GROWING UP IN CHRIST

Seven Levels of Moral Decision Making

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- Paul, an Apostle to the Gentiles, had a great longing for his fellow Jews
- I was raised in the SDA tradition and while I present Christian truths for everyone, have a great longing in my heart for those in the SDA tradition
- For their benefit, I will provide periodic historical quotes

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Have You Ever Been One of the First to Know Something was Wrong?

Have you ever had the difficulty of identifying a problem when someone in leadership already concluded that no problem exists?

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There Is Something Wrong in Christianity

- Domestic violence rates - No different

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- Pornography use - No different
- Disunity and fragmentation with 34,000 different groups

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2 Timothy 3:1-5 *NIV*

1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last
days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of
money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their
parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving,
slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the
good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure
rather than lovers of God– 5 **having a form of**
godliness but denying its power.

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There Is Something Wrong in Christianity

In this seminar, we will:

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There Is Something Wrong in Christianity

In this seminar, we will:

- Expose an infection of thought / distortion of belief that keeps good people trapped in addiction and violence cycles

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There Is Something Wrong in Christianity

In this seminar, we will:

- Expose an infection of thought / distortion of belief that keeps good people trapped in addiction and violence cycles
- Present a Remedy to bring healing and prepare people to meet Jesus

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How Do You Determine What Is Right And Wrong?

- Do you look to a higher authority – parent, teacher, political leader, pastor, priest or deity – to tell you?

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How Do You Determine What Is Right And Wrong?

- Do you look to a higher authority – parent, teacher, political leader, pastor, priest or deity – to tell you?
- Do you look for a consensus among peers, or perhaps a code of rules or system of established laws?
- Or do you have another standard?

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We Will Examine the 7 Levels so that…

"We shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature. Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful people, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent."

— *Ephesians 4:13,14* NIV

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Eric Wright

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Eric Wright

- What should he do?



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Eric Wright

- What should he do?
- What is the RIGHT action to take?



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Eric Wright

- What should he do?
- What is the RIGHT action to take?
- Should he break the law?



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Eric was Arrested and Charged With

- Assault on an police officer
- Disorderly conduct
- Reckless endangerment
- Two counts of traffic signals violation
- Expired registration

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Did Eric Do Right or Wrong?

It all depends on your level of
Moral Development

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Seven Levels of Moral Development

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Level 1

Reward and Punishment

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Level 1: **Reward** and **Punishment**

- The most basic level

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Level 1: **Reward** and **Punishment**

- The most basic level
- Right – if rewarded

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Level 1: Reward and Punishment

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- Right – if rewarded
- Wrong – if punished

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- Nazi soldiers

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Level 1: Reward and Punishment

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- Right – if rewarded
- Wrong – if punished
- Nazi soldiers
- Ancient Israel as slaves in Egypt

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Ruler Must Be Powerful

- Rulers establish right to rule by powerful displays of might and vengeance on enemies

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- Mercy or failure to punish is viewed as weakness and immoral by level 1 thinkers

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- Rulers establish right to rule by powerful displays of might and vengeance on enemies
- Mercy or failure to punish is viewed as weakness and immoral by level 1 thinkers
- People at this level see a God of mercy, who doesn't inflict punishment as a marshmallow God and insist God must use His power to inflict torment and death

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God Meets People Where They Are

- God took vengeance on the gods of Egypt

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- God displayed power with 10 plagues to demonstrate the impotence of the Egyptian gods

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God Meets People Where They Are

- God took vengeance on the gods of Egypt
- God displayed power with 10 plagues to demonstrate the impotence of the Egyptian gods
- "I did this so that you might know that I am the Lord your God." *Deuteronomy 29:6*

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Level 1 Is so Primitive it Doesn't Require a Brain

- Thinking is completely sidelined

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- Animals, plants, and bacteria avoid painful stimuli and grow toward rewarding stimuli

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- Thinking is completely sidelined
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- This level of functioning is not worthy of human beings created in the image of God
- It is Satan's goal to reduce us to "brute beasts, creatures of instinct" operating at level one.

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Level 2

Marketplace Exchange

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LEVEL 2: MARKETPLACE EXCHANGE

- Quid pro quo: You do something for me in return for something of agreed-upon value

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LEVEL 2: MARKETPLACE EXCHANGE

- Quid pro quo: You do something for me in return for something of agreed-upon value
- As ancient Israel said when the law was read, “All the Lord has said WE will do.”

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LEVEL 2: MARKETPLACE EXCHANGE

- "Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth."
  - Vengeance is a moral duty – to NOT pay someone back with equal amounts of pain and suffering is considered immoral.

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LEVEL 2: MARKETPLACE EXCHANGE

- "Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth."
  - Vengeance is a moral duty – to NOT pay someone back with equal amounts of pain and suffering is considered immoral.
- This is the health / wellness gospel
  - If you do these rituals or say this prayer for so many days, you will be blessed of God.

