

The third step to overcome spiritual immaturity is ...

3. Determine with God's help to grow

a. See the need to grow spiritually

- 1) God tells us that strong meat belongs to the mature Christian (v.14). Strong meat is the "steaks" and "roasts" of the Scripture. It is the opposite of the "milk of the word". It is the doctrinal teachings that require thinking, study and concentration.
- 2) Note what God told Joshua years ago, (Joshua 1:8) "*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*"
- 3) The Psalmist desired to learn God's Word. (Psalms 119:18) "*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*" (Psalms 86:11) "*Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*" (Psalms 119:133) "*Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*"
- 4) God desires that Christians learn His Word and grow spiritually. (2 Timothy 2:15) "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

b. Be willing to change your habits

- 1) Hebrews 5:14 says that mature Christians *by reason of use* (lit. through habit) *have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*
 - a) Maturing requires good habits of Bible study.
 - b) Maturing requires mental exercise or hard work studying to learn what God says is good and evil.
- 2) With God's help, you can establish a new habit of studying the Bible, attending all the church services, applying what you learn and making spiritual changes.

Conclusion: If you are a Christian, God wants you to mature spiritually, and you can with His help and with determination. The maturing process is a lifelong journey. Full maturity will come only in heaven.

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

Overcoming Spiritual Immaturity

2 June 2019 AM - Hebrews 5:1-14 - Heb19 - Scott Childs

Introduction: When our boys were infants, they drank their mother's milk for many months. That was normal. They ate no steak and chicken when they were a month old. When they began eating some foods, we had a food grinder that ground and mashed everything very fine. At that age, that too was normal. However, if they had still needed their food ground and mashed at age 15 that would have been sad. Normal maturity allows a teen to eat strong meat. The same is true spiritually.

Paul began this chapter talking about the priesthood. In verses 1-4, he spoke of the human priests who offered sacrifices for their own sins and the sins of the people. In verses 5-10, he spoke of Christ, the divine priest, who was God's Son, a priest after the order of Melchisedec, who prayed for deliverance yet learned obedience by suffering and becoming the author of eternal salvation. Realising that some of his readers had not yet grasped all that Christ had done for them, Paul addresses the problem of spiritual immaturity, verses 11-14.

Transition: Spiritual immaturity is an abnormality that we should and can overcome by taking the three steps found in our text.

The first step to overcome spiritual immaturity is ...

1. Identify your spiritual maturity level

a. Have you had time to mature spiritually? v.12

- 1) Newborn Christians, like babies, ought to hunger for the "milk of the Word". (1 Peter 2:2) "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*" God gives them a hunger to learn all that they can. That is normal for a new Christian.
- 2) Drinking just the *milk of the Word* for years and years is not normal. Ask yourself, "*Have I been saved long enough that I ought to be more spiritually mature?*" Just as time naturally produces physical and mental maturity, time should also produce spiritual maturity. I have known professing Christians who say they were saved years ago, yet they have not been baptised, they do not attend church faithfully and they are still addicted to sinful habits. They are spiritually immature. That is sad!

- 3) Are you teaching others what you have learned? (v.12) As a child matures, it is normal for him to talk about what he is learning. That is true spiritually as well. If you do not like to talk to others about what you are learning spiritually, something is wrong. Teaching is a sign you are maturing.
 - a) Parents, are you teaching your children the Word of God? It is more than saying prayers with them. (Proverbs 6:20) "*My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:*"
 - b) Older women are you teaching the younger. (Titus 2:4) "*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,*"
- 4) Are you still struggling with the spiritual basics? (v.12) Are you still *unskilful* or inexperienced in the word of righteousness? (v.13)
 - a) The "*first principles of the oracles of God*" refer to the ABCs of the Word of God.
 - b) The ABCs are daily Bible reading, daily prayer, daily confession of sin, meditating on what you read, memorising helpful verses, striving to resist temptation, and faithfully attending church.

b. How well do you digest spiritual meat? v.12

- 1) Healthy babies are growing babies. As they mature, they want to eat solid food.
- 2) When a spiritually immature person hears meaty doctrinal teaching from the Bible, he may get frustrated, tune out, complain, or spit it out. These symptoms describe spiritual babes (v.13).

The second step to overcome spiritual immaturity is ...

2. If you are immature, seek to identify the cause

a. Are you dull of hearing? (v.11)

- 1) Paul admits that some doctrine is "*hard to be uttered*". In other words, it is difficult to explain in words. Without question, there are things in the Bible that are difficult to understand.
- 2) The apostle goes on to say that the real cause was they

were *dull of hearing*. They were slow or sluggish listeners. They did not want to hear. In other words, they were *apathetic*. Jesus saw this as a problem during His earthly ministry. (Luke 24:25) "*Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*"

- a) I believe that apathy is one of the main causes of spiritual immaturity in churches.
- b) Today the phone, Internet, TV, music, games, pleasures and sports constantly entertain people. Biblical preaching is not to be entertaining but enlightening and enriching. Entertainment addicts find listening to preaching difficult and boring.

b. Do you lack teaching?

- 1) Are you attending all of our church services? Sunday evening and Wednesday evening focus more on teaching.
- 2) Many churches today have shifted from preaching to entertainment to build crowds. In doing so, there is a rapid growth in spiritual ignorance.
- 3) When the focal point of a church service moves from the pulpit to the music and God's word is relegated to a brief closing comment that church has ceased to be a biblical New Testament church.

c. Are you positive that you have spiritual life?

- 1) Those who have no real interest in learning the doctrines of the Word of God have a serious spiritual problem. They may not even truly be Christians. (Titus 1:16) "*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*"
- 2) Genuine salvation in Christ changes a person from the inside out. He receives a new life in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17) "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" Sadly, many religious people have never experienced that life-changing event.
- 3) Once you identify the cause of spiritual immaturity ...