

# 7

## ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES MATURE BRETHERN HAVE TOWARD THE YOUNG



### Introduction

1. “**Mature**” is a general designation, but, specifically, refers to anyone that (i) has acquired enough biblical knowledge in order to teach, instruct, and mentor others (**Hebrews 5:12**), and (ii) is actually walking in the Spirit (**Galatians 5:25**); after all, one must be a doer of the word and not a hearer only (**James 1:22-25**). “**Younger**” refers to anyone that needs teaching, instruction, and mentoring - a child (**Ephesians 6:4**), a new Christian (**Matthew 28:19-20**; cp. **Acts 2:41-42**), a Christian in need of teaching on a specific topic (**Titus. 2:3-5**), or even a Christian of many years that has not matured (**Hebrews 5:12**).
2. “What responsibilities do mature brethren have toward the young – whether in age or in the faith?” A potential of 1014 brethren saw this question, and I received two basic answers: (i) to bring children up in the training and admonition of the Lord (**Ephesians 6:4**), and (ii) older women to teach younger women how to love their husbands, etc. (**Titus 2:1-5**). I *suspect* this limited understanding is quite prevalent among brethren.
3. In this lesson the aim is to highlight seven responsibilities that mature brethren have toward the young – whether in age or faith.

Note: I made several attempts to put the following points in a logical order, but I kept changing my mind! But then I realized that you don’t teach “in order”; you teach “as required”. A maestro doesn’t conduct each instrument in order, but all together.

### 7 RESPONSIBILITIES MATURE BRETHERN HAVE TOWARD THE YOUNG

1. To know God (**John 17:3; Hebrews 8:10-11**).
2. To know the scriptures (**Deuteronomy 11:18-21**).
3. To be doers of the word (**James 1:22-25**).
4. To train and admonish (**Ephesians 6:4**).
5. To develop and nurture a spirit of serving (**John 13:13-14**).
6. To mentor men and women with potential in special service (**2 Timothy 2:2**).
7. To set an example (**Philippians 3:17**).

### 1. To Know God (**John 17:3; Hebrews 8:10-11**)

If one does not have a relationship with God, then everything else we may say or do is in vain.

- a. Whether a child, a babe in Christ, or a Christian that does not know God, a mature Christian is responsible to teach such how to develop a relationship with God (**Matthew 28:19-20**). While the following could also apply to adults, the main focus of this section is on teaching children.
- b. Every relationship begins with a conversation and is maintained by conversation. This means teaching a child...



- 1) How to pray (us talking to God). John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray, and Jesus taught His disciples how to pray (**Luke 11:1-13**). It is essential to teach our children (i) *how* to pray (**Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:15; 1 Peter 4:7**), (ii) *what* to pray (**Matthew 5:44; 9:38; 26:41; Acts 12:5; Philippians 1:9-11; 4:6-7; Colossians 1:9; 4:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:1-2, 8; 4:4-5; James 5:13-18; 1 John 5:16; 3 John 1:2; cp. Romans 8:26**), and (iii) *when* to pray (**1 Corinthians 7:5; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 5:5**).

The greatest desire of *godly* parents is to impress upon the minds of their children the importance of developing and maintaining a relationship with God.

2) How to read and study the scriptures (God speaking to us):

- a) Jesus expected people to read the scriptures (**Matthew 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31**), Paul told churches to read his epistles (**Colossians 4:16**), and he encouraged Timothy to “give attention to reading” (**1 Timothy 4:15**). It is through reading the scriptures that one increases his knowledge and understanding of the truth (**2 Corinthians 1:13; Ephesians 3:4**), and it is through the word that one gains and maintains one’s faith (**Romans 10:17**).

Reading the Bible simply involves reading! Bible study, though, concentrates on a single topic, Bible character, or book of the Bible for closer study.

- b) When a child matures, it is good to start teaching them how to study the scriptures for themselves.

(i) Jesus said to the Jews, “You *search* the scriptures...” (**John 5:39**). The word “search” is from the Greek word *ereunaō* [G2045]. Here it means “To search into, investigate, explore” (CWSD). Daniel H. King, Sr. comments, “The word for ‘search’ used here does not suggest spiritual penetration but meticulous analysis”.

(ii) The Pharisees urged Nicodemus to “*search* and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee” (**John 7:52**). The word “search” is from the Greek word *ereunaō* [G2045]. Here it means “To search into, investigate, explore” (CWSD).

