

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on September 1, 2019:**

**"Transformed by Love Series (Letters of John):
4 Fruits of Christian Maturity (1 John 4:17-5:5)
(Part 9)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows us through John's letter the four fruits of Christian maturity that flow out of us because of God's love in us.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Pastor Craig asked humorously, "Could all you mature Christians sit on this side of the main aisle and all you immature Christians sit on the other side?"
- "And better yet, how many aren't sure if you are a mature Christian; can we have a show of hands on that?"
- Hopefully by the end of this message today, we will be able to answer that question with confidence.
- In these Scriptures, John is going to show us four fruits of Christian maturity.

Recap of 1 John 4:1-16:

1. Believers are to test the spirits to determine false from true.
2. True spirits testify Jesus' incarnation.
3. The Holy Spirit resides in believers and is greater than the one in the world.
4. We recognize the spirit of truth as one who listens to us.

5. Love comes from God, so we are to love one another, which is the identify of our being born of God.
6. God showed his love toward us by sending Jesus so we might live through him.
7. God's spirit identifies that we live in him and he in us.
8. Jesus the Son of God was sent to be the Savior of the world (not just believers).

In Preview of today's message (1 John 4:17-5:5 – pastor Craig's rhyming verses:

*Love gives us confidence to meet the Judge,
We are like Jesus, so he holds no Grudge.
No fear in love because he first loved Us,
Love for sis and bro, let's ride that Bus.*

*Four fruits of the spirit we must Grow,
Confidence and Integrity, two we must Sow.
Obedience and Victory are two More,
Faith in Jesus provides all Four.*

Overview:

- This is one traditional model of spiritual formation, which has three interconnecting circles labeled “Being”, “Knowing” and “Doing.”
- Now as we go through this spiritual process of growing and maturing in our relationship with God which is based on faith, it is modeled after these three principles.
- This traditional model also relates to one of our key Scriptures in Mark 12:30, “To love God with all of our hearts, mind, soul and strength.”
- “Being” can be defined as our very heart and soul.
- “Knowing” would be understanding who we are, which comes from faith and it also includes how we study and learn.
- And finally “Doing” comes from our strength and we’ll see that it leads out of our faith and relationship with God.
- Now, it’s not “doing” in the traditional sense, because we know that when we place “the cart of doing or response” before the “horse of faith” things start to get messed up.
- Our “doing” is based on the spiritual disciplines of praying, studying, gathering together in worship and fellowship and getting to know each other more deeply in our small groups and in our classes.
- We shouldn’t follow the example of Ben Franklin who had a check list of building character by his own efforts.
- We shouldn’t think that we have to go out and do something for God.
- If anything, we participate with Him. It’s not our work, it is God’s work.
- God has invited us into that relationship with Him so we can participate in the work that He is doing.
- And so, as we love God, we can love others, because out of that relationship flows God’s love.
- As we consider these interconnecting circles of “Being”, “Knowing” and “Doing”, it’s good to remind ourselves of how we participate with what God does.
- One of the first fruits of a mature Christian according to John is “confidence.”
- Now, let’s define the word “fruits”. Is it a result from an outcome or an input?
- The correct answer is outcome.
- So, our confidence in the day of judgment is an outcome of our faith relationship that we have with Jesus.

1-Confidence (1 John 4:17–19):

1 John 4:17 (NIV), 1 John 4:17 (NIV), This is how love is made complete

- “Made complete” is another way of saying “maturity.” Other translations call it “perfect.”

This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

- So, how many of us here feel confident about the “day of judgment”?
- Now, some day we’re all going to face Jesus, who is the judge. It’s not God the Father.
- Knowing that Jesus is the judge does that provoke confidence or does that provoke fear?
- So, how can we be confident, as Jesus as our judge? Answer: we’ve been judged already.
- As believers, we have already been judged.
- So if we have been already judged as believers who have faith in Jesus, is there anything for us to fear? The answer is a resounding, “No!”
- Now, fearfulness is a sign of Christian immaturity.
- As we grow in Christian maturity, we will have less fearful thoughts.
- We should not just have confidence in the present day, but also in the future.
- So, there is nothing for us to worry about in the day of judgment.
- Now the not-yet-believers don’t know what they are going to face, so they have some doubts and fearfulness about the future.
- When they come face to face with Jesus on the day of judgement, they may feel a little warm from His fiery love, but they’re not going to see a God that wants to rebuke and punish, but rather they are going to see a God of loving embrace.
- Through the Incarnation, we know that judgment is not punishment.
- Jesus has already forgiven the sins of the whole world, not just believers.
- Now all of humanity needs to believe this truth and begin to experience a relationship with God.

18) There is no fear in love.

- Yes, there is no fear in love – in our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- If a person feels fearful in that relationship, they need to change the way they think.
- John tells us that God’s love in us, casts out that fear.
- So we need to seize the day, as Dan Rogers commented on a few weeks ago, of our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit and not put it off.

18b) But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.

- Are any of us here going to face punishment, now or in the future? Answer is “No!”
- Since God is love and if we are in love with God, our love is a reflection of our faith.
- There is no punishment in love.
- When we become fearful, we need to tell ourselves that we are acting immaturely.

The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19) We love because he first loved us.

- God initiated love – He loved us completely and totally before we ever loved Him.
- It’s God’s love in us that give us the ability to love others.
- This is what John keeps telling us over and over again. It’s a hallmark of who God is and it’s also a reminder for today of how we need to reach out to others and share with them.

2-Integrity [values and behavior are integrated]- (1 John 4:20–21):

1 John 4:20 (NIV), 1 John 4:20 (NIV), Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

- That's a pretty straight forward statement.
- If we have God's love flowing out of us, we will love our brothers and sisters.

21) And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

- Notice the word that John chooses here – “must” not “should” or “perhaps.”

3-Joyful obedience/outcome of the Spirit (1 John 5:1–3):

1 John 5:1 (NIV), 1 John 5:1 (NIV), Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves his child as well. 2) This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

- So, when we think about obeying God's commands, it's through our relationship with Him that obedience flows out of us.
- It's operating out of that faith that gives us the power to obey God and to love others.

3) In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

- So, when we are obeying joyfully and obeying out of what the Spirit prompts us to do, that cannot be burdensome.

4-Victory (1 John 5:4–5):

1 John 5:4 (NIV), 1 John 5:4 (NIV), for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5) Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

- Who likes to win and who likes to lose? We all want to be winners.
- We don't go a ball game to watch our team play and say, “I hope they lose today!”
- So it's by belief and by faith, we are deemed an overcomer.
- Our life of overcoming comes out of our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- Jesus said that we have been declared victorious both now and in the future.

In Summary of 1 John 4:17-5:5 (Let's say this together):

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Closing prayer