



Parent Maturity Stage

Resource

Parent

Biologically being a parent does not automatically put you at the parent stage of maturity. Singles can be parents too.

Age:

- First birth until youngest child becomes an adult/13

Primary Goals:

- To sacrificially take care of children with joy

Parent Stage Needs

- An encouraging partner
 - Not meant to do this alone
- Guidance from elders
- Feedback and advice from other fathers or mothers
- Needs community to provide encouragement, guidance, breaks and opportunities to recharge
- A secure, orderly environment

Parent Stage Tasks

- To give life without requiring anything in return
 - You are no longer looking to take care of yourself and others equally, like an adult would
 - We are made in the image of God, how we are wired,
 - We desire something in return but we don't demand it
- Building a home
 - Safety
 - Belonging
 - Identity
- Protect my family
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Mental
 - Spiritual
- Serve my family
- Enjoy my family
- Mature my children
- Allows and provides spiritual parents and siblings for their children



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- Learn how to bring children through difficult times and return to joy from other emotions
 - Stay present through big emotions - trauma
 - You are responsible for your own emotions
- Synchronize with the needs of: children, spouse, family, work & church
- Learn how to discipline in love
 - Our brains are wired/designed so that conflict/discipline should always improve/bring connection and acceptance when it is done correctly. If not, discipline most likely will produce disconnection and rejection.
 - The goal of discipline is to invest into your children's growth so that they can live out the life God has for them.

What about Singles as Parents?

- 3 Types
 - Supplemental
 - Assist with training, introduction to the community, protection
 - Stand-in
 - When a parent is unable to be available for whatever reason at given times
 - Replacement
 - When there is a permanent loss of a parent

Singles as Spiritual Parents:

- God is the One who calls you to this
- Needs to be done as part of a community
- Focus on your same gender
- Have parenting coaching
- Be aware of the power of bonds
 - Sexual circuits are located next to the brain's bonding center

Mature parents are so full of the life skills and maturity that they have learned, up to this point, that they joyfully desire to offer it to the next generation. Even if it costs them the ability to take care of themselves well.

Mature parents are more than eager for the next generation to go on beyond them.

Mature parents are aware that they cannot provide everything their children will need and allow opportunities for others to come alongside the child.



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Parent Maturity Holes: Obvious Immaturity

- Family members may be put at risk, deprived, or feel unimportant
- Children may be “parentified”- having to take care of parents - which actually blocks their maturing process
- Children may be vulnerable to peer pressure, unhealthy group bonds, and be less likely to succeed in life’s goals.
- Parents may be overwhelmed and fueled by stress (fear) instead of joy.
- Hopeless, depressed, disintegrating family units develop.

Primary Task to be completed:

Sacrificially taking care of children

Primary Resulting Problem (as adult, if not completed):

Distant/conflicted family relationships

Practical Personal Tasks:

- Identify 1-2 tasks to prayerfully begin to work on
- Find a “counsel of parents” to enter relationship with
- Find elder who have “been there and done that” successfully
- Begin to do things that make your home safe and secure
 - Set a standard for honesty and integrity
 - Quick to listen, slow to speak
 - Speak to/with family not at them
 - Be more physically affectionate
- Grow your Joy Bucket
 - Practice appreciation
 - Personal
 - Tell you family what you appreciate about them
 - Quiet yourself
 - Find what brings you Joy and do it (recharge)

Practical Community Tasks:

Be that “counsel of parents” for other parents

Be the community that encourages, guides, and gives breaks and opportunities to recharge

Teach other parents how to bring their family back to joy



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Mature/Redeemed vs. Wounded Fathers¹

Fathers	Mature/Redeemed	Wounded
Present	Seek out, and engage his children. Notice their lives and reactions. Stays involved through conflict and difficulty. Accessible	Withdraws, emotionally and physically absent. Hide out in the garage, in TV, at work, or hobbies. Duck out at the first sign of difficulty. Abandons.
Protective	Protects from self and others. First line of protection. Does not expose children to shame, ridicule, humiliation, excess of power, harmful people or things.	Defeated, feels weak, threatened, and ineffective. May not protect family from self or others.
Attentive	Delights in children. Sees them through God's eyes. Knows their interests, progress discoveries, thoughts, feelings, and needs. Each child can see that they are individually special to Him	Work, hobbies, friends, become distractions and can absorb and deplete their tank. Was not taught to take care of 2 or more people at the same time. Bitterness and self hatred, depression and guilt can be at the forefront.
Calms	Holds children with non-sexual affection that quiets and they are able to rest because he is calm. Creates an atmosphere where children can feel safe and express their needs. Children look for dad in difficult times to return to joy.	Restless, driven and disruptive. Usually reacting with anger which agitates and unsettles the home. He creates fear rather than joy/love. He can create hard, strong, fast, productive, independent "winners" that are not allowed to quiet, rest and play.
Enjoys	Feels wonder at the beauty of his children. He will bless his children with his voice so that it becomes their favorite sound of the day. His joy will make his kids think he is nuts. In private, his joy brings laughter and safety. In public, his evident pleasure in his children brings pride.	Was not blessed as a child so doesn't know how to bless his own. Was not admired by an older man or even a friend. He feels he is inadequate to be a father even if no one has said so. There is no joy in his life. Silent, self-conscious and ashamed, he does not enjoy the life he gives or his greatest gifts, his own children.
Comforts	Understand that every absence no matter what the reason or who was absent hurts. He will gather those who are hurting because of what they missed whether he was responsible or not and grieve the loss with his children so they can heal and find joy again	Scatters, parties, make himself feel good but does not notice the hurt of his family. If he does, he may blame or ridicule them for their pain. It hurts to be around him. His children are afraid to remind him if he forgets his promises or overlooks their needs.

¹ Adapted from Living with Men, Chapter 9, by E. Jame Wilder



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The Life Model: Adult Maturity Indicators²

Personal Tasks	Community & Family Tasks	When the Tasks Fail
Protects, serves, and enjoys one's family	The community gives the opportunity for both parents to sacrificially contribute to their family.	Family members are (1) at risk, (2) deprived, and (3) feel worthless or unimportant.
Is devoted to taking care of children without expecting to be taken care of by the children in return.	The community promotes devoted parenting.	Children have to care for parents which is impossible and leads to child abuse/neglect and/or "parentified" children which blocks instead of facilitating their maturity.
Allows and provides spiritual parents and siblings for their children.	The community encourages relationships between children and extended spiritual family members.	Children are vulnerable to peer pressure, to cults, to any misfortune, and are less likely to succeed in life's goals. Parents get overwhelmed without extended family support.
Learns how to bring children through difficult times and return to joy from other emotions.	The community supports parents by giving them encouragement, guidance, breaks, and opportunities to recharge.	Hopeless, depressed, disintegrating family units develop.

² Chart adapted from Shepherd's House, Inc. © 2000



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Parent Maturity Stage Assessment³

No	At Times	Usually	Always	
				I have brought others to life
				I have an encouraging partner
				I receive guidance from elders.
				I have peers that hold me accountable
				I have a secure and orderly home and community
				I can give without needing to receive in return
				I see my family through the eyes of heaven
				I include others in family activities
				I am present with my family
				I am protective of my family
				I am attentive to my family
				I am calming to my family
				I enjoy my family
				I comfort my family
				I help my children mature
				I can synchronize the needs of wife, children, family, work & church

³ Modified from <https://lifemodelworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/Maturity-Skills-Assessment.pdf>. This can also be found in *RARE Leadership*, by Marcus Warner & Jim Wilder and *The Complete Guide to Living with Men*, by E. James Wilder