

# **CHARACTERISTICS OF MATURITY**

by Paul & Glenda Hawthorne

If we going to raise great kids, we need to display great attitudes ourselves. This can be used in the process of helping our children mature--- and in checking our own growth as well.

The following list is designed primarily to help spur parents into thinking about the application of the different points of maturity regarding their own or other children.

Apply, illustrate, develop the following points. Give examples from the child's situation. Emphasizing the areas where the particular child needs growth. Touch on the others the child already does well in, but more lightly.~~All scripture citations are taken from the NASV~~

## **I. MATURITY IS BEING SELF-CONTROLLED.**

### **A. NOT EXPECTING EVERYTHING TO GO YOUR OWN WAY.**

1. Kids: asking for a friend to visit, choosing recreation.
2. Adults: vacation plans, investments, holidays with realities  
1Cor.13:5 "Does not seek its own..."  
Phil.2:20-22 "All seek after their own interests..."  
Prov.13:12 "Hope deferred makes the heart sick"

### **B. BEING ABLE TO ACCEPT CRITICISM, DISCIPLINE, & INSTRUCTION.**

1. Kids: Pout? Argue? Blameshift? Denial?
2. Adults: Blow up? Clam up? Become bitter?

Heb.12:11 "All discipline for the moment seem not..."  
Prov.9:8 "Reprove a wise man and he will love you..."  
Prov.12:15 "Way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but...."  
Ps.32:8-9 "Don't be as the mule...whose trappings include..."

### **C. GAINING CONTROL OF YOUR TEMPER & NOT ACTING OUT YOUR HOSTILITIES.**

1. Kids: Name calling, slapping, biting, breaking toys, tantrums.
2. Adults: Yelling, revenge, destroying property, dishes/doors.

2Pet.1:6 "adding to your knowledge, self-control"  
Eph.4:26 "Be angry yet do not sin"  
Prov.14:29 "Slow to anger has great understanding"  
Prov.29:11 "A fool always loses his temper, but..."

#### D. LIVING WITH REALITY ACCEPTING THINGS AS THEY ARE.

1. Kids: Disappointed in sports abilities--so they put down others  
Disappointed in size, beauty--so uses heavy makeup etc.  
Disappointed in popularity, so compensate with drugs, sex, & "buying" friends.
2. Adults: Disappointed with finances, aging process, or family.

Titus 2:5,6 "To be sensible"

1Pet.1:13 "Keep sober in spirit"

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#### E. BEING ABLE TO ADAPT TO CHANGE.

1. Kids: Is it too difficult to adapt to a new baby; new school, new neighborhood? Or, to changes in body? In rules? In dress?
2. Adults: Difficulty dealing with each new stage in a child's age: infant/toddler/ teen with mind of their own/ or a young adult with a life of their own? Facing changes in job, finances?

Phil.4:11-13 "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."

#### F. BEING ABLE TO CONTROL YOUR FEARS & ANXIETIES. (Phil.4:6; Isa.26:3)

1. Kids: Complaining of stomachache? Headache? Are They: With-drawn? Moody? Fear of: Bully? New teacher? Coming test? Dating?
2. Adults: Realize 90% of what we worry about never takes place.  
Quote: A coward dies many deaths, a brave man dies but once.  
Plan to overcome fear: Make plan to handle fear, then act!

#### G. DISCIPLINING YOURSELF.

1. Kids: Discipline self regarding schoolwork, food, TV, time.  
Do you think for yourself? Or bow to peer pressure?  
This is a big area of maturity!  
Each victory is a seed that spawns many others!
2. Adults: Discipline self regarding temper, time, study, dieting  
morals, words, alcohol. Everything should be in balance!

1Cor.9:27 "I buffet my body & make it my slave"

Prov.25:28 "Like a city broken into & without walls"

#### H. RESPECTING YOURSELF.

1. Kids: Many kids have terrible self esteem. They feel they don't dress or look well enough. Help them evaluate the FOUR

## FALSE TEEN KEYS OF LIFE: Beauty, Brains, Bucks, or Brawn!

2. Adults: Many adults still struggle with self esteem as a result of their childhood athletics, physique, or academics.

Rom.12:3 "Not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think---but to have sound judgment."

Prov.23:7 "As he thinks within himself---so is he."

\* Parents: Never use put downs to kids or mate, it affects their thinking for most of the rest of their lives.  
Look for every opportunity to give genuine praise.  
It won't cause them to be egotistical.

