



Maturity Retreats:

Maturity is an unexpected solution to troubled marriages, problems with children, addictions, depression, character weakness, spiritual dryness, the list goes on. Jesus offered unexpected solutions throughout His earthly ministry. For example, rather than deliver Israel from Rome's oppression like the rabbis expected, Jesus fed people miracle bread and taught them Kingdom life. Instead of preventing Lazarus from dying like his family hoped, Jesus shows up late and raises His friend from the grave. There are numerous Scriptural examples where Jesus frequently responded to people's problems and needs in unorthodox ways. All too often we Christians look to talk show hosts, magazines and the media to tell us what we need or how to fix what ails us. We even doggedly try to do all the right things in life and still fall short of the results we expect. Maturity is one solution you do not want to miss.

Maturity is an unexpected solution to problems...

Maturity is the unexpected solution all of us rely on to reach our potential. I painfully remember one rainy afternoon when I performed below my potential. It was a time when my high school baseball team practiced indoors. One of the drills we ran was a "hot potato" exercise where two groups stood opposite each other in lines. The goal was to run toward another person and throw the ball until you were too close. At that point the next pair took turns and we returned to the back of the opposing line to start all over again. This drill was designed to quicken reflexes and enhance our timing. Because I played first base this was a useful exercise for my skill training but there was one problem. My eyesight was fading. I put off buying glasses for about a year and we were indoors practicing with poor lighting. Here I stood, running and throwing the ball at my partner. Conditions were ripe for a disaster.



After a few rounds I noticed Brian, my partner, was throwing too hard. "Why is he throwing at me like this, isn't he paying attention?" I thought to myself. Due to the rapid pace of the exercise, I lacked the opportunity to tell him to soften his throw. Soon it was my turn. Brian shot the ball my direction. Only this time his throw was not at my chest, as it should be, but aimed at my head. The ball also had extra "zing" to it. Before I could see the ball, WAM! I felt something smack the middle of my forehead. White stars appeared and danced before my eyes. Piercing pain shot through my skull. I stumbled and tried to hold my footing. Dizziness threatened to take me down. The sheer impact of the ball slamming my head caused the gym to stop its activity. Cheerleaders stopped practicing. My teammates cringed. Coach suddenly sat me down and called for ice. A baseball sized lump appeared while seams from the ball remained etched on my forehead. This could have been prevented.

This could have been prevented...

After this incident I invested in glasses. My eyesight improved. Now I could see in order to protect myself. My skills and timing increased. Rather than quit playing, I made necessary improvements and adjusted. When it comes to life and relationships, growth and recovery increases our wisdom and makes us stronger. Problems such as character weakness, fearful living, low joy, outbursts, rigidity, marriage failure, inconsistency, flawed bonds and untamed cravings deplete us. Like my experience without glasses, we live below our potential when we fail to make changes. These are symptoms of a painful lack of maturity. We rely on people to help us thrive and give us what we cannot give ourselves. Unfortunately it is all too common for communities and families to lack necessary resources to help us be our best. This is one of many reasons why you benefit from a maturity retreat. In one weekend you discover practical steps that let you and your people cultivate maturity. You learn ingredients necessary to be who God has created you to be. You can begin to develop maturity that leads to wholeness, peace and joy.



What does maturity do?

Maturity accomplishes several things. It protects your children by teaching you and your spouse the skills to repair when things go wrong. You pass on the best of yourself to those you love instead of pain and dysfunction. Maturity equips your marriage by helping you develop the capacity to grow and stay relational during hardship. Maturity retreats prevent disasters by examining the six stages of life so you identify your earned maturity and find community resources to grow. Assessing earned maturity means you avoid putting too much weight on fragile foundations and strengthen what is weak or missing. Purposeful maturity means filling holes in your life and growing in complexity. Effective leaders are those who receive feedback, address their wounds and learn from mistakes. Healthy parents are those who acknowledge their mistakes and repair with their children when things go wrong. Maturity retreats let leaders, parents, singles and groups assess weaknesses and identify needed resources. Maturity can change the way you see and experience relationships, community, church and family.

You pass on the best of yourself...instead of pain and dysfunction.

All of us have areas in our lives that we cannot improve, on our own. Problems such as unprocessed pain, low joy, difficulty with the “big six” distressing emotions, addictions, and more rob believers of intimacy with Jesus and one another. Another advantage of a maturity retreat is you learn the value and necessity of true maturity. In one weekend you discover essential needs and tasks to reach your potential and pass on the best of yourself to your children and grandchildren.



