Maturity Of The Believer - Where Do You Stand?

Are You A Devoted NT Christian? The sad reality of the average believer today:

Typical Modern Christians may believe in Jesus, attend church, and pray, yet **their Christianity revolves more around their own happiness, comfort, feelings, and expectations rather than God's holiness, authority, and demands.** They love hearing that God loves them, but resist correction, avoids uncomfortable truths, and wrongly considers being "nice" as the essential element of a Christian, and for genuine biblical love. When trouble comes, they seek immediate relief rather than developing endurance. They know favourite Bible verses but often lacks discernment, discipline, holiness, and the willingness to suffer for Christ. They expect God to accommodate their life rather than surrendering their life fully to God.

Their fundamental problem is that God exists largely to serve their expectations, rather than their entire existence being surrendered to the God who created, redeemed, and commands them.

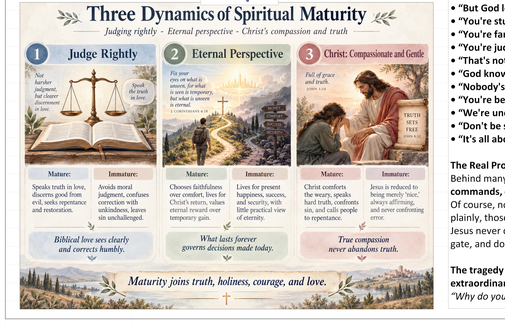
Let Us Now Set The Proper Kingdom Foundation To This Study With:

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD — THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY			
Attribute of God	Who God eternally is — ontological reality	What this means for the Christian	Key Scriptures
Self-existent (Aseity)	God depends on nothing and no one for his existence. He is the uncreated source of all self-importance.	God does not need us; we depend entirely upon him. Christian life begins with humility, not	Exod. 3:14; Acts 17:24–25
Eternal	God has no beginning or end. He exists beyond the limitations of created time.	Eternal realities must govern our priorities. Present comfort and suffering are temporary.	Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17
Unchanging (Immutable)	God's essential being, character, and purposes never change.	His revealed character remains trustworthy even when circumstances and feelings change.	Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17
Infinite and transcendent	God is unlimited in his perfection and infinitely exalted above creation, while remaining actively present and involved.	We must not reduce God to human categories, emotions, preferences, or expectations.	Isa. 55:8–9; 1 Kings 8:27
Sovereign	God possesses supreme authority over all creation. Nothing can overthrow his ultimate purposes.	Our responsibility is faithful obedience, not demanding that God arrange events according to our wishes.	Ps. 115:3; Dan. 4:35
Omnipotent (All-powerful)	God possesses unlimited power to accomplish everything consistent with his nature and will.	We trust his power without presuming that he must exercise it according to our preferred timetable.	Jer. 32:17; Luke 1:37
Omniscient (All-knowing)	God knows all things perfectly, including every human thought, motive, action, and circumstance.	We live honestly before him, knowing that nothing is concealed from his judgment.	Ps. 139:1–6; Heb. 4:13
Omnipresent (Present everywhere)	God is not confined by physical space. All creation is continually present to him.	We cannot escape his presence; neither are we abandoned simply because we cannot feel him.	Ps. 139:7–12; Jer. 23:23–24
Holy	God is absolutely pure, morally perfect, and utterly distinct from everything sinful or corrupt.	Holiness is not optional. We must increasingly become holy because the God who called us is holy.	Isa. 6:1–5; 1 Pet. 1:15–16
Righteous	Everything God is and does conforms perfectly to what is right. He is himself the ultimate standard of righteousness.	Right and wrong are not determined by personal feelings, cultural acceptance, or popular opinion.	Deut. 32:4; Ps. 145:17
Just	God judges perfectly, without corruption, favouritism, or moral compromise.	Sin matters. We are accountable for our conduct and must practise righteous judgment.	Gen. 18:25; Rom. 2:6–11
Truthful and faithful	God never lies, deceives, or breaks his promises. His word and character are completely trustworthy.	We submit to revealed truth rather than treating emotions or cultural expectations as ultimate authorities.	Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2
Loving	God eternally possesses perfect love, demonstrated supremely in the giving of his Son. His love is never morally corrupt or indifferent toward evil.	Biblical love seeks another's true good, including repentance, holiness, and salvation — not merely happiness or affirmation.	John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:8–10
Merciful	God shows compassion toward the miserable and guilty, withholding deserved judgment according to his gracious purposes.	We receive mercy humbly and show mercy to others without denying the seriousness of sin.	Exod. 34:6–7; Eph. 2:4–5
Gracious	God freely gives undeserved favour and blessings, most supremely salvation in Christ.	Salvation cannot be earned; nevertheless, saving grace trains believers to renounce ungodliness.	Eph. 2:8–10; Titus 2:11–14
Patient and longsuffering	God is slow to anger and forbears with sinners, giving opportunity for repentance.	Delayed judgment must never be mistaken for divine approval of wrongdoing.	Rom. 2:4–5; 2 Pet. 3:9
Wrathful against evil	God's wrath is his perfectly righteous opposition to sin, wickedness, and all that contradicts his holiness.	We must take sin, repentance, judgment, and Christ's saving work with utmost seriousness.	Rom. 1:18; John 3:36
Good	God is perfectly good in his nature, purposes, and actions. He is the source of every genuinely good gift.	We trust his goodness even when his providence involves hardship, chastening, or unanswered prayer.	Ps. 119:68; Jas. 1:17
Wise	God possesses perfect understanding and always acts consistently with his knowledge, goodness, and purposes.	We submit to his wisdom rather than assuming our preferred outcomes are necessarily best.	Rom. 11:33–36; 16:27
Worthy of all glory	God possesses supreme majesty, excellence, and worth. All things exist through him and for him.	The ultimate aim of Christian life is God's glory, not the elevation of personal significance, comfort, or success.	Isa. 42:8; Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11