(iii) The Bereans listened to Paul’s teaching<sup>1</sup>, but they “*searched* the scriptures” to see if what he taught was so (**Acts 17:11**). The word “searched” is from the Greek word *anakrinō* [G350]. Here it means “to examine accurately or carefully” (CWSD).

What is meant here by “search” and “searched” is not simply reading a passage or a chapter or a book, but searching for and studying those passages that pertain to a particular subject. This is what we call a topical study. In the first instance, Nicodemus was urged to search for passages that predicted that a prophet would come out of Galilee (**John 7:52**). In the second instance, the Bereans were studying those scriptures that pertained to the coming Messiah (**Acts 17:11**).

3) How to keep the commandments (cp. **Luke 18:18-21**). A Christian’s relationship with God is also dependant on keeping the Lord’s commandments (**Matthew 7:24-27; cp. Deuteronomy 27:26**).

- a) John’s statements on this subject reveal just how essential keeping the commandments are in maintaining our relationship with God.

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (**1 John 2:3**).

“He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (**1 John 2:4**).

“Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us” (**1 John 3:24**).

- b) There are many other scriptures that also stress the importance of keeping the Lord’s commandments: (i) Keeping the commandments is the proof that Jesus is our Lord (**Luke 6:46**), (ii) the proof of our love for the Lord (**John 14:21**), and (iii) the proof that we love the children of God (**1 John 5:2**).

- c) Another thing to stress is that we must keep *all* the commandments (**James 2:10**). We cannot keep those we like and ignore those we don’t like. If we live a moral life and attend services, then we must also fulfil other personal responsibilities: set aside something of our income for the poor (**Ephesians 4:28; cp. Proverbs 3:27**), visit orphans and widows (**James 1:27**), and support preachers<sup>2</sup> (**Galatians 6:6**).

- c. Another important aspect of knowing God is in how we treat others; whether our fellow brethren or unbelievers (**Matthew 25:31-46; 1 John 3:17; 4:19-21**).

Mature Christians have a responsibility to teach the young how to develop and nurture a relationship with God.

<sup>1</sup> Paul, no doubt, taught the same things as he did in Thessalonica (cp. **1 Corinthians 4:17**): “Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ” (**Acts 17:2-3**).

<sup>2</sup> See Mike Willis’ comment on this verse: Truth Commentaries, Galatians. The quote is too long to include here.

## 2. To Know The Scriptures (Deuteronomy 11:18-21)

Without a knowledge of the scriptures it is impossible to know the will of God and walk in faith.

- a. God commanded His people to continually teach their children the scriptures (**Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:6-7; 11:18-19**). Timothy was taught the scriptures by his mother (**2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15; cp. Mark 10:17-20**).
- b. Timothy had “known” the Holy Scriptures from his infancy (**2 Timothy 3:15**). “To ‘know’ the scriptures means to be acquainted with its divisions, stories, commandments, and teachings; and to understand them” (David Collins). These thoughts align with God’s command regarding what to teach children (**Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:6-9; 11:18-20; Psalms 78:1-8**).
- c. The purpose of knowing the scriptures is not simply to gain knowledge, it is...
  - 1) To know the will of God (**Ephesians 5:17**) with a view to doing it (**Romans 2:13**).
  - 2) To know how to trust God, keep His commandments, and remain faithful (**Psalms 78:1-8**).
  - 3) To know how to discern between good and evil (**Hebrews 5:14**).
  - 4) To know how to exercise love<sup>3</sup> (**1 Timothy 1:5**).
  - 5) To know how to determine truth from error (**Ephesians 4:13-14; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; cp. Acts 17:11**).
  - 6) To know how to give an answer to unbelievers (**Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:15**).
  - 7) To know how to contend earnestly for the faith (**Jude 1:3**).



“The Jews very early learned their children the holy Scripture. Philo the Jew says (w), εκ πρωτης ηλικιας ‘from their very infancy’; a phrase pretty much the same with this here used. It is a maxim with the Jews (x), that when a child was five years of age, it was proper to teach him the Scriptures” (Gill).

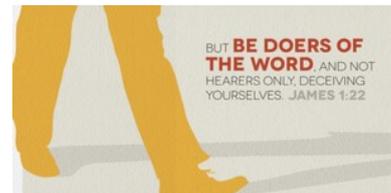
Knowing the word of God births joy (Jeremiah 15:16).

Mature Christians have a responsibility to teach the young to know the scriptures.

## 3. To Be Doers Of The Word (James 1:22-25)

One may have a great knowledge of the scriptures, but it is not profitable to the soul unless it is applied.

