

Hebrews 5:11-6:12

Week Eight

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Day 1



Heavenly Father, thank you for your word that reveals who you are. Open my eyes as I read to see you more clearly and to see myself more clearly in your light. Soften my heart to accept what you show me and follow you more closely.

- ✓ Read through the passage in each translation.
- ✓ Underline or write in the margin, themes that you see.
- ✓ Write a question you have about the passage.
- ✓ In the space below, write out a verse from our passage that stands out to you, that you can meditate on throughout the week.

Day 2- Hebrews 5:11-14

1. Look back at 5:10. What does the author have a lot to say about that is hard to explain?

2. What was the problem facing the author of Hebrews and the readers according to verse 11?

3. Describe or give an example of what you think it means to be dull of hearing.



Lord, am I dull of hearing? Please give me ears to hear. Help me be attentive and sensitive to your Spirit. And then help me to act on what I hear. Forgive me for my spiritual laziness and indifference!

4. From verse 12, how do we know the readers are not new believers?

-How would you characterize the people the author describes?

Scholar's Note: Solid food is the weightier matters of God's word.¹

For Discussion: What are some dangers and ramifications of being immature spiritually?

Picture and Ponder: "Truth heard but not internalized and maintained will be lost to the hearer."²

5. According to verse 13, what happens to someone who lives on milk, never moving on to solid food?

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses and answer the question:

-*"Unskilled in the word of righteousness"* can be understood in two different ways that are not mutually exclusive. One way is that it "refers to the righteousness that comes from God in the gospel through the work of Jesus Christ and is received by faith."³ The other way is to understand it as having a moral element

pertaining to righteous living. In light of the verses below, how do these two thoughts go together?

Philippians 1:27 ²⁷ *Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...*”

1 Corinthians 3:1-2 (NRSV) *“Brothers and sisters, I couldn’t speak to you as people who live by the Holy Spirit. I had to speak to you as people who were still following the ways of the world. You aren’t growing as Christ wants you to. You are still like babies. The words I spoke to you were like milk, not like solid food. You weren’t ready for solid food yet. And you still aren’t ready for it.”*

Scholar’s Note: “...discernment is like a theological grid or a worldview that helps us make instant moral and theological judgments about our circumstances..”⁴

6. Look back to verse 12; why were they not ready for solid food?

-According to verse 14, what would internalizing and living out the basic principles of God’s word do in their lives that makes them ready for solid food?

-According to verse 14, being immature and not trained by the principles of God make these believers deficient in what?



We cannot look at growth in our spiritual life as optional. There is nothing good or even natural about being stunted in growth. Immaturity is not a good look. Not only is it not a good look but our Hebrew author also gives us this warning because there is danger in stagnation. It is not something to be taken lightly.

- ❖ You should be encouraged because you are studying the solid food of Hebrews! What else are you doing in your life to move from where you are to more spiritual maturity?

- ❖ What is the biggest struggle you face in growing spiritually?

- ❖ Grace is not a cheap gift – Jesus *died* to sanctify you and make you his own. How can you fight against being sluggish of hearing or spiritually dull?

- ❖ *Phil. 2:13 “For it is God who is working in you, enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose.” (HCSB)* If you have lost your desire to grow spiritually, take hold of this promise and ask God to give you the desire and ability to deepen your spiritual life as he works in you.

Day 3- Hebrews 6:1-3

6. What is the goal we are to go on to in verse 1?

7. Look up the word foundation and write the definition.

8. What does the author **not** want to do with the foundation according to verse 1?

Picture and Ponder: “The point is not to abandon these truths, but to establish them as a sure foundation for later building.”⁵

9. What is the foundation according to verse 1?

10. According to verse 2, what do they not need further instructions about?

Scholar's Note: "Ceremonial washing and the laying on of hands were both integral to Judaism. In order to move on to maturity, these Jewish believers needed to leave behind their confidence in ritualistic practices."⁶

Scholar's Note: Remember that the readers were Jewish Christians in danger of falling away from Christianity and slipping back into Judaism. MacArthur views the elementary doctrine of Christ (v.1) as "... referring to basic Old Testament teaching that prepared the way for Messiah the beginning teaching about Christ."⁷



The author encourages his readers that together, they will go on to maturity, building upon the foundation that has been laid instead of laying the foundation over and over, and he acknowledges the sovereignty of God in the endeavor.