So Therefore:

SIX FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS READERS MUST UNDERSTAND	
Foundational truth	**Consequence for spiritual maturity**
God is the centre of reality — not man.	Christianity is not primarily about what God can do for us, but about knowing, glorifying, trusting, and obeying the God who created us.
God defines goodness, truth, holiness, and righteousness.	Christians do not possess authority to redefine morality according to feelings, preferences, culture, or social expectations.
God does not change to accommodate human desires.	Spiritual maturity requires us to change in conformity to God, not to reshape our understanding of God to suit ourselves.
God's love can never be separated from his holiness.	Genuine divine love does not imply approval of sin. God's gracious purposes include repentance, redemption, discipline, and transformation.
God's wisdom and purposes exceed our understanding.	We must trust and obey him even when he does not explain his actions, remove suffering, or fulfil our personal expectations.
We exist for God's glory and are being conformed to Christ.	Christian maturity is measured by increasing Christlikeness, not principally by happiness, emotional experiences, prosperity, popularity, or comfort.

3 Examples



The Modern Christian's Excuses for Disobedience

The modern carnal Christian has developed an impressive vocabulary of excuses for avoiding the demands of biblical Christianity. Rather than allowing Scripture to confront and correct his life, he has learned to dismiss uncomfortable truth with convenient phrases:

- **"You're too intense!"** — Because wholehearted obedience to Christ now looks like religious extremism.
- **"But God loves us too, you know!"** — As though God's love cancels His holiness, commandments, and warnings of judgment (John 14:15).
- **"You're stuck in the old days!"** — As though God's eternal truth expires when society changes (1 Peter 1:24–25).
- **"You're far too regimented and legalistic!"** — Because self-denial, discipline, and obedience are mistaken for attempts to earn salvation (Luke 9:23).
- **"You're judging me!"** — Because biblical correction is unwelcome, while Jesus' command to judge with right judgment is conveniently forgotten (John 7:24).
- **"That's not the God I serve!"** — A very revealing excuse, when the God revealed in Scripture is rejected in favour of a god fashioned around personal preferences.
- **"God knows my heart!"** — Indeed He does, including its capacity for self-deception (Jeremiah 17:9–10).
- **"Nobody's perfect!"** — A true statement twisted into an excuse for refusing to pursue holiness (Hebrews 12:14).
- **"You're being unloving!"** — Because love has been redefined as unconditional approval rather than a commitment to truth and righteousness (1 Corinthians 13:6).
- **"We're under grace, not law!"** — As though grace were permission to continue in sin rather than the power and instruction to renounce it (Romans 6:1–2; Titus 2:11–12).
- **"Don't be so heavenly minded!"** — As though setting one's mind on things above were not an explicit biblical command (Colossians 3:1–2).
- **"It's all about having a relationship, not following rules!"** — As though a genuine relationship with Christ could exist independently of obedience to His words (1 John 2:3–4).