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Level 2 Barely Requires a Brain

- Thinking at this level is minimal

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- Thinking at this level is minimal
- Animals – dolphins, monkeys, dogs – can do things in exchange for a treat
- Motives remain self focused
- Not worthy of beings created in the image of God

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Level 3

Social Conformity

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LEVEL 3: SOCIAL CONFORMITY

- Everyone's doing it

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Level 3: **Social Conformity**

- Everyone's doing it
- Right is determined by the consensus of one's peers or community

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Level 3: **Social Conformity**

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- Right is determined by the consensus of one's peers or community
- Individual vengeance is not allowed, but group punishment is considered mandatory
- Like ancient Israel when they wanted kings and when they collectively punished / stoned / ostracized

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Level 3 Doesn't Require Thinking

- Look to others to determine what is right

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Level 3 Doesn't Require Thinking

- Look to others to determine what is right
- Many herd animals follow the crowd, even if it is right over the cliff

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Level 3 Doesn't Require Thinking

- Look to others to determine what is right
- Many herd animals follow the crowd, even if it is right over the cliff
- Again, not worthy of beings created in the image of God

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Level 4

Law and Order

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Level 4: **Law and Order**

- Right and wrong determined by a codified system of rules, judges and imposed punishments

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- Right and wrong determined by a codified system of rules, judges and imposed punishments
- Judgment is deferred to properly elected or otherwise constituted authorities

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Level 4: **Law and Order**

- Right and wrong determined by a codified system of rules, judges and imposed punishments
- Judgment is deferred to properly elected or otherwise constituted authorities
- Authority figures rarely questioned: He must be right, he's the judge, mayor, president, pastor, pope, God…

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Level 4: **Law and Order**

- As ancient Israel at the time of Christ said, “We have a law…”

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Level 4: **Law and Order**

- As ancient Israel at the time of Christ said, “We have a law…”
- Much of the modern world with imposed laws, judicial systems and COERCIVE enforcement

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Level 4: Minimal Level of Thinking

- At this level, one only has to think, “What are the rules?” “What is the law?”

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- At this level, one only has to think, “What are the rules?” “What is the law?”
- Doesn’t have to understand why

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- At this level, one only has to think, “What are the rules?” “What is the law?”
- Doesn’t have to understand why
- Doesn’t have to consider variables – if the rule says it, one must do it
- Security is found in law-keeping – “I can’t be punished if I keep the rules” – OR in a legal loophole - substitutionary law-keeping, legal payments made to appease the legal authority.

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Level 5

Love for Others

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Level 5: **Love for Others**

- Right is determined by doing what is actually beneficial for others

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Level 5: **Love for Others**

- Right is determined by doing what is actually beneficial for others
- People have value regardless of the "law" (i.e. African Americans have value regardless of Jim Crow laws)
- Right is determined, NOT by checking rules, but by doing that which is actually good for another

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Level 5: **Love for Others**

- This was Jesus healing on the Sabbath, socializing with tax collectors and touching lepers. Also, the story of the Good Samaritan, Apostles picking grain on Sabbath, David and the showbread.

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Level 5 Requires Other-Centered Thinking

- Level five is the first level that moves the decision making away from self to others

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- Level five is the first level that moves the decision making away from self to others
- Requires consideration of various options
- This level doesn't require high cognitive intelligence, but does require some emotional intelligence with compassion and concern for others.
- It's about right motive; NOT right answers
- Except you become like little children…

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Level 6

Principle Based

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LEVEL 6: **PRINCIPLE BASED**

- Understands design law, right and wrong is determined by harmony with how life is actually constructed to operate

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LEVEL 6: PRINCIPLE BASED

- Understands design law, right and wrong is determined by harmony with how life is actually constructed to operate
- One doesn't do something "because the rule says so," but because it actually works that way

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Level 6: **Principle Based**

- Understands design law, right and wrong is determined by harmony with how life is actually constructed to operate
- One doesn't do something "because the rule says so," but because it actually works that way
- This was Jesus and the Apostles after Pentecost

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Level 6 Requires Thinking

- Not only a concern for others but a realization of how God constructed life to operate

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- Not only a concern for others but a realization of how God constructed life to operate
- One reasons through cause and effect

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Level 6 Requires Thinking

- Not only a concern for others but a realization of how God constructed life to operate
- One reasons through cause and effect
- Mature individuals don't use illegal drugs, not because they are illegal, but because they violate the laws of health. Thus, even when made legal by the state, they still don't use them.

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Level 7

Understanding Friend of God

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Level 7: Understanding Friend of God

- Not only love for God and others

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Level 7: Understanding Friend of God

- Not only love for God and others
- Not only understands God's design for life

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Level 7: Understanding Friend of God

- Not only love for God and others
- Not only understands God's design for life
- But understands and intelligently participates in God's *purposes*

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Level 7: Understanding Friend of God

- Not only love for God and others
- Not only understands God's design for life
- But understands and intelligently participates in God's purposes
- "I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father."

John 15:15 The Message

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Level 7 Understand

- God's character and law of love

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Level 7 Understand

- God's character and law of love
- God's design for life

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Level 7 Understand

- God's character and law of love
- God's design for life
- The origin of evil and the nature of sin

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- God's character and law of love
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- The weapons of Satan

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Level 7 Understand

- God's character and law of love
- God's design for life
- The origin of evil and the nature of sin
- The weapons of Satan
- The original purpose for the creation of humanity
- The fall of humanity into sin
- God's working through human history

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- The original purpose for the creation of humanity
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- God's working through human history
- The purpose of the Cross

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Level 7 Understand

- God's character and law of love
- God's design for life
- The origin of evil and the nature of sin
- The weapons of Satan
- The original purpose for the creation of humanity
- The fall of humanity into sin
- God's working through human history
- The purpose of the Cross
- The ultimate cleansing of the universe from sin

