

Consider Jesus: The Only Way to Grow Up Hebrews 5:11 - 6:20

A human person in an adult body with a child's mindset is no laughing matter. Irresponsible and forgetful, impulsive and pouty, whining and pitching fits, "Me" ruling over "You"... hardly a very good expression of Jesus, right? Sadly, too many believers have chosen not to "press on to maturity" (6:1). Even though many "ought to be teachers by now" (5:12) - take all God has graced to us and freely give it away to others (Matt 10:8) - we remain more interested in getting than giving.

The root cause of such failure to grow up is clearly stated in Heb 5:11 - "You have become dull of hearing." ("Become"? You weren't "born again" that way!) This is not due to a learning disability or lack of revelation. Rather, it comes from a "sluggish" (6:12) resolve - an unwillingness - to know and express Christ. It is not due to hard subject matter, but hard hearts and minds. Such self-inflicted dullness, sluggishness is evidenced by...

...boredom: rehearsing and restating the same material over and over - "milk" for every meal, not "solid food" (5:13); the "ABC's", not the "story" of God's life for, in, and through us.

...gullibility: an inability to be discerning and thus easily enticed to draw "life" from the wrong source (5:14; 6:4-6).

...a lack of fruitfulness: apart from hearing and trusting what God is saying we are unable to release the mature character of God and be a blessing to others (6:7-8).

...a loss of focus and hope: lacking a "see through" capacity into the greater realities, we are easily tossed about by impatience, anxiety, and demoralizing fatigue (6:19).

Each of these is a logical extension of a self-for-selfness - and God made life so that the self-absorbed, the immature, cannot make it work!

The remedy is fairly simple but very direct: BE DILIGENT TO PRESS ON, TO GROW UP! (6:1,11) Then, watch God Himself carry you forward! Stop rehearsing and wrangling about what you already know - the "elementary teaching", the "foundation" - your initial salvation experience, your introduction into the church, what happens when you die (6:1-2). Trade in your "milk" for "meat" (5:12-14). Milk is for babies - predigested food provided by another; meat is for those growing up, able to "prepare" and fully digest most of their own meals. Fully resolve - "be diligent" (6:11-12) - to mine the depths of Christ, knowing it takes "faith AND patience" to possess your possessions and live in His promised supply in a world that actively resists Him and His truth.

How will we know we are growing up? We will be keener discerners of the "source" of our options (5:14). We will not "fall away" (6:4-6,9,11), fall back into immaturity. We will bear fruit - because of the "rain" - the grace of God - we will bear "vegetation" -the character of God (6:7). We will live in "hope" - a passion for what is possible because we "consider Jesus" and not ourselves (6:11, 16-20). The key is not our faith, but His faithfulness. Those growing up still experience much turbulence in this world. We are learning to "Consider Jesus" as the "anchor of our soul" (6:19), and find "strong encouragement", a "sure and steadfast" refuge in Him! (6:18)

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Greetings

For those of you who need (or like) to plan ahead, our 2019 Florida Retreat will be in Gainesville again this year on February 8-10. As we get closer more details will be given on how and when to register. Last year we used all 30 of our reserved rooms - once our registration begins, don't delay too long!

We have events scheduled for 2019. If you are interested in meeting in your town, let us know soon. Our conference schedule usually has opportunities 12-15 months out (sometimes sooner), so let us know.

I enjoy the variety in our travel schedule - churches big and small of all kinds and types, subjects from the ABC's of Christ in you, to Bible studies, to leadership, to conflict resolution. I appreciate more and more the beauty of diversity - "if all were one member, where would the Body be?" (I Cor 12:19), and yet am more convinced than every that even though there may be many "gifts... ministries... and effects" there is but one God, one Spirit, one Lord in and over and through all (I Cor 12:4-6).

Thank you for your support in so many ways - many continue to be encouraged, challenged, taught and shaped by "Christ in you, the hope of glory." We proclaim Him!



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