The Real Problem

Behind many of these excuses lies the same fundamental attitude: **people want Jesus as Saviour without submitting to Him as Lord. They welcome His promises but resist His commands, celebrate His mercy but avoid His holiness, and demand His blessings while rejecting His authority.**

Of course, not every accusation of legalism, harshness, or judgmentalism is an excuse. Such faults can be real and must be corrected. But when Scripture itself is speaking plainly, those accusations cannot be used to silence it.

Jesus never described discipleship as comfortable, fashionable, or accommodating to the flesh. He spoke of denying oneself, taking up one's cross, entering through the narrow gate, and doing the Father's will.

The tragedy of much modern Christianity is not that God's standards have become too difficult to understand, but that too many professing Christians have become extraordinarily skilled at explaining why they should not have to obey them.

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" — **Luke 6:46, ESV**

Typical Areas Of Spiritual Immaturity In Believers Today

CHRISTIAN MATURITY — COMPLETE COMPARISON CHART				
Area / Distinction	Mature NT Christian / Biblical Love	Immature / Modern Pattern / Carnal Love	Biblical References	Relevant Traditions of Men
Faith	Trusts God's character and promises despite adverse circumstances, even when divine intervention is delayed or unseen.	Interprets trials as evidence that God is not committed to conform to personal expectations; may confuse unanswered prayer with divine neglect.	Rom. 4:18–21; Heb. 11:1–13	Name it and claim it; health and material prosperity; 25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured'; Prayer warriors; 26. Push self-belief
Suffering	Accepts hardship as a possible and sometimes necessary part of discipleship, understanding that suffering can develop perseverance, character, and hope.	Regards hardship as abnormal, unfair, or evidence that God has failed to provide the expected protection life.	Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3–5; 1 Pet. 4:12–19	10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 14. Believe and live in material prosperity; 20. Feelings worship; 21. Biblical illiteracy; 22. Healing evangelism
Perseverance	Endures prolonged trials without abandoning obedience to Christ, continuing in faith and obedience despite disappointment.	May become disillusioned, spiritually destabilised, or tempted to abandon faith when difficulties persist.	Jas. 1:2–4, 12; Heb. 10:35–39	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 20. Feelings worship; 21. Biblical illiteracy; 22. Lukewarm church;
Prayer	Prays for wisdom, holiness, strength, faithfulness, deliverance, and God's will, accepting that God answers according to perfect knowledge and eternal expectations.	Concentrates primarily on relief, comfort, healing, material blessings, and removal of circumstances.	Matt. 6:9–13; Phil. 4:6–7; 1 John 5:14–15	14. Believe and live in material prosperity; 20. Feelings worship; 25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured'; 26. Push self-belief; 30. Spiritual conceit and presumption on God; 34. Prosperity doctrine; 46. Prayer weakness or unbalance; 50. Gifts suppressed or sensationalised; 53. Healing overclaim and miracle sensationalism
Emotional maturity	Experiences fear, grief, anxiety, and disappointment but increasingly governs conduct by truth, self-control, and obedience.	Treats emotional distress as decisive evidence of spiritual failure or allows feelings to govern convictions and conduct.	Gal. 5:22–23; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:13	19. I do not have to listen if correction does not feel loving enough; 20. Feelings worship; 25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured'; 26. Push self-belief
Obedience	Obeys Christ even when obedience requires sacrifice, inconvenience, rejection, or personal loss.	Regards obedience as negotiable when it conflicts with desires, convenience, relationships, or cultural expectations.	Luke 6:46; John 14:15; 1 John 2:3–6	5. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 22. Lukewarm church; 23. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 31. Fear of failure is legalism; 39. True obedience is works and legalism;
Scriptural knowledge	Studies Scripture carefully, understands its context, applies its commands, and increasingly submits to its authority.	Relies on favourite verses, religious slogans, emotional sermons, and the opinions of influential teachers.	Acts 17:11; 20:27; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12–14	1. Simplistic text-proofing theologies; 2. Wooden literalism confused with inerrancy; 17. All opinions are equally valid; 23. Fear of God reduced to mere respect;
