

“Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.” Philippians 3:15-16 NLT

## lectio // Philippians 3:13-4:1

This idea, that Paul writes about often, is misunderstood among believers. Maturity is not just what you say, not just how you look on a Sunday or sound in a gathering of Christians. It is also how we behave towards each other. Yes, it is what we talk about while we are with each other. Paul says that people were bragging about things that are shameful. He also says their CONDUCT shows that they are really enemies of the cross! That is such strong language to use towards “believers.” The conversations we have with each other and the way we interact with each other very much reflect our theology. Heaven, and the Kingdom of God, is very real and shows up in what we talk about or it doesn’t. And, I’m not talking about conversations about clouds, harps and flying like angels! Our conversations and behaviors actually reflect eternity - as though we understood that the what I say will be echoed in a life after this one AND the way I treat a believer will be viewed as though we will be future neighbors and friends forever! Why would I even think about belittling, gossiping or being a jerk to my brother now when we will share a thousand years of life and stories with each other along with Jesus? I know that all is forgiven and sins will not be carried into eternity, but why would we pretend it’s okay to be “mature” and get away with taking and behaving so poorly here on earth. It just doesn’t make sense. Maybe our sin is not just individual failure, short-sighted and lacking faith now - what if it is communal as well? My sin is a sin within community and it doesn’t just effect me, it effects the whole?

## oratio

Dad,

I hate to be so practical in all this, but the most mature believers were also the most kind, humble and had a wonderful magnetism about them. They were always people I wanted to be around them and have them pray for me. Even with those with strong, opinionated attitudes still carried a certain grace about them that made me want to do better. It was reflective of eternity and I saw Jesus in them, even in times when they weren’t perfect. That’s the maturity I want in my life!

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root