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Level 7

- Jesus operated at this level

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Level 7

- Jesus operated at this level
- As will those who are ready for translation

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Level 7

- Jesus operated at this level
- As will those who are ready for translation
- The Scriptures describe those who are ready to meet Christ when He returns as:
  - Being sealed in their foreheads with the seal of God. *Revelation 7:3*
  - Those who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. *Revelation 12:11*

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Love is the Basis of Life

- This principle of other-centeredness leads to values of modesty, humility and wise stewardship of money

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- Level 7 would have no problem avoiding expensive jewelry, or flashy cars, or clothes designed to promote self

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Love is the Basis of Life

- This principle of other-centeredness leads to values of modesty, humility and wise stewardship of money
- Level 7 would have no problem avoiding expensive jewelry, or flashy cars, or clothes designed to promote self
- But level 4 would make rules, such as no cosmetics or jewelry, but never notice the person who weekly buys an expensive coat or dress because that's not one of the rules.

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Why So Many Laws

- Understanding people operating at level 4 and below gives insight as to why there are so many laws in the books of Moses.

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Why So Many Laws

- Understanding people operating at level 4 and below gives insight as to why there are so many laws in the books of Moses.
- Consider how many laws we have in our society. When people operate at level 4 and below, they need a law for every situation.

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Why So Many Laws

- But when people reach level 5 and above, it can be summed up in two:
  - Love God and Love each other.

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Why So Many Laws

- But when people reach level 5 and above, it can be summed up in two:
  - Love God and Love each other.
- Rules are no longer needed because they are written upon the heart. *Hebrews 8:10*

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 1 - Reward and Punishment

It is wrong not to brush because mommy will be mad and the child will be punished. It is right to brush because the child will be praised.

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 2 - Marketplace Exchange

This is the child or parent who says,
"I'll brush my teeth if you read me a bedtime story,"
or "Brush your teeth and I'll read you a bedtime story."
Don't brush, no story. Do brush, get the story.

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 3 - Social Conformity

It's wrong not to brush at this level because one will be teased at school, it's right to brush in order to be accepted

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 4 - Law and Order

At this level there is a family behavior contract,
with codified expectations and written consequences.
Don’t brush and lose a prescribed privilege,
no cell phone for that day.
Do brush and maintain the privilege.

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 5 - Love for Others

Realizing it would inconvenience one's parents to take him to dentist and pay dental bills and, therefore, desiring to reduce burdens on his parents, one brushes his teeth.

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 6 - Principles Based

The person at this level understands the second law of thermodynamics (even if they can't name it) that if energy isn't put into the system, it will decay. Therefore, one brushes because this is how things actually work best.

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding friend of God

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding friend of God

- Not only loves others and understands God's design

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding friend of God

- Not only loves others and understands God's design
- Also realizes made in God's image and the body is the Spirit Temple.

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding friend of God

- Knows that failure to brush causes decay, increases sickness, and undermines one's ability to fulfill God's purpose.

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Consider a Child Brushing his Teeth through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding friend of God

- Knows that failure to brush causes decay, increases sickness, and undermines one's ability to fulfill God's purpose.
- So one brushes as a good steward to maintain one's health in order to be of greatest usefulness in God's cause, be a good witness to others, and demonstrate love for God and fellow human beings.

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At All 7 Levels Teeth are Brushed

- But only level 5 and above can be trusted

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At All 7 Levels Teeth are Brushed

- But only level 5 and above can be trusted
- Level 4 and below require some external threat, some external oversight to enforce the behavior

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At All 7 Levels Teeth are Brushed

- But only level 5 and above can be trusted
- Level 4 and below require some external threat, some external oversight to enforce the behavior
- Level 4 and below have a selfish motivation – no heart change
- Level 5 is the first level the law is internalized, where the law is written on the heart and the motive changes to love!

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Imposed vs. Design Law

- Level 1-4 views life through imposed law lens

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Imposed vs. Design Law

- Level 1-4 views life through imposed law lens
- Level 5-7 views life through Design law lens

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Hebrews 5:11-14 *NIV*

11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain
because you are slow to learn. 12 In fact, though by this
time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to
teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over
again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives
on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the
teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the
mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to

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God wants us to Grow Up

- Because staying as children, infants on milk MEANS:

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- Because staying as children, infants on milk MEANS:
  - We are not yet righteous, i.e. we are not “set right” in our hearts / minds (justified)

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- Childlike Christianity requires ongoing supervision, oversight, and external threats to do what is right

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God wants us to Grow Up

- Because staying as children, infants on milk MEANS:
  - We are not yet righteous, i.e. we are not “set right” in our hearts / minds (justified)
- Childlike Christianity requires ongoing supervision, oversight, and external threats to do what is right
- Has a form of godliness but denies the power

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Immature Christianity and Our Youth

- Have you ever wondered why so many young people leave the church?

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Immature Christianity and Our Youth

- Have you ever wondered why so many young people leave the church?
- Teaching level 4 and below is why many young people leave the church

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- Have you ever wondered why so many young people leave the church?
- Teaching level 4 and below is why many young people leave the church
- Remember the tooth brushing analogy and the descriptions of level 4 and below operations

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Immature Christianity and Our Youth

- Have you ever wondered why so many young people leave the church?
- Teaching level 4 and below is why many young people leave the church
- Remember the tooth brushing analogy and the descriptions of level 4 and below operations
- We must help our young people grow up to understand God, His character of love, His methods and design for life!

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So What Prevents Maturing?