Self-denial	Understands self-denial as a daily commitment to put off sin and live for God's purposes, rather than self-centred pursuits.	Characterised primarily by occasional sacrifices, comfortable spirituality, and pursuing personal happiness.	Luke 9:23–24; 14:25–33; Phil. 3:7–11	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 5. Appeasing fleshly members; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 14. Believe and live in material prosperity;
Prayer from others	Receives prayer gratefully, gives prayer, encouragement, and practical support while developing personal faith and accepting spiritual responsibility.	Passively expects others to carry spiritual responsibilities.	Gal. 6:2–5; Eph. 6:18–20; Jas. 5:16	25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured'; 43. Consumer church mentality;
Holiness	Pursues progressive sanctification, genuine repentance, moral purity, and separation from sinful conduct.	Minimises habitual sin, excuses deliberate disobedience, or treats holiness as unnecessary religious burden.	Rom. 6:11–22; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:15–16	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 5. Appeasing fleshly members; 22. Lukewarm church; 24. No conviction of sin and tears of repentance; 27. True obedience is works and legalism; 29. Relationship with God over obedience; 32. Be holy reduced to 'God knows we are only human, lighten up'
Church life	Serves others, accepts accountability, admonishes, encourages, bears burdens, and contributes to the congregation's spiritual development.	Views church primarily as a provider of sermons, music, entertainment, emotional encouragement, and personal benefits.	Rom. 12:3–13; Eph. 4:11–16; Heb. 10:24–25	7. Project exciting, trendy church to attract saved and unsaved; 9. Appeasing fleshly members; 18. No church discipline; 43. Consumer church mentality; 44. One-man pastor rule and weak elderships; 45. Celebrity leadership and platform culture; 47. Sermon-plus-music reduction of church life; 48. This fellowship and weak membership accountability; 49. Ordinances minimized or sentimentalized;
Spiritual conflict	Recognises temptations and spiritual opposition, resisting through Scripture, prayer, self-discipline, and vigilance.	Expects spiritual difficulties to disappear through intervention without developing disciplined spiritual maturity.	Eph. 6:10–18; Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8–9	20. Feelings worship; 21. Biblical illiteracy; 26. Push self-belief; 27. True holiness is legalism; 28. Relationship with God over obedience; 53. Healing overclaim and miracle sensationalism
Material security	Learns contentment in prosperity and deprivation, regarding material blessings as temporary rather than ultimate.	Anxiously pursues security, status, and comfort, treating material possessions as evidence of success.	Matt. 6:19–34; Phil. 4:11–13; 1 Tim. 6:6–10	2. Focus on wealth, career, hobbies, partying; 14. Believe and live in material prosperity; 25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured';
Assurance	Grounds assurance in Christ and his promises while continuing in faith, repentance, obedience, and perseverance.	Alternates between false confidence and despair, treating occasional failure or spiritual dryness as proof of rejection by God.	Col. 1:21–23; Heb. 3:12–14; 1 John 2:3–4	10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 22. Lukewarm church; 24. No conviction of sin and tears of repentance; 27. True holiness is legalism;
Death	Faces mortality with resurrection hope, understanding that faithfulness to Christ may cost earthly life.	Has little developed theology of death, persecution, martyrdom, resurrection, or eternal perspective.	Phil. 1:20–23; 2 Tim. 4:6–8; Rev. 2:10	6. Focus on wealth, career, hobbies, partying; 13. Pastors will not preach hell or end-times warning; 14. Believe and live in material prosperity;
Biblical love versus 'niceness'	Loves people through truthfulness, compassion, holiness, righteous judgment, and necessary confrontation, correction, and restoration. Refuses to substitute social approval for faithfulness to Christ.	Equates love with kindness, politeness, agreeableness, affirming, non-confrontational, and emotionally reassuring, even when this requires suppressing biblical truth.	Eph. 4:15; Gal. 1:10; 1 Cor. 13:4–6; Jude 3	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax;