\* Kids: See yourself as God sees you, and as you really are.  
Count your own abilities, not your friend's/bro/ sister's  
Others are not your standard, Christ is! (2Cor.10:12)

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## I. BEING THANKFUL AND CONTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE.

1. Kids: Don't expect treats and favors, earn them! Are you appreciative of gifts given? Places taken? Room provided?  
Try listing your blessings.

2. Adults: Face anguish from coveting. Happiness doesn't come from owning things. What's the difference between need & greed?

Phil.4:11 "for I have learned to be content"

Phil.4:18 "I have received everything in full (in prison)"

## J. BEING ABLE TO GIVE OF YOURSELF, EXPECTING NOTHING IN RETURN.

1. Kids: Don't expect pay for everything. Do some things out of love. Your parents will be amazed by you---and maybe "Dazed."

2. Adults: Don't expect people to notice and appreciate everything. Kids won't; mate maybe won't; saints might not---  
but God always will. Yet, others will notice and will be inspired by your example.

Rom.12:1-2 "Present your bodies a living sacrifice..."

Lk.6:35 "Give, expecting nothing in return..."

## K. GETTING SATISFACTION FROM GIVING AS WELL AS RECEIVING.

1. Kids: The young get satisfaction from getting presents, favors. The mature get satisfaction from unselfishly giving! Buy your parents\siblings a present totally FROM YOUR OWN MONEY!

2. Adults: Some adults are (1) Happy only when getting! or are, (2) Unhappy when receiving! Either extreme shows immaturity.

Acts 20:35 "It is more blessed to give than receive."

2Cor.12:15a "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls

## L. BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF & WITH OTHERS. SINCERE, NOT "TWO-FACED!"

1. Kids: Not making excuses: "I forgot" or, "I didn't hear you"

"He hit me first"; or "He made me do it"

"My friend's parents don't make their kids do that!"

2. Adults: "I couldn't help myself.. "My wife/husb made me do it"

a. Not Excuse-making (Lk.14:18) (Just lose, don't excuse!)

b. Not Blame-shifting (Gen.3:12-13) (It's not my fault!)

c. Not Minimizing (Ex.32:24) (I threw it into the fire &)

d. Not Exaggerating (Num.13:33) (We became like grasshoppers)

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## M. RESPECTING DIFFERENCES.

(For kids or adults)

1. Not being critical. ("It just makes me sick how so & so...")

Mat.7:1-2 "Do not judge...for in the way you judge, you..."

Prov.21:9,19 "Than with a contentious and vexing woman..."

1Cor.13:7 "Love...hopes all things..."

2. Being kind, gentle, loyal. (Are you generally negative?)

Are you courteous in phone use? In front of friends? Not relating truly embarrassing incidents to outsiders?

1Pet.3:8-9 "Let all be harmonious, sympathetic..."

1Cor.13:4-5,7 "Patient, kind, not jealous, not brag..."

## N. BEING ABLE TO FORGIVE. THEN ACT AS THOUGH IT NEVER HAPPENED!

How to do that? Grant pardon first---you'll feel it later.

Recognize that all people have blind spots---what are theirs?

What are your blindspots?

1. Forgiveness conditioned on repentance (Lk.17:4)
2. Yet allow for their lack of insight. (Lk.23:34)
3. Don't keep a mental ledger, with a view to settling accounts. (1Cor.13:5)
4. Don't allow bitterness to take root. (Heb.12:15)

#### O. HANDLING OTHER PEOPLE'S INCONSIDERATE BEHAVIOR.

1. Kids: Dealing with cruelty of kids in school or at home.  
Immature say: "I can't stand it" or "take it" or "handle it" anymore! The mature say: *"I can do all things through Christ"*

2. Adults Handling traffic, stupidity, aggressive sales people, Junk mail, phone calls.

Hint: Anger is a secondary emotion. Which of 3 emotions lies beneath your anger---Frustration? Fear? Hurt of any kind?

Phil.4:13 *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Eph.4:31 *"Do all things without wrath and anger.."*

#### II. MATURITY IS BEING RESPONSIBLE.

##### A. BEING DEPENDABLE, ABLE TO TAKE [assume and fulfill one's] RESPONSIBILITY.

1. Kids: Getting themselves up, taking care of their own room; their own homework, own music lesson, own Bible lesson.

2. Adults: Do what you say you will do! Don't agree to something that your not apt to accomplish. God doesn't give us too much to do----we do.

1Tim.5:8 "If any does not provide for his own..."

