

# IN THE MARGINS: 'Why don't you grow up?'

*By Tony Martin*

*Editor*

Picture this: I'm in Walmart, that great petri dish of all sorts of humanity. It's a great leveler in society. You see all types of folks in there. After 9 p.m., a portal to an alternate universe opens and the aisles are flooded with people you won't see anywhere else. Fascinating.

This was after work one afternoon recently, and I'd stopped by to get some Gorilla Glue and some Mary B's frozen biscuits. One of these things is not like the other, and it involved traipsing all over the store, but such is the Walmart experience.

I walked up into the checkout line. I don't enjoy the self-checkout; it's annoying because things never scan easily for me, and there are workers hired by Walmart to do this particular task. Why should I not use the services they're being paid for?

I watched a Small Human Drama unfold before me. There was a boy of about 10 with whom I assumed to be his dad. I missed the first part of their exchange – I think it had to do with wanting a Snickers bar from the impulse rack.

Then, this father, visibly fed up, sternly asks his young son, "Why don't you grow up?"

The kid, barely 10 and fighting back tears, says, "*That's what I'm trying to do.*"

I can't judge their relationship based on this one encounter. What I did understand, though, was that the statement "Why

don't you grow up?" doesn't mean there will be instant maturity.

This got me thinking. Isn't that true for most of us? We really do want to grow and get better, even if we're not sure how.

So, in the world of walking the Christian walk, what does it look like to actually be a grown-up? Let's break down what a mature Christian looks like and how you can check if you're on the right track.

### **What Does a Mature Christian Look Like?**

***Keeping Cool and Staying Patient:*** Imagine keeping your cool when you feel like blowing a fuse, or waiting calmly when everything in you wants to rush things. That's what self-control and patience look like – genuine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

***Being Wise and Not Just Smart:*** Ever hear that wisdom's worth more than gold? It's true. Mature Christians don't just shoot from the hip; they think things through with God's Word in one hand and a prayer in the other (Proverbs 3:13-18).

***Helping Others Because You Want To:*** Jesus washed His disciples' feet and told us to do the same, metaphorically speaking (Philippians 2:3-4). Being grown-up in your faith means you're helping because you genuinely care, not just to get a pat on the back.

***Rock Solid Faith:*** When storms hit, a mature Christian isn't knocked off their feet. They've built their house on the rock, not the sand, standing strong because their faith is in Someone bigger than any problem (Matthew 7:24-27).

***Prayer Isn't Just for Before Meals:*** Got a vibrant chat line going with God? That's great! Mature believers keep that line open, knowing that it's their lifeline in good times and bad

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

***Always Hitting the Books (The Good Book, That Is):*** If you're serious about growing up, you never stop learning. Dive into Scripture, not just to check a box, but to really feed on it and let it change you (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### **How Can You Know YOU Are a Mature Christian?**

Figuring out if you're maturing in your faith can be tricky, but here are some thought-starters:

***How do you handle the tough stuff?*** When life gets rough, do you lean on God? Seeing how you react when the going gets tough can tell you a lot about where you're at spiritually.

***What's your influence on others?*** Are you lifting people up and giving them nuggets of wisdom? If you're making a positive impact, chances are you're growing.

***Are you all-in on spiritual habits?*** Staying connected through prayer, Bible time, and fellowshiping with fellow believers shows you're serious about your growth.

***How do you deal with other people's mess-ups?*** Giving grace instead of grief? How you handle other people's flaws says a lot about your maturity.

***Can you take advice?*** Open to learning and admitting you don't have all the answers? That's a big sign of maturity.

Being a "grown-up" Christian isn't about reaching a final destination or a state of perfection; it's about moving faithfully forward on the journey God has set before us, continually seeking to embody the love, humility, and wisdom that Christ exemplified. It's about aspiring every day to respond like the boy in the store might have wished he could – with the confidence and grace of someone who is indeed trying to grow up, in every sense of the word.