- a. Knowing the word is essential, but so is *doing* the word (**James 1:22**). Jesus asked, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (**Luke 6:46**).
- 1) Generally speaking, a lord is someone with authority, control, or power over others; to say that someone is “lord” is to consider that person a master or ruler of some kind. In Jesus’ day the word *lord* was often used as a title of respect toward earthly authorities (cp. **1 Peter 3:5-6**). Jesus is the creator of all things (**Colossians 1:15-17**) and has *all* authority in heaven and on earth (**Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9-11**), and, therefore, has the right and power to command all people.
- 2) If Jesus really is our Lord, then we will do *all* that He says (**Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:24-27**). Note: Jesus doesn’t force anyone to submit to Him, we must do so willingly. Having said that, a day is coming when, at the name of Jesus, “every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (**Philippians 2:10-11**).
- 3) Our justification rests on doing the will of God (**Romans 2:13**). To believe otherwise is to deceive ourselves (**James 1:22; cp. 1 John 3:18**).



The highest duty of man is to learn the will of God and then do it.

<sup>3</sup> Here Paul is referring to the aim, purpose, and outcome of the charge given in verses 3-4, but, in fact, may be said to be the goal of all Biblical teaching.

b. The things listed here may apply to all Christians, but they especially need to be instilled into the young:

1) Conduct in the house of God. Writing to Timothy, Paul says, “Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15). People need to be taught how to conduct themselves whenever the saints gather together. Indeed, God wants all things to be done “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). The following points are aimed at three age groups:

a) Infants/toddlers. Admittedly, it can be difficult to get a toddler to sit still and quiet through the service, but to just let them run around is not good (it certainly sends the toddler the wrong message!); they can disrupt the service and distract people’s attention. The truth is that toddlers *can* be trained to sit still and quiet – if you need help and advice, then ask parents that have experience in such matters.

b) Young people. Sometimes you see young people (and adults that ought to know better) texting or even playing games on their mobile phones, and they “can’t see anything wrong with it!” Young people need to be taught what’s wrong with it! Young people must be taught that we assemble to worship God, not to entertain ourselves.



c) Adults. Some adults can be disruptive and disorderly: chatting during the service, looking at their phones, dozing off, etc. Some leave after the Lord’s Supper or during the break for no legitimate reason, etc. This sort of behavior is not only disrespectful it sets a bad example to the younger people.

2) Good works. As soon as is possible, let your children experience the joy of doing good works.

“I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live” (Ecclesiastes 3:12).

a) We were created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14).

b) Those that profess godliness will adorn themselves with good works (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

c) Good works are testimonies of one’s faith (James 2:18, 24).

d) Good works must be maintained (Titus 3:14).

e) We must also stir others up to good works (Hebrews 10:24).

f) Our good works may influence unbelievers (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12).

g) Those engaged in good works are free of any terror from governing authorities (Romans 13:3-4; cp. 1 Peter 3:13-17).

h) A reputation for good works is one of the qualifications for widows to be supported by the church (1 Timothy 5:9-10).

☞ The church at Thyatira was commended for their good works (Revelation 2:19).

☞ Dorcus was said to be “full of good works and charitable deeds” (Acts 9:36).

We all know the joy we experience when we do good works, and we must allow our children to experience that joy for themselves.

3) Manners, respect, honor, etc. It is vitally important to teach young people about being well mannered, gracious, courteous, and respectful.

a) Children must be taught to respect and honor (i) their parents (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3; cp. Deuteronomy 27:16; Proverbs 20:20). If children are not taught to respect and honor their parents, then they will have no respect and honor for anyone; not even the Lord! (ii) Governing authorities (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:17). (iii) Masters/Employers (1 Timothy 6:1). (iv) Those in the local church: elders, deacons, preachers, and all the brethren (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; 1 Peter 2:17).

A moral lifestyle is the proof of self-respect, and good manners are the proof of your respect for others.