- Staying on Infant Formula

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So What Prevents Maturing?

- Staying on Infant Formula
- And what is the theological formula of infants?

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So What Prevents Maturing?

"Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites [baptism/ symbolic rituals], the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."

Hebrews 6:1,2

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What is Infant Formula?

- Do's and don'ts, the commandments, behavioral / legal religion, keeping track of deeds and sins

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What is Infant Formula?

- Do's and don'ts, the commandments, behavioral / legal religion, keeping track of deeds and sins
- This is the starting point, the infant stage

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  - We must be born in order to grow physically

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- Do's and don'ts, the commandments, behavioral / legal religion, keeping track of deeds and sins
- This is the starting point, the infant stage
  - We must be born in order to grow physically
  - We must be born again and repent, to grow spiritually

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What is Infant Formula?

- Do's and don'ts, the commandments, behavioral / legal religion, keeping track of deeds and sins
- This is the starting point, the infant stage
  - We must be born in order to grow physically
  - We must be born again and repent, to grow spiritually
  - The law initially convicts us so we know something is wrong

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What is Infant Formula?

- Freedom from guilt and shame is wonderful
  - Sadly many stay as babes with chronic conviction of sin and repentance from acts

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Healthy Repentance

- When we realize the truth of God's design for life, His character of love, and our terminal condition, we surrender ourselves in trust to Jesus.

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Healthy Repentance

- When we realize the truth of God's design for life, His character of love, and our terminal condition, we surrender ourselves in trust to Jesus.
- This is David praying, search me and see the wicked way in me, create in me a clean heart, oh God!

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What Prevents Growing Up?

- Level 4 and below theologies with legal descriptions and legal solutions – for those who don't leave the church – end up trapped in addiction and violence cycles. Why?

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What Prevents Growing Up?

- Level 4 and below theologies with legal descriptions and legal solutions – for those who don't leave the church – end up trapped in addiction and violence cycles. Why?
- Because they are told a false legal solution, which has a form of godliness, but no power to heal.

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What is Infant Formula?

- Haven’t brushed teeth, have cavities / pain

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What is Infant Formula?

- Haven't brushed teeth, have cavities / pain
- Seek help – from expert

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What is Infant Formula?

- Haven't brushed teeth, have cavities / pain
- Seek help – from expert
- Told, accept the legal tooth brushing of your older brother or do a ritual / have intercession with the Dentist

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What is Infant Formula?

- Haven't brushed teeth, have cavities / pain
- Seek help – from expert
- Told, accept the legal tooth brushing of your older brother or do a ritual / have intercession with the Dentist
- Your older brother will be examined instead of you and the record of His perfect teeth will be recorded in your chart

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What is Infant Formula?

- You will be declared to have perfect teeth, even though you don't. Just believe you do.

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What is Infant Formula?

- You will be declared to have perfect teeth, even though you don't. Just believe you do.
- You claim you believe it, but you continue to get worse.

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Genuine Righteousness/Justification

- Being set right in heart with God again

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Genuine Righteousness/Justification

- Being set right in heart with God again
- Natural heart distrusts God / enmity *Romans 8:7*

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- Natural heart distrusts God / enmity *Romans 8:7*
- Abraham "trusted God and was recognized to be righteous" or set right *Romans 4:3*
- His heart changed from distrust to trust
- In trust, open the heart and receive the indwelling Holy Spirit that takes Christ's victory and reproduces it in us!

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Infant Repentance

- Childlike conviction of our bad deeds

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Infant Repentance

- Childlike conviction of our bad deeds
- Feel guilty and ashamed of the bad things we have done

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Infant Repentance

- Childlike conviction of our bad deeds
- Feel guilty and ashamed of the bad things we have done
- Live in fear of punishment and rejection

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Infant Repentance

- Vulnerable to have our understanding of God distorted because

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Infant Repentance

- Vulnerable to have our understanding of God distorted because
  - We feel bad about ourselves; we accept the lie that God is mad at us

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Infant Repentance

- Vulnerable to have our understanding of God distorted because
  - We feel bad about ourselves; we accept the lie that God is mad at us
  - We punish ourselves in our own minds; we believe the lie that God wants to punish us
  - We want to do something to “make up” for our badness; we believe the lie that God needs something done to Him to make up for our badness.

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Faith in God - how is this infant formula?

- Because faith or trust is also a starting point. It is in faith that we confess and repent.

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Faith in God - how is this infant formula?

- Because faith or trust is also a starting point. It is in faith that we confess and repent.
- But sadly, many don't grow past this level. Life is all about repenting from acts and having faith that Jesus has paid the penalty.

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Faith in God - how is this infant formula?

- They stay infants, unacquainted with righteousness, claiming faith in a legal payment made *to protect us from God*, rather than coming back to trust in God so they can say, like Jesus, *Into your hands I trust my spirit*.

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Example

- Teens who ask, “If God will forgive me, then why can’t I have sex before marriage?”

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Example

- Teens who ask, “If God will forgive me, then why can’t I have sex before marriage?”
- This is level 1-4 thinking, believing the problem with sin is breaking rules and getting in trouble with the one in charge.
- It is like asking, “If God will forgive me for smoking, what is wrong with smoking?”
- Level 5 and above realize God’s law is design law and deviations damage the deviant

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Instructions about Baptism – how is this infant stuff?

- Again, it is a starting point; it is the beginning of the new life in Christ.

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Instructions about Baptism – how is this infant stuff?

