



## **Maturity in Marriage**

**By Deb Babb, LCSW**

What is maturity in marriage? Maybe it would be easier to start by looking at the opposite of this- *immaturity* in marriage. Consider Paul's statement in I Corinthians 13:11 (Amplified Bible), "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; now that I have become a man [adult], I am done with childish ways and have put them aside." Children believe that the world revolves around them and that life is all about them because they are the center of the universe. They're **self-absorbed**. This is to be expected of immature children but not of mature adults. Other marks of immaturity are a selfish attitude (It's all about me!) or demanding one's own way, being ungrateful, being irresponsible, and having reactions to conflict or problems that aren't conducive to resolution (easily angered, temper tantrums, contempt, manipulation). It can be helpful to ask yourself, your spouse, or a trusted friend or mentor, if you are exhibiting some of these characteristics in your marriage (as long as you're willing to hear the feedback!).

One step toward becoming more mature is making a conscious decision to "put away childish ways" and then taking specific steps to do things differently. What are those "childish ways" you need to do away with? Do you always have to be right in any disagreement? Are you being responsible in your marriage or are you focused more on what your rights are, i.e., "I have the right to spend the weekend with my buddies/go shopping/spend money on what I want?" Do you try to manipulate the situation to get "your needs" met without considering your spouse's needs? Are your needs more important than your spouse's? Do you "expect" your spouse to have dinner ready/house cleaned when you get home and then become easily angered/ have a pity party if these expectations are not met?

Maturity and growth (not *perfection*) involves asking yourself these tough questions, or hearing the answer from your spouse/trusted friend/mentor and being willing to take a hard look inside and deciding to change. It involves asking yourself, "What did I learn from doing it this way? What do I still need to change?" We grow in maturity when we can test our thoughts and ideas against another person- whether our spouse, trusted friend, or mentor- and remain open to correction when they share with us the error of our ways. Occasionally, we all need others to shine light on our blind spots in a loving and challenging way. Take the time today to first ask God to reveal those areas you may be "immature" in and help you change. If you're still not convinced this is an area you need to change, be willing to seek input from another. After all, we're called to "sharpen" one another ("As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Proverbs 27:17 NIV). By sharpening ourselves, we sharpen not only our marriage, but all our relationships.

To find out more about Deb Babb, click [here](#) to visit her counselor page!