We rely on the Body of Christ and each other to be who God created us to be. From Adam and Eve onward it has not been good for us to be alone. We need mature community relationships to reach our potential. All too often believers spiritualize growth and think they can change on their own. *I have my faith and that's all I need!* some say. We need to walk out our faith in relationships with others to increase our ability to love, handle distress and be more like Jesus.

It has not been good for us to be alone...We need mature community relationships...

Maturity is a topic that can change the way you think about relationships, community, church and family. Have you noticed times in your life when you responded in ways that bothered you? Possibly you said something you wish you could take back. Maybe you did something you regret in a vulnerable moment of pressure or strain. Surely you have watched the news or read about a Christian leader who fell to immorality, addiction or scandal. Possibly your church community bears the scars of a previous rupture or disaster. A maturity retreat examines how flawed bonds play into situations like this and looks at how to avoid problems in the future. Maturity may be just what your church needs to reach its next level of growth.

What a maturity retreat is:



A maturity retreat consists of teaching, exercises and activities to promote Christ-like change. Knowledge of maturity identifies cracks in your developmental foundation. Information is not enough to produce growth, however. A weekend retreat exposes faulty development and introduces repair skills that lead to restoration. All of us rely on community relationships, relational joy, skill training and *Immanuel* healing for growth, healing and character development. A maturity retreat jump-starts your race to wholeness.

Each weekend maturity retreat enhances the overall effectiveness of a church both individually and corporately. Right hemispheric skills are introduced that are designed to produce mature followers of Jesus Christ. The lack of right hemisphere emotional capacity causes us to lose internal synchronization and do foolish things, waste energy, become anxious and fearful, resistant and evasive. Each retreat lets participants discover community resources then identify the next step in their emotional development. Six life stages of maturity combined with creative exercises make one powerful weekend!

Information is not enough to produce growth...

What a maturity retreat is not:

A maturity retreat is not designed to replace your community with a seminar nor is it designed to advance you into your next stage of maturity in the seminar itself. This retreat does not replace the THRIVE Conference training though it is designed to prepare individuals, couples and groups for the in-depth training THRIVE offers.

Should Christians mature?

Consider the condition of the Western church for a moment. Immorality runs rampant, addictions prosper, good leaders fall by the wayside, marriages crumble and conflict tears congregations apart. Something is amiss. Besides being well versed in theology, believers require skills to deal with pain and recover when things go wrong. More often than not, these skills are absent in our churches and families. Some of us live according to our pain or malfunctions instead of the joy and peace Jesus offers. You pay thousands of dollars a year for auto, health, life and home insurance in case of unfortunate disaster. A maturity retreat is cheaper and its impact can last a lifetime.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Ephesians 4:15

Theology does not change character but relationships can. Have you ever run across a rigid Christian who knows the Bible inside and out but still lacks joy? What about someone who battles an addiction or is overcome by depression or anxiety? These are symptoms of the need for purposeful maturity formation. We at Shepherd's House believe maturity is a crucial element that is terribly lacking in the church today. God knows we need other people. Maturity means as a leader, I improve my chances of avoiding a pitfall in ministry. As a spouse I grow in my capacity to love and lead. As a missionary I gain the growth to meet heavy demands on the missionary field. As a parent and grandparent, maturity means I pass the best of myself on to my loved ones. Regardless of my role maturity means I learn helpful recovery skills and gain momentum for growth and change.

You pay thousands of dollars a year for...insurance...A maturity retreat is cheaper and its impact can last a lifetime.

What you leave a retreat with.

Through a retreat you recognize your earned level of maturity. You discover holes and deficits that need attention and action. You clearly see the next step needed for growth. Maturity, as a concept, is now understandable. You know the need for maturity in your family and community and have additional skills to achieve your goals. There is now a common language within your church community to embrace maturity. You have a clear road map for maximum growth that leads to true maturity. You see the value of maturity and can't help but tell others!



Who should come?

Only those who are serious about being full of life. Whether your childhood was wonderful or painful, maturity formation is critical to be who God has created you to be, this side of heaven. Trauma stunts our active growth process. You may have lacked something as a child or experienced abuse. Either way maturity paves the way to being unstuck. Most of us have little understanding of what maturity is by definition but we easily recognize deficits when we see them. The goal of this retreat is to educate and equip you so you make a difference and build better churches, communities and families.

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YES! I want maturity, the unexpected solution, for me, my family and community!!