Rebuke and correction	Corrects sin and error when necessary, using an appropriate combination of gentleness, firmness, patience, clarity, and courage; accepts correction personally.	Regards rebuke as intrinsically unloving, rejects correction because it is uncomfortable, and equates disagreement with personality.	Prov. 27:5–6; Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13	3. Judge not lest you be judged; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian;
Righteous judgment	Evaluates doctrine and conduct according to Scripture, distinguishing righteous discernment from hypocrisy, prejudice, and unjust condemnation.	Interprets 'judge not' as a prohibition against identifying sin, evaluating doctrine, or correcting wrongdoing	Matt. 7:1–5; John 7:24; 1 Cor. 5:12–13	3. Judge not lest you be judged; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God;
Fear of God	Approaches God with loving confidence and reverent fear, recognising his absolute holiness, sovereignty, authority, justice, and right to judgment.	Reduces the fear of God to polite respect, or assumes divine love removes the need for reverent fear.	Matt. 10:28; Acts 5:1–11; Heb. 12:28–29; 1 Pet. 1:17	10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 13. Pastors will not preach hell or end-times warning; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God;
The complete biblical character of God: love, holiness, etc.	Knows God as infinitely holy, compassionate, merciful, patient, holy, righteous, truthful, and just. Understands that God's attributes function together rather than existing in tension or conflict.	Reduces God to someone who 'loves me soooooo much' that unconditional affirmation, acceptance, happiness, and personal success have become the ultimate measures of faithfulness. Assumes God's love excludes wrath, discipline, rebuke, moral demands, or judgment.	Exod. 34:6–7; Isa. 6:1–7; John 3:16–21, 36; Rom. 2:4–11; 3:21–26; 11:22; Gal. 5:22–23; 1 Tim. 1:15–17; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Titus 2:11–14; 1 Pet. 1:15–17; 1 John 4:7–10	4. Evangelism with God's love, not repentance; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 13. Pastors will not preach hell or end-times warning; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God;
Understanding Jesus Christ	Recognises Jesus as the compassionate Saviour, holy Son of God, authoritative Lord, truthful teacher, righteous judge, and risen King.	Imagines Jesus primarily as perpetually agreeable, reassuring, permissive, and unwilling to confront sin or severely rebuke false religious leaders.	Matt. 23:13–36; John 2:13–17; 5:22–29; Rev. 19:11–16	10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 13. Pastors will not preach hell or end-times warning;
Repentance	Responds to conviction with confession, godly sorrow, turning from sin, and practical changes in conduct.	Substitutes reassurance, affirmation, and vague regret for genuine repentance and moral transformation.	Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 2 Cor. 7:9–11	4. Evangelism with God's love, not repentance; 5. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry;
Truth versus feelings	Submits personal feelings, assumptions, cultural preferences, and desires to the authority of Scripture.	Rejects uncomfortable biblical teaching because it feels offensive, unloving, judgmental, or inconsistent with personal experience.	John 17:17; Rom. 12:2; 2 Tim. 4:3–4	1. Simplistic text-proofing theologies; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God;
Doctrinal courage	Maintains biblical convictions under opposition, communicates them truthfully and respectfully, and refuses to surrender essential doctrines to gain approval.	Compromises convictions, conceals unpopular teachings, or refuses necessary disagreement to preserve social acceptance.	Acts 4:18–20; 5:29; Gal. 1:10; Jude 3	3. Judge not lest you be judged; 5. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 12. Must be nice as a Christian;
Moral discernment	Distinguishes good from evil through careful biblical instruction, observation, moral reasoning, and consistent practice.	Treats incomprehensible moral claims as equally valid or refuses to distinguish right from wrong where judgment might provoke criticism.	Rom. 12:2; Phil. 1:9–11; Heb. 5:14	1. Simplistic text-proofing theologies; 2. Wooden literalism confused with inerrancy; 3. Judge not lest you be judged; 13. Immoral TV and movie viewing treated casually; 17. All opinions are equally valid; 23. Fear of God reduced to mere respect;
