

# Jesus taught us principles of maturity

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BIG SANDY, Texas—In Jesus' instructions that most people call the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encouraged His audience to be mature.

In Matthew 5:48 He said: "Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Other translations use the word *complete* or *mature* instead of *perfect*.

How can a disciple become more mature? What is the context of this verse?

The context of Matthew 5 is Jesus showing how the wonderful law of God was to be magnified. He talked about the Sixth Commandment, the Seventh Commandment, a principle from Leviticus 19:12 and a principle from Deuteronomy 19:21.

## **Love your enemies**

Then Jesus gave some instructions about loving people.

- He told people to love their enemies.
- He said that people should bless those who curse them.
- He mentioned that people should do good to those who hate them.
- He taught that people should pray for those who spitefully use them and persecute them.

Did Jesus know anything about being persecuted?

Of course He did.

Does Jesus expect us to follow in His footsteps?

That is the essence of what is called Christianity.

## **Falsely accusing**

Years after the death of our Savior, the apostle Peter taught: Rejoice when you are partakers of Christ's sufferings (1 Peter 4:13).

He also taught: Jesus set an example of dealing with suffering (1 Peter 2:21).

The context was being falsely accused, as Jesus was.

How does it feel to be falsely accused? It doesn't feel very good, does it?

### **Wasting energy**

What is the natural human reaction to being falsely accused?

- First, some people openly display an aggressive attitude of revenge.
- Second, other people display an attitude of revenge as a stated effort to seek "justice."

With both these previous reactions, the person often does more falsely accusing toward other people than was actually done against him.

- A third reaction is people spending excessive time and energy trying to prove their innocence.

In this scenario the person might or might not seek punishment of the alleged wrongdoers. Obviously, seeking punishment of others is not fulfilling our Savior's example.

### **Don't live in the past**

But, even if a person is not seeking punishment of others, the exercise of spending lots of time and emotion attempting to clear a name or reputation is also not fulfilling our Savior's example.

Spending lots of time and emotion seeking to clear a name in most matters is living in the past. It often keeps a person in unnecessary personal turmoil.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we should seek to be like our role model. He reflects the mind, character and will of our mature Father.