Phil.2:25-30 "Because he came close to death to complete what..."

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##### B. BEING ABLE TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE AND WAIT FOR IT.

1. Kids: They want things RIGHT NOW! They want bikes, designer jeans, be first-string in sports, play musical instrument with virtually no practice, have Bible knowledge with no study. They don't want to wait to next week, next month---that's FOREVER! That's also immaturity.

2. Adults: We don't want to wait for Bible knowledge, be elders, Godly family, successful career, good car, nice furnishings! We want to charge it on Master Card! But we should re-strain; re-consider; re-try; re-tool; re-educate; and re-dedicate!

Prov.31:25 "She smiles at the future because..."

Ecc.11:1-4 "Cast your bread upon many waters and you..."

### C. BEING ABLE TO STICK WITH THINGS UNTIL THEY ARE DONE. [Perseverance!]

1. Kids: They start and then want to rapidly give up on mowing the lawn when it ceases to be fun in about 5-10 minutes. But maturity means being willing to finish your: Math homework; music lesson; garden weeding; dog training; or whatever task they agreed to\ or are assigned to do [within reason].

2. Adults: Are great starters on diets, hobbies, projects, garage cleaning; and letter writing ---but seem seldom to finish. Do you finish whatever Bible classes you start? Teaching & training children till they are adult? Continue working on marriage till it is a real success?

2Pet.1:6 "In your self control, perseverance"

1Cor.16:13 "Act like men, be strong"

Rev.3:2 "Sardis...I have not found your deeds completed..."

### D. BEING A DILIGENT, CAREFUL WORKER.

1.kids: Typically kids do a slap-dash kind of job on most things. For instance: washing their face; clean their room; wash dishes, etc.

2. Adults: Are we industrious in being the best Bible teacher that we can be? Or just enough to get by? Are we diligent on our job? In our family? With our finances? Regarding our homes? Determining truth? As a deacon? As a song leader? As a Christian?

Col.3:23 "Whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord."

Ecc.9:10 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might"

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### E. DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE WITHOUT REQUIRING REWARD\RECOGNITION!

1. Kids: Help clean the table after dinner. Volunteer to do something around the house without being paid for it. See it-- and just take care of it?

2. Adults: Avoid the "What's-in-it-for-me" philosophy. Make a contribution to life that matters, as well as to a congregation.

Gen.24:19-20 Rebecca offered to water 10 camels! Then she RAN to get the job done! (And she had no anticipation of reward.)

### III. MATURITY IS BEING ABLE TO SUBMIT.

#### A. FACING UP TO THE HARD THINGS IN LIFE WITHOUT: COLLAPSING\GIVING UP!

1. Kids: Want to give up after--failing a big test; flubbing up in a big game; losing your girlfriend; getting beat up; not being accepted by the crowd. Do not require others to "MAKE" you happy: You determine to BE happy. Whether alone or with others.

2. Adults: Sometime want to give up on marriage, job, kids, church, Christ, career, life. Set optimistic example for kids!

2Cor.4:16-18 "Though our outward man is decaying, yet..."

2Cor.6:8-10 "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing..."

2Cor.11:24-28 Beaten, in danger, betrayed, under daily pressure

1Ki.19:8-18 Elijah, don't quit! Keep on -- keeping on!

#### B. BEING ABLE TO LOVE AND OBEY GOD WITHOUT COMPROMISE.

1. Kids: Not allowing others to lead them into temptation.

You must be the leader among your peers, morally. You must think for yourself. Are you good when with good kids, and bad with bad?

2. Adults: Do you set the example in your family? Or does your mate, relatives, or co-workers cause you to compromise truth and do things you otherwise would not?

Mat.10:32-38 "He who loves father or mother more than me is..."

Mat.22:36-38 "Love God with all your heart\soul\mind."

#### C. BEING ABLE TO SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T AGREE.

1. Kids: Do you submit to parents regarding friends, duties, time to be home\in bed? [If you won't submit to parents---you won't submit to God!] Submit to school authorities? To older siblings when left temporarily in charge of the younger?

2. Adults: Wives do you submit to Husband? All saints do you submit to the elders? Husbands do you submit to the governmental rulings regarding speed limits, building codes & taxes?

Eph.6:1-2 "Children obey your parents in the Lord..."

1Pet.2:13-15 "Submit to every human institution for the Lord..."

1Pet.3:6 "Thus Sarah obeyed Abram, calling him Lord."

