

## DGCC Nurturing Discipleship

### Qualitative Measures of Spiritual Maturity

God's Word calls for us not to obey a set of rules but to imitate God, to live like Jesus (Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 John 2:6). We all need to examine ourselves, both to see if we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5) and to move more and more toward conformity to Christlikeness (1 Corinthians 11:27-32 and Romans 8:29). Our aim is for all to move to spiritual maturity; while that includes gains in knowledge, fundamentally it means becoming more like Christ.

Don Whitney's book *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* is helpful in assisting this self-examination. Below we highlight several ways that the New Testament describes our being conformed to Christ's image, and then relate them to the questions Whitney poses. We encourage you to use these questions and descriptions in your self-examination, and then to ask those in your cohort to spur you on to grow in the areas needed.

#### Pictures of Christian Maturity from Three Key Passages

##### The Fruit of the Spirit Gal 5:22-23:

- F1 Love
- F2 Joy
- F3 Peace/harmony
- F4 Patience/forbearance/steadfastness/endurance/not responding to provocation
- F5 Kindness/helpfulness/seeing what is really needed and providing it
- F6 Goodness/other-oriented and interested in their welfare
- F7 Faithfulness/reliability/commitment
- F8 Gentleness/humility/not being overly impressed by a sense of one's own importance
- F9 Self-control

##### The Ladder of Maturity 2 Pet 1:5-7

- L1 Faith
- L2 Virtue/moral excellence/goodness/admirable character
- L3 Knowledge
- L4 = F9 self-control
- L5 Steadfastness/perseverance/endurance/bearing up under pressure or attack
- L6 Godliness/piety/awesome respect accorded to God
- L7 Brotherly love/brotherly affection/brotherly kindness
- L8 Love

##### Philippians

- P1 = L8 Abounding love 1:9
- P2 = L3 Knowledge and discernment 1:9
- P3 = L2 Test and approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless, filled with the fruit of righteousness 1:10-11
- P4 = F8 in humility count others more significant than yourselves 2:3-8
- P5 holding fast to the word of life 2:16
- P6 expressing joy in Christ, deepening joy in Christ, spreading joy in Christ 3:1, 4:4
- P7 Christ is worth more than all the world has to offer 1:21, 3:8-11
- P8 taking all anxieties to God in prayer 4:6-7
- P9 Content in all circumstances by God's power 4:11-13

## **Don Whitney's Questions**

In each case, we've listed next to the question shorthand for the pictures of maturity above. Use the Scripture references to flesh out the biblical thought behind each question. Note that when the same idea appears in more than one list above (as indicated by an equal sign) we have only listed below the FIRST occurrence of a picture. For example, when L3 appears we don't also list P2, but you should look at Philippians 1:9 when you consider question 2.

1. Do You Thirst for God? F2 L6 P6 P7 P9
2. Are You Governed Increasingly by God's Word? F7 L1 L2 L3 P5
3. Are You More Loving? F1 L7
4. Are You More Sensitive to God's Presence? L1 L6 P9
5. Do You Have a Growing Concern for the Spiritual and Temporal Needs of Others? F5 F6 F8
6. Do You Delight in the Bride of Christ? L7 P6
7. Are the Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life (including prayer) Increasingly Important to You? L1 L3 L5 P8
8. Do You Still Grieve Over Sin? F9 L2 L6
9. Are You a Quicker Forgiver? F3 F4
10. Do You Yearn for Heaven and to Be With Jesus? L1 L6 P7