mature. The Greek is teleios. The idea here is that we must grow up, close the gap between who we are and who God would have us be. Teleios speaks of the difference between a man and a child in I Corinthians 14.20. In Hebrews 5.14, it is translated of full age in our King James.

What Should Spiritual Maturity Look Like In My Life?

Maturity is the ability to control our anger and settle our differences without violence, without spreading the hurt to third parties with gossip and character assassination.

Maturity is the capacity to face unpleasant moments, life's frustrations, discomfort and defeat, without complaint or collapse.

Maturity is the ability to make a decision and then stand by it and apply that conviction to life. The immature spend their lives exploring endless possibilities,

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and then do nothing about any of them. Maturity is choosing to do right, and then do it!!

Maturity is the art of living in peace with that which we cannot or should not change. Maturity is learning to be content with what we have.

Maturity is being able to judge self, seeing ourselves as we really are in light of what we should be. It is being tolerant of those who are different from us, yet being intolerant of our own sins, faults and shortcomings. Indeed, what a better world if our intolerance was first focused on self instead of others.

Maturity is confession, being big enough to say, "I was wrong." And, then when right, maturity has no need to become self-righteous.

Maturity is having the desire and discipline to change, to repent. It is one thing to admit our sins; it is another to forsake them, to move on conforming to the image of His Son. The call of Christianity is to an ongoing maturity.

Maturity is patience. Being willing, like Moses, to pass up immediate pleasure in favor of the long-term good and gain.

Maturity is responding to the needs of others, often at the expense of our own desires or wishes. It's placing the interests of others before our own.

Maturity is dependability, showing up, always keeping our word, coming through, even in the time of crisis. The immature are masters of the alibi and excuse!

Maturity is humility. It is taking on the nature of a servant, being like Jesus, willing to wash feet – even the feet of those who are against us, those we know will betray and deny us.

Maturity is being comfortable in our own skin. No, we're not to be satisfied with who we are until we are like Jesus. But, always trying to be somebody else is an ugly way to live.

Maturity is being able to see the good in others, and in our circumstances and situation. Gripping, complaining, murmuring, always searching for the negative, being judgmental of others, speaks volumes about ourselves.

Maturity is resting in God's grace, being assured of our forgiveness and salvation if we are obedient to His will. Paul spoke of Epaphras' prayers for the saints that "they stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured" (Colossians 4.12). Are we mature? Are we confident, assured, of our salvation?

Paul speaks of genuine spiritual maturity in Philippians: "Not that I have

already attained all this, or have been made perfect, [teleios] but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, 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, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward" (Philippians 3.12-14).

As God's children, we must admit our lack of maturity, while working toward becoming more and more of what Jesus calls us to be and become. We must persistently press forward and upward, never looking backward. It was Paul who wrote: "God has equipped us... until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4.12-13).

May God guide and assist us into a deeper awareness of what genuine maturity really is. Amen?

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"O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Psalm 118:1-9).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Dec 27 – Prayer Service after Evening Worship
- Jan 3 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class
- Jan 10 – Preach-N-Eat and 1:30 Worship (Song Service)
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell