

MONDAY

John 13:37-38 ³⁷"Master," said Peter, "why can't I follow now? I'll lay down my life for you!"
³⁸"Really? You'll lay down your life for me? The truth is that before the rooster crows, you'll deny me three times."

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Part of my job as a 911 dispatcher is to interrogate callers who are in various states of panic so I can send the appropriate emergency equipment.

One day a woman called to say that a family member had fallen and needed to go to a hospital.

After finding out where she lived and assuring her that the paramedics would arrive shortly, I asked her, "Do you know what caused the fall?"

"No," the woman nervously replied. "What?"

Cybersalt Digest

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It seems that a little skinny man applied for a job as a dock worker. The foreman looked him over carefully and said, "You're too small." The little man was indignant and said, "I can do any job that your biggest men can handle. At least give me a chance to prove myself."

"Alright," the foreman said, "over there you will find a group of men loading 300 pound anvils. You go ahead and join them." Everything went fine until all of a sudden there was a terrific splash and someone cried, "Man overboard!"

The foreman rushed to the side of the dock. There was the small man thrashing furiously in the water. He was gasping for air as his head bobbed up and down. "Throw me a rope," he yelled. "Throw me a rope and hurry," he cried as he went under the water once again. As he bobbed back to the surface once again, he cried, "If you don't hurry up with that rope I'm going to let go of this anvil!"

Cup O' Cheer

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Increasing the rate of information input to your brain may make you a candidate for Jeopardy but it probably has little to do with increasing spiritual characteristics like love, trust, compassion, faith, courage -- and wisdom.

Want to increase your wisdom? Practice reflection, meditation and introspective thinking for 30 minutes each morning.

Many who allow constant information input are keeping themselves in the shallow end of the wisdom pool. Don't be one of them.

Turn off the TV for at least two hours every evening - Read your email at set times during the day - perhaps once in the morning and once in the evening. Attend Church religiously.

Cup O' Cheer

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Every now and again one of our local restaurants will sponsor a classic car show, and auto enthusiasts from all over the region will roll up in their vintage vehicles.

Once, while strolling through the lot, admiring the trip down memory lane, I overheard two owners talking. One explained that he had some friends who put together a car using wheels from a Cadillac, the engine from a Ford, the chassis of a Chevy, and the body of an old Plymouth.

"Wow," the other guy exclaimed. "What did they call it?"

The first guy laughs and replies, "Grand Theft Auto. They got two years!"

Mark's Musings

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On The Church Bulletin Board: "Tonight's marriage counseling sessions have been cancelled due to a conflict." *List Serve*

TUESDAY

John 14:1-4 ¹ "Don't let this throw you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me. ²There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so. Wouldn't I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? ³And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live. ⁴And you already know the road I'm taking."

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During a Christian conference, I worked late on the worship PowerPoint slides. Please note the "D" and "F" keys are next to each other on the keyboard and spell checkers do not catch wrong words used in the correct context. The following morning as we were leading worship, the congregation sang, "Lord, You are more precious than silver. Lord,

You are more costly than..." and everyone broke into laughter. The slide said, "Lord, You are more costly than GOLF."

Well, it's a true statement...at the courses I've seen.

From Tim Cimbura by way of [Sermon Fodder](#)

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Sometimes our summers (and falls!) are cookers. I have always been impressed by the difference just a little bit of shade makes. In the heat of the day, simply moving under a tree instantly creates a more comfortable feeling. There's less glare; it feels cooler.

There are many references in the Bible about being, hiding, and taking refuge, under the "shadow" of His wings. I have pondered that, from time to time, and never gotten a totally satisfactory answer.

One thing for sure, is that a shadow, of a tree for example, provides shade. During times of intense heat (trouble), the shadow (shade) carries relief. It provides a respite.

I love all the Psalms, and chapter 121 is no exception. In verse 5 it says, "The Lord watches over you, the Lord is your shade at your right hand."

What better place to catch our breath than in the shadow of God, or in the shadow of His wings? We can

cool off, re-gather our wits, and get back out there.

Sometimes it's good to remember that a bit of shade is just the ticket, especially when the shade is from the shadow of our Heavenly Father.

Sally I. Kennedy via, Monday Fodder

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Christian love is offensive because it is willing to offer the socially awkward word of rebuke. Christian love is willing to risk stepping on someone's toes because you don't want to see them continue heading down the path of sin and self-destruction. *Trevin Wax*

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If tin whistles are made out of tin, what do they make foghorns out of? *Humor Digest*

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For two years I managed a group of musicians who proudly labeled themselves "the loudest rock 'n roll band in L.A." One night, during a particularly rowdy and raucous rehearsal, the group took a break. Rubbing one ear, the lead singer asked, "Hey, are you guys losing your hearing?"

The bass player shrugged and, pointing to his forehead, replied, "Well, maybe just a little on top."

Cybersalt Digest

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The waiting room has its purpose. It is the place where you get mentally ready for what comes next. You are not meant to live there. You were designed for the world outside. And *it* waits for you!

Encouragement for today

WEDNESDAY

John 14:5-7 ⁵Thomas said, "Master, we have no idea where you're going. How do you expect us to know the road?" ⁶Jesus said, "I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You've even seen him!"

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If I were asked, "How can you tell if a person is mature?" I would respond by saying, "If a person consistently acts in a mature manner, he would be a mature person. However, if on the other hand he consistently acts in an immature manner, you can be certain that he would be an immature person." As Aristotle said, "We are what we repeatedly do."

While none of us is perfect or completely mature, if we understand the characteristics of maturity, we can work on these areas to grow in maturity. While there are many characteristics, the following certainly would be among the top five:

1. **EMOTIONAL MATURITY.** While **spiritual maturity is reflected in the quality of our relationship to God,** **emotional maturity is reflected in the quality of our relationships with people.** As God's Words say, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. Thus, in reality, I'm no closer to God than I am to people.

Without a reasonable level of emotional maturity, it is virtually impossible to have healthy interpersonal relationships. **Immaturity is without doubt a major cause of impaired relationships and failed marriages.** Emotional maturity means that we will have a healthy self-concept--not thinking too highly or too lowly of ourselves. This will include a healthy sense of self-acceptance and self-worth, which will also

determine how well we do in many other areas of life.

Emotional maturity also requires that wherever possible, impaired relationships from the past are resolved, that we have forgiven all who have ever hurt us, and that all supercharged, repressed negative emotions from past experiences are resolved.

2. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. Another vital characteristic of maturity is acting responsibly and appropriately in all situations--neither overreacting nor under-reacting. People overreact when unresolved painful issues from the past are triggered and they react as if they were responding to the original hurt. People under-react when they withdraw from dealing with an issue they need to confront and resolve. Some excuse this behavior as being Christian and not wanting to hurt someone's feelings. Rather, it is basically being weak, afraid, or insecure--not to mention being dishonest.

True, "I may have been a victim in the past but if I remain a victim, I am now a willing volunteer." **Acting in a mature manner means that I now accept personal responsibility for every area of life. It means that I refuse to play the blame-game.** Consistently blaming someone else for the difficulties I have will cause me to B-LAME--emotionally, that is.

When working with divorced people, I have found that so many primarily blame their former partner for the breakdown of their relationship. They fail to see that they, too, contributed to the conflict either by being too weak, too passive, too co-dependent, too over-dependent, too independent, too needy, too afraid of closeness, or in any of a score of other ways.

On one occasion a friend once said to me, "Are you angry at me because I've been divorced three times?"

"Angry, no," I answered, "afraid, yes!"

"Well they were all jerks," she responded. So I asked, "Well, why did you marry them?" The last I heard is that my friend is now in her fifth marriage.

The reality is unless we act responsibly and admit, confront, and resolve our personal issues, we are destined to repeat past failures. It's either resolution or repetition.

Daily Encounter

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A woman from Charleston, South Carolina was overheard to remark that it was her 53rd wedding anniversary. When asked if she planned a special celebration, she smiled and said softly, "When you have a nice man, it really doesn't matter."

I suspect they learned the secrets of staying in love.

Steve Goodier, Cup 'O Cheer

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If you love something, set it free. Unless it's chocolate. Never release chocolate.

Renee Duvall

THURSDAY

John 14:8-10 ⁸Philip said, "Master, show us the Father; then we'll be content." ⁹"You've been with me all this time, Philip, and you still don't understand? To see me is to see the Father. So how can you ask, 'Where is the Father?' ¹⁰Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that

I speak to you aren't mere words. I don't just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act.

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A kid walked up to a guy wearing a 10-gallon hat, leather vest, leather chaps, and Gucci shoes. The kid asked him, "Mr. Cowboy, why do you wear that big hat?"

The cowboy replied, "Well, son, the big hat protects me from hot sun and driving rain, and at night I put it over my face when I sleep on the range, so it protects me then, too."

"Why do you wear that leather vest?"

"It also helps to keep the weather off me, and it has pockets where I can keep my cigarettes and matches."

"Well, why do you wear leather chaps?"

"They protect my legs when I'm riding my horse through rough bushes."

"Well, Mr. Cowboy," the kid finally asked, "Why do you wear Gucci shoes instead of cowboy boots ?"

"So people won't think I'm a truck driver."

Humor Digest

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True, there is nothing like romance to anesthetize the pain caused by the loss of a love and, like a drug, blind one to reality. People who use romance and/or sex to avoid facing their reality and deaden their pain, fail to see that while romance can lead to love, romance in and of itself is not love. Neither is sex. Romance can be triggered by physical and sexual attraction, by being over-needy, or by the magnetic pull of one's neuroses (unresolved character issues).

The fact is that we are as sick (or as healthy) as the people (especially in romantic relationships) we are attracted to. We need to realize that what we fail to resolve we are destined to repeat. For instance, an over-dependent person will most likely be attracted to a codependent partner and vice versa. A weak, passive person will be attracted to a domineering and controlling partner and vice versa. A woman who had a bad relationship with her father is just as likely to be attracted to a man just like her father--and relate to him in exactly the same way as she did to her father. Or a man who had a bad relationship with his mother will likely be attracted to a woman just like his mother and repeat that bad relationship.

And the divorcee, who fails to resolve his or her character issues will, in all probability, be attracted to the same kind of person they just divorced. The reality is that, before we can have healthy relationships, we need to be healthy, for only healthy and mature people find and make healthy and mature relationships.

And maturity is what God's Word (as seen in today's Scripture) encourages every one of us to become.

Furthermore, we strongly encourage all couples, whether or not they have been married before, to have in-depth pre-marriage counseling before they get married to ensure that they are suitable for each others, as feelings can come and go and be up and down like a yo-yo.

Daily- encounter

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Always go to other people's funerals, otherwise they won't come to yours.

FRIDAY

John 14:11-14 "Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see—these works.¹² The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing. You can count on it.¹³ From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it.¹⁴ Whatever you request in this way, I'll do.

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In 1882 U.S. cabinet maker Peter McGuire introduced his idea for a new holiday saying, "Let us have a festive day during which a parade through the streets of the city would permit public tribute to American Industry." A dozen years later President Cleveland signed a bill into law designating the first Monday in September "Labor Day." For many Americans today is a day off from work, a chance to cook-out and hang-out in the lingering warm weather of summer.

A day off from labor, however, was not a new concept when McGuire suggested his holiday. The concept of a day of rest was first declared by the Lord in Genesis. In illustration, God rested the seventh day after creating the world and He deemed the day of rest holy (Gen. 2:2-3). He didn't call it Labor Day - He called it the Sabbath.

Sabbath is a not a day of tribute to workers, it's a day of tribute to their Maker. It's a day to rest your body while renewing your mind by making the focus of the day your Maker and your relationship with Him. In the Jewish tradition, the Sabbath is the focal point of the week - not just a day of laundry or list-making to gear back up for the week ahead. The Jewish people spent three days preparing for Sabbath, and three days reflecting on what they had learned or encountered of God during the Sabbath. They were a Sabbath-focused people, and therefore a God-focused people.

Keri Wyatt Kent, author of *Breathe*, writes, "This creates a rhythm of life that puts our focus not on our stuff or our schedule but on the opportunity to meet with God." Kent reveals:

"We are created in the image of God, and he modeled for us a way of life that makes sense for how we are created. Here's how to dance the dance of life, he said: work, be creative, use your imagination, throw yourself into it, whether you are washing dishes, reading to your kids and running a household, or trading stocks, reading corporate reports, and running a business. ...At the end of each day, stop. Take a rest, eat a good meal, get enough sleep, and refresh yourself. Take time to think about your day, to notice where God was in it and where you were blessed, and to say, "It's good." Then go back at it the next day. And after six days, take a whole day off. And say, "It's really good." Spend a whole day just pausing, just reflecting on how really good it is, and then start the dance again, at a sustainable pace."

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Lessons from Life

Law of Gravity: Any tool, nut, bolt or screw when dropped will roll to the least accessible corner.

Law of the Result: When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will.

Law of Biomechanics: The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

Murphy's Law of Lockers: If there are only two people in a locker room, they will have adjacent lockers.

Law of Logical Argument: Anything is possible if you don't know what you are talking about.

Brown's Law of Physical Appearance: If the clothes fit, they're ugly.

Oliver's Law of Public Speaking: A closed mouth gathers no feet.

Preaching Now