Sexual morality	Submits sexual conduct, desires, relationships, and personal boundaries to the moral teachings of Scripture, exercising self-control and repentance.	Treats sexual conduct as largely private, assumes sexual immorality is permitted by Scripture to accommodate personal desire, prevailing cultural expectations, or fear of disapproval.	Matt. 5:27–30; 1 Cor. 6:18–20; 1 Thess. 4:3–8	3. Judge not lest you be judged; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 13. Immoral TV and movie viewing treated casually; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God;
Entertainment and purity	Deliberately guards thoughts, affections, habits, and entertainment choices against influences that corrupt desires, conscience, or behaviour.	Consumes degrading or sexually immoral entertainment without examining whether it corrupts desires, conscience, or behaviour.	Ps. 101:3; Phil. 4:8; Eph. 5:3–12	4. Focus on wealth, career, hobbies, partying; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 13. Immoral TV and movie viewing treated casually; 27. True holiness is legalism; 32. Be holy reduced to 'God knows we are only human, lighten up'
Worldliness	Rejects conformity to sinful worldly priorities while responsibly participating in society as a witness to Christ.	Uncritically adopts prevailing cultural values concerning pleasure, wealth, celebrity, status, entertainment, consumption, and success.	Rom. 12:1–2; Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15–17	6. Focus on wealth, career, hobbies, partying; 7. Project exciting, trendy church to attract saved and unsaved; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 13. Immoral TV and movie viewing treated casually; 43. Consumer church mentality
Spiritual humility	Recognises continuing dependence upon divine grace, remains teachable, accepts corrections, and refuses spiritual self-importance.	Assumes spiritual superiority, entitlement to blessing, immunity from failure, or that personal convictions cannot be questioned.	Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 10:12; Jas. 4:6–10	19. I do not have to listen if correction does not feel loving enough; 25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured'; 26. Push self-belief; 30. Spiritual conceit and presumption on God;
Christian freedom and grace	Understands grace as God's unmerited favour that brings salvation and trains believers to renounce ungodliness and live obediently.	Uses divine grace as an excuse for continuing in deliberate sin, dismissing holiness and obedience as legalism.	Rom. 6:1–2, 15–22; Titus 2:11–14; Jude 4	4. Evangelism with God's love, not repentance; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 24. No conviction of sin and tears of repentance; 27. True holiness is legalism;
Discernment of false teaching	Tests religious claims against Scripture, evaluates teachers by their doctrine and conduct, and rejects teachings that contradict apostolic tradition.	Accepts attractive messages, popular ministers, claimed revelations, and spiritually exciting experiences without adequate biblical examination.	Acts 17:11; Gal. 1:6–9; 1 John 4:1	1. Simplistic text-proofing theologies; 2. Wooden literalism confused with inerrancy; 17. All opinions are equally valid; 18. No church discipline; 43. Consumer church mentality; 44. One-man pastor rule and weak elderships; 45. Celebrity leadership and platform culture; 47. Sermon-plus-music reduction of church life; 48. This fellowship and weak membership accountability; 50. Gifts suppressed or sensationalised; 51. Public unimpressed tongues; 52. Quasi-canonical prophecy claims; 54. Pragmatism over faithfulness
Spiritual gifts and manifestations	Exercises and evaluates spiritual gifts according to Scripture, prioritising truth, intelligibility, order, holiness, and the edification of the body.	Confuses emotional excitement, spectacle, charismatic personalities, or untested supernatural claims with spiritual maturity and divine approval.	1 Cor. 12–14; 1 Thess. 5:19–22; 1 John 4:1	7. Project exciting, trendy church to attract saved and unsaved; 20. Feelings worship; 30. Spiritual conceit and presumption on God; 45. Celebrity leadership and platform culture; 50. Gifts suppressed or sensationalised;
Divine healing	Prays for healing, believes that healing is part of the atonement, and submits the outcome to God's wisdom without claiming that recovery is guaranteed.	Treats physical healing as a right obtainable through sufficient faith, assumes sickness indicates deficient faith, or regards continued suffering as evidence of divine rejection.	2 Cor. 12:7–10; Phil. 2:25–27; Jas. 5:14–16	14. Believe and live in material prosperity; 25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured'; 26. Push self-belief; 30. Spiritual conceit and presumption on God;