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#### D. DEPENDING ON GOD FOR CARE AND DIRECTION IN LIFE--NOT ON SELF.

1. KIDS: Children worry about what the rest of the group will think regarding their clothes & their personality. They worry about being left alone if their family dies. They worry about their future---will they find the right mate\career? Will they live long enough to fulfill their dreams? Maturity = Trust God!

2. ADULTS: Worry about finances, their house, their mate, their children, their future as they age. We should set the example by depending on God after doing what we can! If we pray why worry--and if we worry why pray? Be a "WARRIOR" not a "WORRIER"!

Jer.10:23 "It is not in man that walks to direct his own steps"  
Ps.3:1-6 "The Lord sustains me & I'll not be afraid of 10,000"  
Ps.23:1-4 "The Lord is my shepherd..tho I walk thru the valley"  
Ps.37:25 "I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed"  
Ps.91:1-7 "The Lord, my refuge...you will not be afraid..."  
1Pet.5:6-7 "Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares"

#### E. BEING FLEXIBLE ABOUT OTHER'S WISHES--BUT INFLEXIBLE WITH TRUTH & INTEGRITY

1. KIDS: Does the child say "My way not yours" or "My TV program not yours" Is dishonesty becoming a habit? Or, do they tell the truth even if friends pleaded with them to "cover up"; for them. Do they tell the truth even if discipline or other unpleasantness was the result? That's maturity.

2. ADULTS: Do you know the difference between the "Negotiable" items [eg. reasonable hair styles; reasonable clothes styles; bed times; room cleanliness; GPA; duties; etc] where you can be flexible?. And the "Non-negotiable" [eg. Truth, morality, respect, drug free] where you must be immovable? Not everything should be in JUST ONE category or the other.

1Cor.10:31-33 "I please all men in all things not seeking my own"  
Prv.23:2 "Buy the truth and sell it not..."  
Ps.69:6b "May not those who seek Thee, be dishonored thru me."

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#### F. NOT SEEKING POWER OR ADVANTAGE OVER OTHERS.

1. KIDS: Some say: "Sure you can play---if I can use your mit!" "Yes they can be part of the "group" if we can use their car, their gas or whatever. [eg. That they are now a sucker!]. Does this child try strongly to manipulate and control others by whining? Pouting? Tattling? Bullying? All this is immaturity.

2. ADULTS: Do you use other tools to manipulate? Tears? Silence? Anger? Aggressiveness? Shouting? Intimidating? Financial bribery? Martyr's speeches? [eg. "After all I've done for you\ How hard I work for you\ And this is the thanks I get\I get crucified by my own family\I always\You never\etc.etc.]

Jude 1:16 "They speak arrogantly, flattering [ie. an insincere compliment] people for the sake of gaining an advantage."

2Pet.2:3 "In their greed they will exploit you..."

2Cor.12:15 "I will gladly spend and be expended for your sakes"

#### IV. MATURITY IS DEMONSTRATING WISDOM.

##### A. MAKING WISE DECISIONS AND STICKING BY THEM.

1Cor.15:58 "Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding..." EPH.--"BE NOT TOSSED ABOUT BY EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE..."

1. List your primary goal or objective!

Fools have 7000 goals & dreams---but never reach one!

Prov.17:24b "The eyes of the fool are on the ends of the earth."

2. Count the cost! (Lk.14:28) Count all the costs: time, money, effort, impact on others, potential for success, what competing goals must be given up to reach the primary goal, rewards gained?

3. Separate fact from feeling

(Titus 2:6) "Sensible" (1 Pet.1:13) "Sober minded"

Are my feelings sweeping me away and out of line with facts?

Or do I "Out Vote" my feelings and act in accord with facts?

##### B. MAKING THE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME, ENERGIES & ABILITIES.

Do first things---FIRST! Do you Major in Minors? Do you find your time eaten up by the trivial? TV? Phone? Casual reading? "Shuffling" things in your room or on your desk? Laying around? "Messing" around? Procrastinating then "excuse-making"? All this done when something else like homework, term papers, or Bible lessons are crying out for attention!

Prov.26:13 "Sluggard says there is a lion in the streets..."

Prov.26:14 "As the door turns on hinges so a sluggard on his bed"

Prov.26:16 "Sluggard is wiser in own eyes than 7 men who can..."

## C. HEARING BOTH SIDES OF A CONTROVERSY BEFORE MAKING UP YOUR MIND.

1. KIDS: Do you jump to conclusions? Take sides without all the facts? Do you then defend friends, or spread your negative opinion of others without asking that person if "such & such" is the truth?