- Again, it is a starting point; it is the beginning of the new life in Christ.
- It is not the experience of victory over self, the crucifying of the flesh, the establishment of mature character or the growth in wisdom and understanding.

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Laying on of Hands – how is this infant Formula?

- Another elementary or starting point

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Laying on of Hands – how is this infant Formula?

- Another elementary or starting point
- After trust, repentance, surrendering self and publicly committing self to start your life anew as a newborn babe in Christ through baptism, then the laying on of hands to impart the Holy Spirit to nurture, enlighten, and help you grow – but this is, again, a starting point.

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Resurrection of the Dead – how is this infant stuff?

- This is one of the basic teachings, that helps us overcome our fear and survival-of-the-fittest instinct of self-preservation.

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- We are held captive to our fear of death *Hebrews 2:14*

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Resurrection of the Dead – how is this infant stuff?

- This is one of the basic teachings, that helps us overcome our fear and survival-of-the-fittest instinct of self-preservation.
- We are held captive to our fear of death *Hebrews 2:14*
- This teaching gives us reassurance to overcome the fear of death and drive to seek our own solution

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Eternal Judgment – how is this infant formula?

- Another basic teaching for the infants, who come all self-focused, wanting to be sure everything is “fair” and those who haven’t repented get what is due them.

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Eternal Judgment – how is this infant formula?

- Another basic teaching for the infants, who come all self-focused, wanting to be sure everything is “fair” and those who haven’t repented get what is due them.
- So, God gives them a basic teaching. There will be a final judgment; you can stop worrying, stop keeping score, stop holding resentments, forgive and trust me; I will settle up accounts in the end.

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What is Immaturity?

- Level four and below

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What is Immaturity?

- Level four and below
  - Self-centered theologies, focus on:

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What is Immaturity?

- Level four and below
  - Self-centered theologies, focus on:
    - Avoiding punishment / getting reward

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What is Immaturity?

- Level four and below
  - Self-centered theologies, focus on:
    - Avoiding punishment / getting reward
    - Making a deal
    - Getting approval / acceptance
    - Avoiding legal trouble, penal / legal theologies

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Immaturity is Refusing the Integrative, Evidence-Based Approach

Refusing to harmonize God's three threads:

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Immaturity is Refusing the Integrative, Evidence-Based Approach

Refusing to harmonize God's three threads:

- **Scripture:** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. *2 Timothy 3:16*

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- **Scripture:** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. *2 Timothy 3:16*
- **Science:** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that

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Immaturity is Refusing the Integrative, Evidence-Based Approach

Refusing to harmonize God's three threads:

- **Science:** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. *Romans 1:20*
- **Experience:** Taste and see that the Lord is good. *Psalm 34:8*; Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your

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Immaturity is Sola Scriptura



- God said it, I believe it, that settles it.

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Immaturity is Sola Scriptura



- God said it, I believe it, that settles it.
- Thoughtless adherence to a rules-focused religion.

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Immaturity is Sola Scriptura



- God said it, I believe it, that settles it.
- Thoughtless adherence to a rules-focused religion.
- Inability to integrate Scripture into reality-based experiences and life principles.

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Immaturity is Sola Scriptura



- Cannot draw conclusions from evidence and require a declarative text or statement to believe.

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Immaturity is Sola Scriptura



- Cannot draw conclusions from evidence and require a declarative text or statement to believe.
- Historically, those who refused to believe the world is round or not the center of the universe.

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Immaturity is Sola Scriptura



- Even though the Bible declares our need to mature, and demonstrates the progression through history of different levels, rejects this program because the 7 levels aren't listed

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What is Maturity?

- Level five and above

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- Level five and above
  - Love / Other-Centered theologies, focus on:

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What is Maturity?

- Level five and above
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What is Maturity?

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  - Love / Other-Centered theologies, focus on:
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    - Living in harmony with Design

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What is Maturity?

- Level five and above
  - Love / Other-Centered theologies, focus on:
    - Love for God and others
    - Living in harmony with Design
    - Fulfilling God's purposes