Church discipline	Accepts biblical accountability, correction, restoration, and where necessary, formal congregational discipline to protect the church and the sinner.	Regards church discipline as inherently unloving, oppressive, intrusive, or incompatible with grace and acceptance.	Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 2 Tim. 3:14–17; Titus 3:9–11	18. No church discipline; 19. I do not have to listen if correction does not feel loving enough; 43. Consumer church mentality; 44. One-man pastor rule and weak elderships; 48. This fellowship and weak membership accountability
Leadership and authority	Respects qualified, accountable, biblically governed leaders who exercise servant-hearted authority and submits to godly leadership and moral integrity.	Equates popularity, personal charisma, social influence, financial success, or dominance with spiritual authority.	Mark 10:42–45; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; 1 Pets. 5:1–4	4. Evangelism with God's love, not repentance; 5. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 44. One-man pastor rule and weak elderships; 45. Celebrity leadership and platform culture; 48. This fellowship and weak membership accountability; 49. Ordinances minimized or sentimentalized;
Worship and reverence	Worships God in spirit and truth, with reverence, gratitude, sound doctrine, intelligibility, order, and concern for congregational edification.	Evaluates worship chiefly by atmosphere, entertainment, personal excitement, emotional intensity, or satisfaction with musical performance.	John 4:23–24; 1 Cor. 14:26, 40; Heb. 12:28–29	47. Sermon-plus-music reduction of church life; 49. Ordinances minimized or sentimentalized;
Evangelism	Proclaims the complete apostolic gospel, including God's love, Christ's saving work, grace, faith, repentance, obedience, and the reality of coming judgment.	Presents primarily an attractive message of acceptance, personal improvement, and divine affection with only minimal emphasis on holiness, and judgment.	Mark 1:14–15; Luke 24:46–47; Acts 17:30–31	4. Evangelism with God's love, not repentance; 5. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 7. Project exciting, trendy church to attract saved and unsaved; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry;
Eternal perspective	Lives in expectation of Christ's return, resurrection, eternal life, and divine judgment, recognising the temporary nature of earthly circumstances.	Concentrates principally on immediate comfort, prosperity, worldly accomplishments, and personal fulfilment with limited concern for eternity.	2 Cor. 4:16–18; 5:9–10; 2 Pet. 3:11–14	2. Focus on wealth, career, hobbies, partying; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 13. Pastors will not preach hell or end-times warning; 14. Believe and live in material prosperity;
Family obligations	Honours parents, cares for dependent relatives, raises children in biblical instruction, and fulfils family responsibilities faithfully.	Subordinates family duties and intergenerational responsibility to personal convenience, cultural expectations, or entertainment-oriented priorities.	Eph. 6:1–4; 1 Tim. 5:4, 8	2. Focus on wealth, career, hobbies, partying; 23. Undisciplined children; 36. Youth favored and spoiled in church culture; 40. Neglect of parents and grandparents under consumerism's influence
Faithfulness versus results	Evaluates ministry and Christian living principally by faithfulness to Christ, truth, holiness, sound doctrine, and obedient service.	Equates numbers, popularity, financial success, celebrity influence, cultural acceptance, and favourable public opinion with God's approval.	1 Cor. 4:1–5; Gal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:1–5	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 7. Project exciting, trendy church to attract saved and unsaved; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God; 25. Constant affirming encouragement — 'You are favoured';
Patient and kind, with necessary firmness	Recognises that genuine kindness sometimes requires difficult confrontation.	Avoids truth when it might upset someone. Treats causing offence as worse than permitting error to continue.	1 Cor. 13:4–6; 2 Tim. 2:24–25; Titus 1:13	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian;
Rebukes sin when necessary	Speaks publicly against sin when necessary, motivated by love for God and others.	Treats all firmness, confrontation, or strongly expressed moral disagreement as unkind or unloving behaviour.	Gal. 2:11–14; 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:9–11	3. Judge not lest you be judged; 5. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God;