Do you do this in regard to other kids in school or in church? Saying: "Did you hear what so & so did...can you believe that?"

2. ADULTS: Do we jump to conclusions about our kids without giving them the opportunity to explain themselves? Do we assign negative attitudes/motives to other adults without asking them personally? (cf. 1 Cor.13:7 "Love...hopes all things.")

Prov.18:13 "He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him."

Prov.18:17 "The first to plead his case seems just, Until another comes and examines him."

John 7:24 "Judge not according to appearance--but judge with righteous judgment."

Jas.1:19 "be quick to hear...slow to speak..."

## D. NOT EXPECTING FLAWLESSNESS FROM SELF OR OTHERS.

1. KIDS: Do you expect your parents to be without flaws? How about your teachers? Athletes? Movie stars? All adults? That's not realistic for anybody. The problem with expecting flawlessness is that---nobody ever lives completely up to our expectations [not even ourselves]. Flawlessness does not in fact exist in the physical world. But ask are they (1) FORGIVEN? (2) FAITHFUL? (3) and moving FORWARD?

2. ADULTS: Do we expect flawlessness in our children? Elders? All saints? Our mates? Our selves? If we expect virtual flaw-lessness we will damage relationships & be continually be discouraged & disappointed in others [or ourselves]. Jesus was the only flawless one ever on earth. (Heb.4:15).

Jas.3:2 "My beloved brethren in MANY things we ALL stumble..."

Ecc.7:20 "Not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins."

## E. SETTING HEAVEN AS YOUR GOAL AND LIVING FOR IT.

Talk of heaven as a family, talk of heaven to your friends. Is this your greatest hope? If you are mature---it will be!

Phil.3:14 "I press on toward the goal for the upward call..."

1 Pet.1:13 "Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

V. CONCLUSION--SO WHAT NEEDS WORKING ON?

Note:

Check areas that really need work!

Don't expect flawlessness of yourself or child!

Make Plan: Improve areas that need work!!!

I. SELF-CONTROL. Good Fair Work Needed

- A. Not expecting everything to go your way. ---- ---- ----
- B. Able to accept criticism & discipline. ---- ---- ----
- C. Controlling your temper and actions. ---- ---- ----
- D. Live with reality, accept things as are. ---- ---- ----
- E. Being able to adapt to change. ---- ---- ----
- F. Able to control your fears & anxieties. ---- ---- ----
- G. Able to discipline yourself. ---- ---- ----
- H. Respecting yourself. ---- ---- ----
- I. Being thankful & content with what have. ---- ---- ----
- J. Able to give of yourself, expecting nothing. ---- ---- ----
- K. Getting satisfaction from giving & receiving. ---- ---- ----
- L. Be honest with yourself and others. ---- ---- ----
- M. Respecting Differences. ---- ---- ----
- N. Being able to forgive. ---- ---- ----
- O. Handling people's inconsiderate behavior ---- ---- ----

II. TAKING RESPONSIBILITY.

- A. Being dependable, to take responsibility. ---- ---- ----
- B. Able to plan for the future & wait for it. ---- ---- ----
- C. Able to stick with things till they're done. ---- ---- ----
- D. Being a diligent, careful worker. ---- ---- ----
- E. Doing what needs to be done without reward. ---- ---- ----

III. SCRIPTURAL SUBMISSION.

- A. Facing up to hard things without giving up. ---- ---- ----
- B. Able to love & obey God without compromise. ---- ---- ----
- C. Able to submit to authority even if disagree. ---- ---- ----
- D. Depending on God for care and direction. ---- ---- ----
- E. Flexible with opinions, inflexible with truth ---- ---- ----
- F. Not seeking power or advantage over others ---- ---- ----

IV. DEMONSTRATING WISDOM.

- A. Making decisions and sticking by them. ---- ---- ----
- B. Making best use of your time & energy. ---- ---- ----
- C. Hearing both sides before make up mind. ---- ---- ----

- D. Not expecting flawlessnes of others. ---- ---- ----
- E. Setting Heaven as your goal & live for it. ---- ---- ----

VI. PLAN FOR GROWTH IN WHAT NEEDED AREAS: (2Pet.1:5-7)

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VII. NOTE: Change takes WORK & COURAGE but is worth it!

(Dan.11:32b NASV)

"But the people who know their God will display strength and take action."

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