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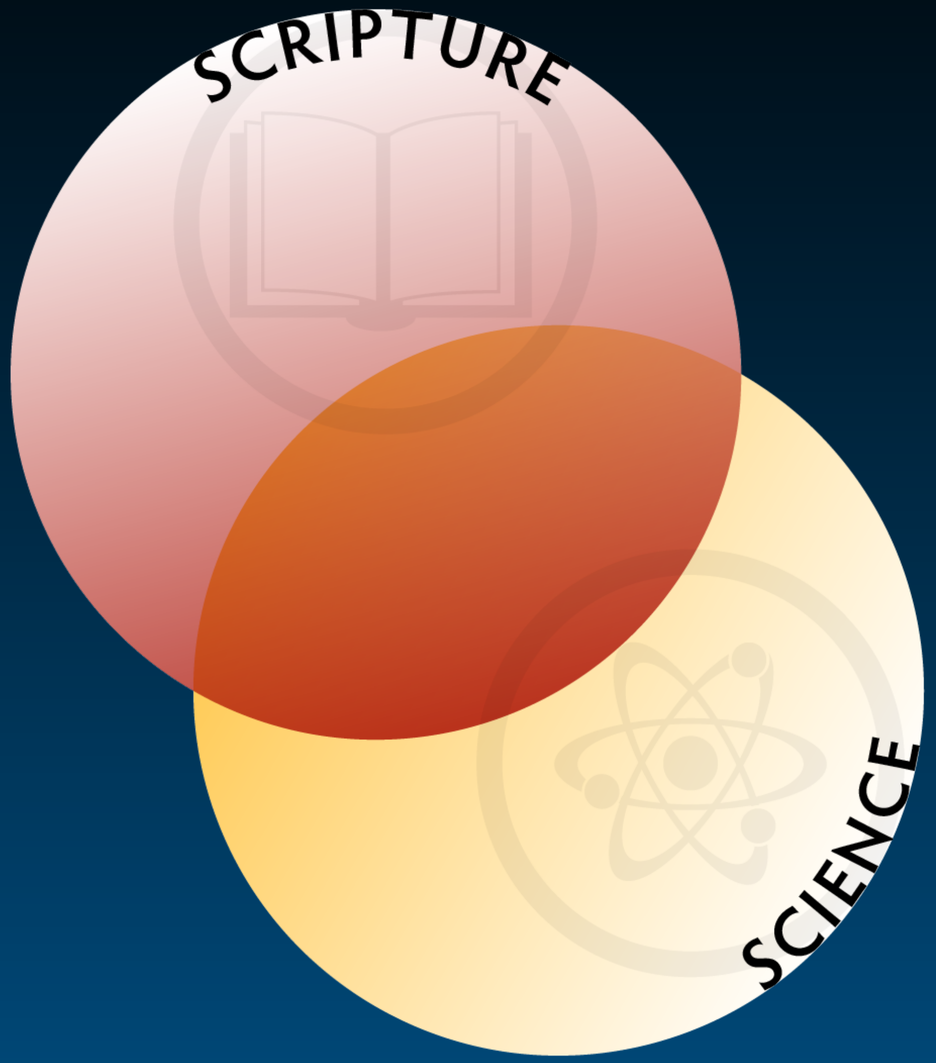
Maturity Level 5



- Love for others
- Includes not only Scripture, but requires interpretations that harmonize with the experience of love

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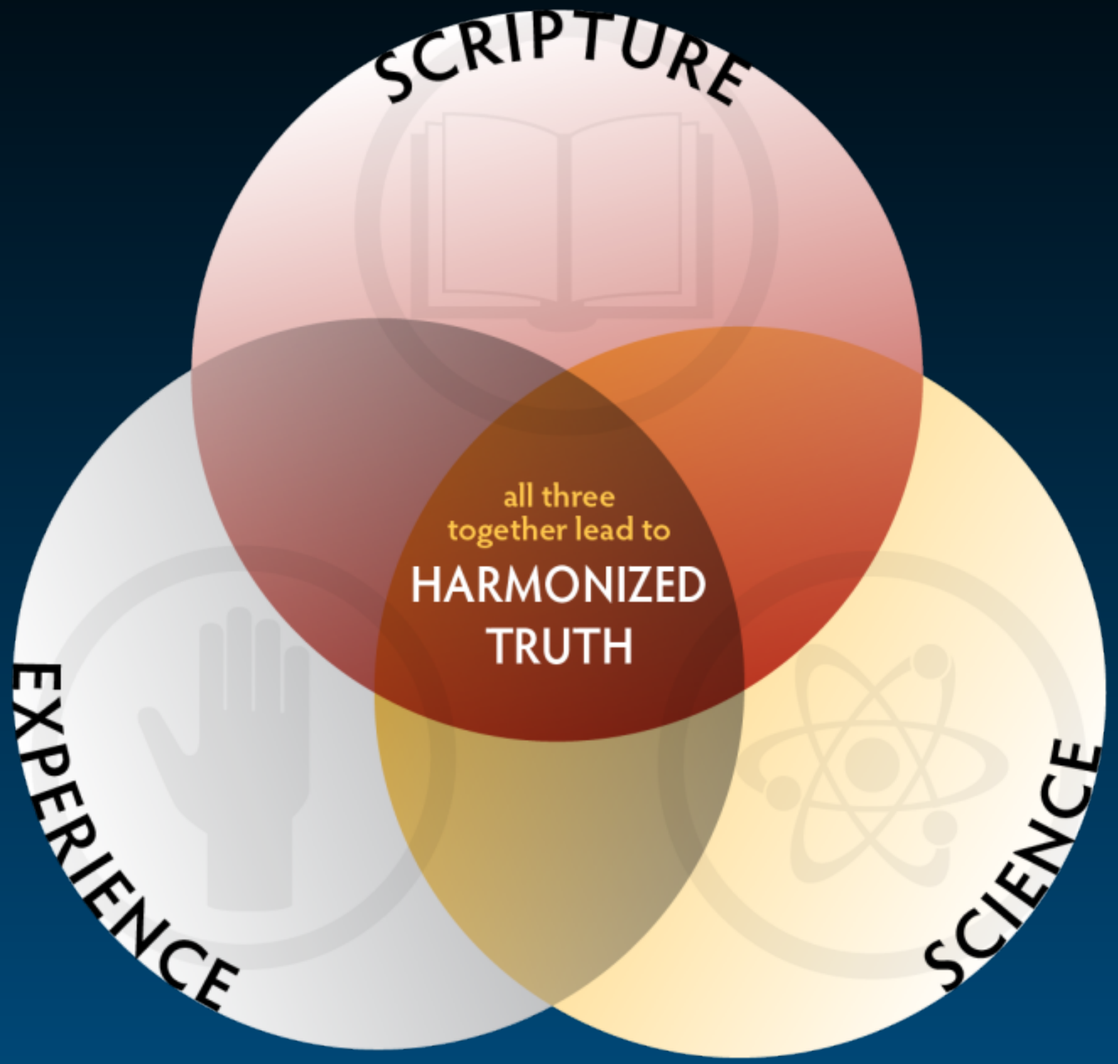
Maturity Level 6



- Principle-based living
- Includes not only Scripture, and love for others, but understands God's design for life

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Maturity Level 7



- Understanding God's Purposes
- Requires integration of Scripture, Science & Experience in the framework of the Great Controversy over God's character

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Historic View

The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience in God's dealing with human life.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 125

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Historic View

Jesus followed the divine plan of education... His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life--God's lesson books.