- b) Young people must be taught good manners, respect, politeness, and courteousness. These things are manifested by, for example, standing up in the presence of the elderly (**Leviticus 19:32**), waiting for elders to finish speaking before speaking (**Job 32:4, 6**), not rebuking elders, but tactfully and considerately entreating them (**1 Timothy 5:1**).
- c) All Christians must be taught how to avoid sin. This includes resisting the enticements of evil people (**Proverbs 1:8-19**), making no provisions for the flesh (**Romans 13:14**<sup>4</sup>), and occupying one's self with walking in the Spirit (**Galatians 5:16**).
- d) Older women must teach younger women how to love their husbands and be homemakers (**Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:3-5**), dress modestly (**1 Timothy 2:9**), and do good works (**1 Timothy 2:10; cp. Acts 9:36**). A study of **Proverbs 31:10-31** is a good place to start.
- e) Older men must teach younger men how to dress modestly (**1 Timothy 2:9**<sup>5</sup>), love their wives (**Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7**), and raise their children (**Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21**).
- c. Seeking advice from others. Solomon wrote, "In the multitude of counselors there is safety" (**Proverbs 11:14; 15:22**). So while mature Christians have a responsibility to teach the young, the young have a responsibility to seek advice. But it is vital to seek advice from experienced people – generally speaking, it is not wise to ask a divorced person about the secrets of a happy marriage; it is not wise to ask a glutton about self-control; it is not wise to ask a fool about pursuing wisdom; it is not wise to ask a man with unfaithful children about raising godly children, etc.

Some parents don't teach their children respect, good manners, and courteousness because they themselves disdain such things.

Mature Christians have a responsibility to teach the young the importance of being doers of the word.

#### 4. To Train And Admonish (**Ephesians 6:4**)

Every child and every Christian needs constant training and admonishing.



- a. If parents work together to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (**Ephesians 6:4**), then they have this assurance: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (**Proverbs 22:6**). Some will argue that this is a general statement; it is generally true. Exactly! And the more children you have, the more this general truth will be seen. If one has seven sons and three daughters, then one or two out of the ten that prove to be unfaithful is, perhaps, no shame. However, if the majority prove unfaithful, then they have *not* been brought up in the way they should go. The man that denies his errors will never correct them.
- 1) Good examples: (i) Abraham is a good example (**Genesis 18:19; cp. Joshua 24:15**). (ii) One of the most notable things Hannah does is offer her son Samuel to the service of God by dedicating him to the temple. While we may not be setting our children to work in temples from a young age, what we can learn from Hannah is having a persistent faith and a heart willing to surrender everything to God and seek His will for her child (**1 Samuel 1:1-28**). (iii) Eunice does not have a Bible narrative of her own, but we do know that Timothy was an impressive, young man of whom Paul took note. Paul also commended his mother and grandmother saying, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well" (**2 Timothy 1:5**).
- 2) Bad examples: (i) Eli's sons were corrupt (**1 Samuel 2:12-17**), and while it appears that he rebuked them (**1 Samuel 2:22-25**), the Lord rebuked him for honoring his sons above Him (**1 Samuel 2:27-29**) and not restraining them from their evil deeds (**1 Samuel 3:13**). (ii) Isaac and Rebekah playing favorites among their children (**Genesis 25:27-28**). (iii) Lot pimping his daughters (**Genesis 19:1-8**).

<sup>4</sup> "Evidently, the idea is that one is not to take forethought or plan for the satisfaction of the desires of the flesh" (Clinton D. Hamilton).

<sup>5</sup> There is nothing said in 1 Timothy 2:9 about men dressing modestly, and there is nothing said in Matthew 5:28 about a woman lusting after a man. This, of course, doesn't mean that men are free to dress immodestly and that women can lust after a man with impunity. The reason women are singled out in 1 Timothy 2:9 is because women are more prone to dress immodestly than men, and likewise, men are singled out in Matthew 5:28 because they are more prone to lust. The principles, though, apply to both men and women.

b. To bring up, nurture and admonish:

- 1) “Bring them up” is from the Greek word *ektrepho*, which means, “to bring up from,” or “to bring up out.” This implies to bring up from infancy to maturity. It is the job of the parents to take a child, and make an adult out of him.
  - 2) Nurture (*en paideia*). The word used here means “training of a child;” hence education, instruction, discipline. Here it means that they are to train up their children in such a manner as the Lord approves; that is, they are to educate them for virtue and religion. It is a word that includes *instruction, guidance, and teaching*. Paul is saying that we are to train children with a plan.
  - 3) Admonition (*nouthesia*). (i) The word used here means literally, “a putting in mind,” then warning, admonition, instruction. The sense here is that they were to put them in mind of the Lord - of His existence, perfections, law, and claims on their hearts and lives. This command is positive, and is in accordance with all the requirements of the Bible on the subject. No one can doubt that the Bible enjoins on parents the duty of endeavoring to train up their children in the ways of religion, and of making it the grand purpose of this life to prepare them for heaven. (ii) Admonition has to do with warning; it has to do with seeing a fault, and warning of its danger. Teaching often has the sense of seeing something that the child is doing wrong, telling him that he is doing it wrong, and correcting it.
- c. So what is involved in bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Well, it certainly involves (i) more than being able to quote Ephesians 6:4 and Proverbs 22:6, (ii) more than an 30-60 minute Bible study every night, and (iii) more than taking them to worship every Sunday. I didn’t say it doesn’t involve these things, it does, but it involves much more. The onus is on parents to study the scriptures to discover what the “much more” involves.