Judges judiciously without hypocrisy	Distinguishes moral discernment from self-righteous or unjust condemnation.	Claims moral judgment is always wrong and that love requires accepting other people's choices without biblical evaluation.	Matt. 7:1–5; John 7:24; 1 Cor. 5:12–13	3. Judge not lest you be judged; 9. Love homosexuals, do not challenge homosexual practice; 12. Must be nice as a Christian; 17. All opinions are equally valid; 18. No church discipline
Seeks repentance and restoration	Values another person's ultimate spiritual welfare over temporary emotional comfort.	Prioritises reassurance, affirmation, and emotional satisfaction even when repentance or confrontation is necessary.	2 Cor. 7:8–11; Heb. 12:5–11; Jas. 5:19–20	4. Evangelism with God's love, not repentance; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God;
Willing to be disliked for obedience	Remains faithful despite criticism, rejection, or loss of popularity.	Treats being liked, accepted, and approved by others as primary Christian virtues.	John 15:18–20; Gal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:12	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 7. Project exciting, trendy church to attract saved and unsaved; 8. Appeasing fleshly members;
Fears God more than man	Recognises God's holiness, moral authority, and right to judge, refusing to compromise obedience for human approval.	Fears social disapproval more than divine disapproval and treats public reputation as more significant than faithfulness to God.	Matt. 10:28; Acts 5:29; Heb. 12:28–29; 1 Pet. 1:17	3. Fear of genuine challenging to change; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian;
Recognises Christ sometimes spoke severely	Acknowledges his compassion and gentleness alongside his authoritative rebukes of hypocrisy, sin, and false teaching.	Presents Christ as universally agreeable, affirming, tolerant of sin, and unwilling to confront error or false teaching.	Matt. 23:13–36; Mark 8:33; John 2:13–17; Rev. 3:19	10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax; 12. Must be nice as a Christian;
Accepts uncomfortable truth requires it.	Receives correction with humility, examines personal conduct, and changes where Scripture requires it.	Rejects correction when it feels insufficiently loving, affirming, gentle, or respectful of personal feelings.	Prov. 12:1; 15:31–32; Heb. 12:11; Jas. 1:22–25	16. Protect people from offensive truths, even from God; 17. All opinions are equally valid; 19. I do not have to listen if correction does not feel loving enough;
Seeks another's ultimate spiritual good	Understands that love may require warning, rebuke, sacrifice, patience, correction, and calls to repentance.	Seeks another person's immediate emotional satisfaction and approval, treating temporary happiness as more important than holiness and truth.	1 Cor. 13:6; Col. 1:28; Jas. 5:19–20; Jude 22–23	4. Evangelism with God's love, not repentance; 8. Appeasing fleshly members; 10. Unconditional love of God means God is never angry; 11. God the Father and Jesus are just; relax;

A Self Assessment

Spiritual maturity examination	Response
When adversity continues, do I remain obedient without requiring immediate relief?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Can I distinguish what Scripture promises from what I personally hope God will do?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Do I take responsibility for studying and applying Scripture?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Am I increasingly able to resist temptation and govern my conduct?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Do I accept correction and repent when confronted with sin?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Can I endure disappointment without accusing God of unfaithfulness?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Am I willing to suffer material or social loss rather than compromise obedience?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Do I contribute to the spiritual strength of others rather than only seeking support?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Does my faith continue when emotional reassurance is absent?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no
Have I become more holy, discerning, faithful, loving, and steadfast over time?	Generally yes / Developing / Generally no

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