Education, p. 77

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 1:** God said it, I believe it, that settles it. God said don’t eat pork so we don't, because if we do God will punish.

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 1:** God said it, I believe it, that settles it. God said don’t eat pork so we don't, because if we do God will punish.
- **Level 2:** God promised if we eat the foods He tells us, He will keep us healthy, so we eat the foods He says and He will give us blessings.

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 3:** Everyone in a culture agrees on what food God says is right to eat so we eat what everyone agrees is right. Orthodox Jews eat one thing, Muslims another, and Christians another.

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 3:** Everyone in a culture agrees on what food God says is right to eat so we eat what everyone agrees is right. Orthodox Jews eat one thing, Muslims another, and Christians another.
- **Level 4:** God has a law and His law prescribes what we eat. If we don't follow the law, then justice requires we be punished.

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 5:** We eat with concern for our weaker brother, not wanting to cause him to stumble and fall. We understand food offered to idols has the same nutritional quality, but if a brother would believe he is under the power of the idol for eating it, then we would refrain.

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 6:** We understand God's design for human life;
- Just as we wouldn't put water into the gas tank of our car because it wasn't designed to run on water, we understand God didn't design our bodies to run on certain foods.
- While we know the ceremonial law was done away with at the cross, we also know the laws of health were not, thus we choose to move closer and closer to God's design for the human being.

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 7:** As friends of God we not only understand His original design for human physiology and thus don't put things into the body He never intended.
- We also understand our responsibility as stewards of God's creation, to tend and protect it.

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Consider the Foods We Eat: How do you determine what is right or wrong to eat?

- **Level 7:** We understand that as God's representatives on earth we treat lower life forms like Christ treats us; we protect them, we don't exploit them for selfish benefit.
- We do all we can to love God's creatures and cause them as little harm as possible, moving ever closer to how we will live in the earth made new.

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Moral Decision Making in the Real World

- Sandi

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Moral Decision Making in the Real World

- Sandi
- At what level was Sandi's husband operating?

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- At what level was Sandi's husband operating?
- Was Sandi's decision to divorce right or wrong?

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Moral Decision Making in the Real World

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- At what level was Sandi's husband operating?
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- Did she have Biblical grounds?
- At what level were the conference officials operating – were they "right" or "wrong"?

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Moral Decision Making in the Real World

- Sandi
- At what level was Sandi's husband operating?
- Was Sandi's decision to divorce right or wrong?
- Did she have Biblical grounds?
- At what level were the conference officials operating – were they "right" or "wrong"?
- Your answers reveal much about your developmental level.

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Law of Love

- Level 7 realizes God is love and built His universe to operate in harmony with Himself

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- Love is not self-seeking *1 Corinthians 13:5*

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- Break the law in one point, break it in all points because all violations are failure to love

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Law of Love

- Level 7 realizes God is love and built His universe to operate in harmony with Himself
- Love is not self-seeking *1 Corinthians 13:5*
- Love gives – breathing
- Break the law in one point, break it in all points because all violations are failure to love
- So beating your wife fails to love her, i.e. betrays her trust, which is adultery

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 1 - Reward and Punishment

- It isn't wrong because he is stronger and as long as he isn't punished for it, it is right. It is only wrong if it results in his being punished.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 2 - Marketplace Exchange

- It isn't wrong, it is just and proper to give a wife the beating she deserves when she doesn't fulfill her side of the marital bargain. It would only be wrong if the husband beats her without proper cause.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 3 - Social Conformity

- It is only wrong if my culture says it is wrong.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 4 - Law and Order

- It isn't wrong, because broken rules require punishment. God gave us rules and when they are broken, justice requires God punish. Jesus took our punishment, and if I want to be like God, I must punish my disobedient wife. This is how love teaches her to obey her husband.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 5 - Love for Others

- It is wrong to beat your wife because it fails to love her, to treat her as a daughter of God, with value as a person.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 6 - Principle Based

- It is wrong because it violates God's design for life and love. It violates the law of liberty, one of God's design protocols for healthy relationships. Love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 6 - Principle Based

- It is wrong because it violates God's design for life and love. It violates the law of liberty, one of God's design protocols for healthy relationships. Love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom.
- Further, God designed husbands and wives as co-equals and husbands are to treat their wives as Christ treats the church, sacrificing himself for her.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understand Friend of God

It is wrong because it not only violates God's design.

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

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It is wrong because it not only violates God's design.

- It damages the mind, character, and conscience of the husband

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

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- It damages the mind, character, and conscience
- of the husband
- Destroys the individuality of the wife

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understand Friend of God

It is wrong because it not only violates God's design.