Parents have a fearful and awesome responsibility to bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord, and the onus is on parents to study the scriptures and discover all that God has revealed on the subject.

**5. To Develop And Nurture A Spirit Of Serving (John 13:13-14)**

Jesus said He came to serve, and we have been called to serve; it is the Christian’s *raison d’être*.

“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (**Matthew 20:27-28**).



- a. Jesus came to serve (**Matthew 20:27-28**) and He is the perfect example of humility and service (**John 13:1-15**). We would all do well to study the life of Jesus to understand what it means to walk in humility (*cp. Micah 6:8*) and in the service of others. We look to Jesus to develop the heart of a servant.
- b. Paul says that we have been called to freedom that we might, through love, serve one another (**Galatians 5:13; cp. Romans 7:6**). Each person serves according to their abilities, talents, and resources:
  - 1) Paul made himself a servant of all (**1 Corinthians 9:19; cp. 1 Corinthians 3:5-7; 4:1**).
  - 2) Phoebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea (**Romans 16:1**).
  - 3) Tabatha served others (**Acts 9:36-39**).
  - 4) Gaius served others through his hospitality (**3 John 1:5-8**).
  - 5) Epaphras was a faithful minister (servant) of the church in Colossae (**Colossians 1:7**).
  - 6) Tychicus is described as a faithful minister (**Colossians 4:7**).
  - 7) The Shunammite woman served Elisha (**2 Kings 4:8-10**).

One can strive to be great in the world or great in the kingdom of God. Mature Christians know that striving to be great in the kingdom of God brings the greatest rewards. Yet, contrary to what the world teaches, greatness is in making oneself the servant of all (**Mark 9:35**).

c. There are various spheres in which we may serve, and, again, according to one’s talents, abilities, resources (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 7:17), and opportunities (Galatians 5:13; 6:10). In whatever sphere we serve, we do so with this attitude: “As to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22; 6:5-9; Colossians 3:23-25).

- 1) At home. A husband and wife have different, divinely ordained roles, but each is to fulfil their role with an attitude of honouring and serving the Lord: husbands (Ephesians 5:25-29; 1 Peter 3:7); wives (Ephesians 5:22). Children, too, must submit to their parents and “serve” them as unto the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20). Serving at home would also include serving needy relatives (1 Timothy 5:4).
- 2) At work. The passage in Ephesians is primarily directed at masters and bondservants, but it can legitimately be applied to employers and employees (Ephesians 6:5-8).
- 3) In the community. We are to do good to all men (Galatians 6:10; cp. Colossians 4:5; Titus 2:14), and that includes our neighbors and those in the wider community (James 1:27; cp. Job 31:15-21; Luke 10:25-37).
- 4) In the local church (Acts 13:2). There are many opportunities to serve within a local church. Here are some suggestions: **Public:** Presiding, preaching, teaching, praying, reading scripture, song leading. **Behind the scenes:** preparing the Lord’s Supper, setting out chairs, hymn books, etc., printing handouts, tracts, etc., making arrangements for gospel meetings, distribution of leaflets, Bible courses, etc. **Personal:** comforting, encouraging, provoking unto to love and good works (Romans 12:3-8, 15; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 14:26; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 4:11).

Mature Christians have a responsibility to encourage the young to imitate Jesus and stir up a spirit of service within them. They should also make them aware of the various opportunities available to them.

### 6. To Mentor Men And Women With Potential In Special Service (2 Timothy 2:2)

A person that aspires to a leadership position or to serve in some special capacity may find a mentor very helpful.



a. Is the word “mentor” in the Bible? Of the fourteen Bible versions I have, only the ISV (International Standard Version) contains the word “mentor”. It appears twice in 2 Kings 2:3, 5. But even discounting this version, the concept of mentorship is found in scripture.

b. Definitions:

- 1) “Mentor. Someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person” (Merriam-Webster, Lerner’s Dictionary).
- 2) “Mentorship is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced and less knowledgeable person” (Wikipedia).

