



Inside-Out Families

Focus There are four stages to maturity related to our spiritual growth and our marital relationship.

Open Who is the best example of a “man or woman of character” that you know? Why do you say that?

Read Living *inside out* is living according to the character and maturity within oneself rather than living in reaction to external circumstances. To live this way, a person must first mature. The stages of maturity apply to both our spiritual growth and relationship with our spouse.

Job is an example of a man who was greater on the inside than on the outside, as shown by his response to extreme difficulty in Job 1:22: *“In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.”* He was mature and responded to his circumstances based out of that maturity. In contrast, we can learn from the prodigal son’s journey from immaturity to maturity as described in Luke 15.

Talk

1. As you listened to this message, what stood out or “struck you” the most? Why do you think that was?
2. Which of the four stages (“give me,” “use me,” “search me” and “make me”) do you identify with most right now? How so?

3. What are the significant differences between the “use me” and “make me” stages in our spiritual lives? In marriage?
4. Why do pride and insecurity halt the maturing process?

Live

1. Read Psalm 139:23–24 in a few different translations. Have you ever *really* invited the Lord to search you in this way? How do you feel when you think about this kind of “examination” of your motives, etc.?
2. If you’re willing to invite the Lord to *search you and know your heart* concerning Him and/or your marriage, write out a prayer of invitation and commitment to the Lord. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you see you as you truly are, without condemnation or shame. Decide when, on your own time, you will further explore this with the Lord this week and share it with a partner.

Pray

Invite the Holy Spirit to lead you in the maturing process spiritually and, if applicable, in your marriage. Pray Psalm 139:23–24 in your own words. Ask Him to reveal pride and/or insecurity in your life. Thank Him that He does not work in your life using condemnation and shame, but with patience and compassion. Ask Him to lead you closer to Him, and to your spouse.