- It damages the mind, character, and conscience
- of the husband
- Destroys the individuality of the wife
- Misrepresents God as dictatorial

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understand Friend of God

It is wrong because it not only violates God's design.

- Fails to understand the purpose in the creation of woman

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understand Friend of God

It is wrong because it not only violates God's design.

- Fails to understand the purpose in the creation of woman
- Man was created in God's image, and God said it is not good for man to be alone and a helper was made for him – a helper to do what?

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Domestic Violence through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understand Friend of God

It is wrong because it not only violates God's design.

- Fails to understand the purpose in the creation of woman
- Man was created in God's image, and God said it is not good for man to be alone and a helper was made for him – a helper to do what?
- To enter into the fullness of Godlike love

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 1 - Reward and Punishment

Because God said don't do something, but they did and God got offended and responded with angry vengeance, taking the life of Jesus in our place.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 2 - Marketplace Exchange

Because Satan now had rights to this earth and claimed the lives of the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, and God struck a bargain with the devil to exchange the life of Christ for the life of humans.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 3 - Social Conformity

Because everyone agrees sin must be punished, someone has to pay.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 4 - Law and Order

To pay the legal penalty the law demanded and the heavenly judge imposed. The Law must be kept. Man broke the Law. Someone had to pay the penalty. Jesus paid that penalty. The integrity of the Law was maintained.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 5 - Love for Others

Because He loved us too much to let us go and His death was the means to reach us with His love and restore us to trust in Him.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 6 - Principle Based

It was the only means to fix what sin had done to God's creation. When mankind sinned, they deviated from God's design for life and their condition was terminal. Christ came to fix what sin did to this creation. Thus "he who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God." *2 Corinthians 5:21*

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding Friend of God

Christ died to reveal truth to win us to trust *(John 8:32)*, destroy death *(2 Timothy 1:10)*, destroy sin and Satan *(Hebrews 2:14)*, restore humanity back to God's original ideal *(1 John 3:8)*, and secure the universe unfallen in its innocence. "All things in heaven and in earth are reconciled to Christ at the cross." *(Colossians 1:20)*

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding Friend of God

Atonement is at-one-ment with God, having the law written on the heart, operating with the mind of Christ, partaking of the divine nature; restoring creation back to God's original design.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding Friend of God

Doing right because it is right and right doing is pleasing to God.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding Friend of God

Doing right because it is right and right doing is pleasing to God.

Neither God, nor His law, defined as the eternal principles upon which He bases His government, change, but our understanding of His law changes, and the human species is changed to live in harmony with that law.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding Friend of God

We understand at this level that God speaks to people at each level of their understanding.

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Why Did Christ have to Die?
The Atonement through the 7 Levels

Level 7 - Understanding Friend of God

We understand at this level that God speaks to people at each level of their understanding.

It is a mistake to stay stuck at earlier levels of understanding and refuse to mature, regardless of how valid and useful they were in their own context.

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Conflict in Christianity

- Level 4 people are anxious that the rules be kept

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Conflict in Christianity

- Level 4 people are anxious that the rules be kept
- Level 4 are often in church adminstration – great concern for keeping rules, proper doctrinal definitions and protecting the institution

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Conflict in Christianity

- Levels 6 & 7 persons who want to discuss general principles are called "liberal”

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Conflict in Christianity

- Levels 6 & 7 persons who want to discuss general principles are called “liberal”
- Level 5 people who seek to love others and show compasion to the “sinner” drug addict and homosexual, are seen as having loose standards by level 4 and below

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Conflict in Christianity

- Levels 6 & 7 persons may become very bored with legalistic sermons aimed at level 4, or with level 1, the fiery hell and damnation threats

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Conflict in Christianity

- Levels 6 & 7 persons may become very bored with legalistic sermons aimed at level 4, or with level 1, the fiery hell and damnation threats
- Level 4 members feel threatened by questions which undermine their legal security or God as a dictator.

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Conflict in Christianity

- Some are attracted to level 2, the health wellness gospel: if you do the right rituals, keep the right rules then God will bless you, while others find such explanations fall short and get frustrated when they see bad things happen to good people

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Growing Through the Stages

- Growth through the levels is generally step wise

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Growing Through the Stages

- Growth through the levels is generally step wise
- Distress that doesn't fit one's understanding motivates growth (rejoice in trials)

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Growing Through the Stages

- Growth through the levels is generally step wise
- Distress that doesn't fit one's understanding motivates growth (rejoice in trials)
- What matters is function, not explanation
  - Some individuals function at level 5 but explain theology at level 4

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Growing Through the Stages

- Can retain vestiges of previous levels
  - Law and order person could still demand vengeance, just via legal channels

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Growing Through the Stages

- Can retain vestiges of previous levels
  - Law and order person could still demand vengeance, just via legal channels
- Can only understand one level beyond your current level

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Growing Through the Stages

- Can retain vestiges of previous levels
  - Law and order person could still demand vengeance, just via legal channels
- Can only understand one level beyond your current level
- Most people operate level 4 and below and persecute people operating at levels 5-7

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The Groom and His Bride

- Christ is returning for His Bride

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The Groom and His Bride

- Christ is returning for His Bride
- But He is not coming back for a CHILD Bride – a Bride who lives in fear of the Groom…

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The Groom and His Bride

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- But He is not coming back for a CHILD Bride – a Bride who lives in fear of the Groom…
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The Groom and His Bride

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- I challenge you to leave the elementary teachings behind and move on to maturity!

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