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye” (Psalms 32:8).

c. Based on the definitions above, we find examples of mentorship in the Bible:

- 1) Jesus mentored twelve disciples. “And Jesus went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:13-14). After His return to heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to “guide” the apostles (John 16:13).
- 2) All Christians that read, study, and apply God’s word are mentored by the Spirit (Galatians 5:25; cp. Psalms 31:3; 32:8; 73:24).
- 3) Moses mentored Joshua (Exodus 24:13; 33:11; Numbers 11:28; 27:18-23 > Deuteronomy 34:9).
- 4) Eli mentored Samuel (1 Samuel 1:21-28; 2:11).
- 5) Elijah mentored Elisha (1 Kings 19:16-21; 2 Kings 2:1-15).
- 6) Ashpenaz, the master of the king’s eunuchs, mentored Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to serve in the king’s palace; which took three years (Daniel 1:1-7).
- 7) Paul mentored Timothy (Acts 16:1-5; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:20).

However great a mentor might be, he should always admonish his protégés to “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1), and to search the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things are so (Acts 17:11).

- d. A mature Christian, then, might see some talent and ability in a younger Christian and offer to help him or her develop it. Timothy was encouraged to mentor young aspiring preachers (2 Timothy 2:2), and experienced wives were encouraged to mentor younger wives in all things domestic (Titus 2:3-5). Parents, of course, ought to mentor their children in the scriptures and godly living (Ephesians 6:4).

Mature Christians have a responsibility to take the young under their wings and help, advice, and train them for service.

### 7. To Set An Example (Philippians 3:17)

You can teach and admonish all you want, but you undermine everything by not setting forth yourself as an example.

- a. In general, Christians are urged not to imitate (G3401) what is evil, but what is good (3 John 1:11), and to “imitate (G3402) those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Hebrews 6:12; 11:1-40).

G3401 *miméomai* - “To mimic, but in a good sense, to imitate, follow as an example” (CWSD).

G3402 *mimētés* – “To imitate. An imitator, follower” (CWSD).



- b. Jesus is the supreme example of a perfect life to imitate:

- 1) Jesus is the perfect example of humility and service (John 13:1-15).
- 2) Jesus is the perfect example of patience when suffering for doing good (1 Peter 2:19-24).
- 3) Jesus is the perfect example of what it means to love (G25 agapao) (John 10:15 > 15:13; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:16).
- 4) Jesus is the perfect example of what it means to forgive (Luke 23:34; 1 Timothy 1:15).
- 5) Jesus is the perfect example of what it means to live a sinless life (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5).

“... as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

- c. Whatever our office or role as a Christian, we are all to set an example to believers and unbelievers:

- 1) The apostle Paul exhorted Christians to follow his example in Christian living (Philippians 3:16-17; cp. 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10).
- 2) Elders ought to be an example to all Christians (Hebrews 13:7).
- 3) The evangelist Timothy was exhorted to be an example to believers (1 Timothy 4:12), and Titus was exhorted to be an example to young men (Titus 2:6-8).
- 4) All Christians are to be an example to everyone, and it is our example that can influence unbelievers (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Corinthians 7:13-16; 1 Peter 3:1-2).

- d. A few miscellaneous notes:

- 1) The prophets are set forth as an example of suffering and patience to follow (James 5:10-11).
- 2) The young can be an example to adults (Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 10:13-16).
- 3) Some people are set forth as bad examples not to follow (Hebrews 4:1-11; 2 Peter 2:1-6; Jude 1:3-7; 3 John 1:5-11).

Mature Christians have a responsibility to set an example to children, brethren, and the world of what it means to have Christ living in me. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

## **Conclusion**

1. A mature Christian is one that knows the scriptures and is walking in the Spirit (A rather general description that could be expounded upon a great deal), and every mature Christian has responsibilities toward the young – whether in years or in the faith.
2. In this lesson we have considered seven responsibilities mature Christians have toward the young:
  - a. To know God (**John 17:3; Hebrews 8:10-11**).
  - b. To know the scriptures (**Deuteronomy 11:18-21**).
  - c. To be doers of the word (**James 1:22-25**).
  - d. To train and admonish (**Ephesians 6:4**).
  - e. To develop and nurture a spirit of serving (**John 13:13-14**).
  - f. To mentor men and women with potential in special service (**2 Timothy 2:2**).
  - g. To set an example (**Philippians 3:17**).
3. A mature Christian will seek to fulfil these responsibilities.

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