- ❖ What should the awareness that, without God's help (v. 3) we are unable to go on to maturity, foster in us?

- ❖ How can always having to lay again the foundation that we are not saved through our own efforts or works sometimes get in the way of maturing in our understanding of holiness or sanctification? (I am not talking about moving on from that precious truth, but embracing it and building on it.)

- ❖ Knowing that we never move on from the gospel what does it look like to build on the foundation of the gospel?

Day 4- Hebrews 6:4-8

This portion of Scripture is very sobering and one of the most widely contested. One commentator states that these verses are some of the most difficult in the New Testament.



Holy Spirit help me today to gain some understanding of these words of God to us. Help me not to be overly fearful or hopeless, but sensitive to your prompting and putting all my hope in Jesus our Savior.

Scholar's Note: Apostasy in the New Testament refers generally to the abandonment of Christianity for unbelief.⁸

11. What five spiritual experiences are mentioned in verse 4-5?

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses and answer the questions:

- When something seems unclear to us in the Bible the first thing we do is go to other verses in the Bible that are clear. We hang on tightly to what we know to be true in Scripture and from there, try to make sense of what seems unclear to us. Sometimes it is helpful to know what the verse is not saying, and then we can try and figure out what it is saying. **Here are some verses that clearly teach that if you are genuinely saved you can't lose your salvation.** Spend some time looking up these verses if you need to be assured of this truth. These verses help us know what Hebrews 6:4-6 is **not** talking about.
Rom. 8:29-39, 11:29, Jude 24-25, Eph. 1:3-14, 1 Peter 1:5, Phil. 1:6, 1 Cor. 1:7-9, 1 Thess. 5:23-24, John 10:28-29, Heb. 10:14, Jer. 32:40
- How do the verses in Matthew, 1 John and Psalm help explain the people in Hebrews 6?

Matthew 7:21-23 ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast

out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

1 John 2:19 “These “against-Christ” people used to be members of our churches, but they never really belonged with us or else they would have stayed. When they left us it proved that they were not of us at all.” (TLB)

Psalm 78:13-16, 23-29, 22,56-57a “¹³For he divided the sea and led them through, making the water stand up like walls!

¹⁴In the daytime he led them by a cloud, and all night by a pillar of fire.

¹⁵He split open the rocks in the wilderness to give them water, as from a gushing spring.

¹⁶He made streams pour from the rock, making the waters flow down like a river!

²³But he commanded the skies to open; he opened the doors of heaven.

²⁴He rained down manna for them to eat; he gave them bread from heaven.

²⁵They ate the food of angels! God gave them all they could hold.

²⁶He released the east wind in the heavens and guided the south wind by his mighty power.

²⁷He rained down meat as thick as dust— birds as plentiful as the sand on the seashore!

²⁸He caused the birds to fall within their camp and all around their tents.

²⁹The people ate their fill. He gave them what they craved.

²²...they did not believe in God

and did not trust his saving power...

⁵⁶...Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies,⁵⁷ but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers;

-How do these verses in 2 Corinthians and Hebrews give us a clue about hardening your heart too many times to the gospel?

-Why would someone be unable to repent?

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 “Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

Hebrews 4:7 “again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Scholar’s Note: “It is tempting to conclude that what is being said here is that people who are rejecting Christ cannot be saved because they are not repenting... Instead, the point is that the people described here are not able to repent and return to faith in Jesus unto salvation because of the hardening effect of their apostasy.”⁹

Picture and Ponder: “Will genuine repentance be rejected by God? ...God does not reject genuine repentance.”¹⁰

12. When Jesus’ disciples were astonished that Jesus said it was hard for a rich man to be saved, they asked, “who then can be saved?”
Matthew 19:26 says, “But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” How does this give us hope for those who have walked away from God?

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses and answer the question:

- How does this parable help explain verses 7-8 and what it has to do with apostasy?

Matthew 13:18-23 ¹⁸*Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives*

it with joy,²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

John 15:4-6 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”

Day 5- Hebrews 6:9-12

13. Even though they have been dull of hearing, what encouragement does the author give them in verse 9?

14. What fruit or *things that belong to salvation* (v.9) are apparent in these believers according to verse 10?

Picture and Ponder: “What God rewards is only what He Himself hath wrought in us: it is the Father’s recognition of the Spirit’s fruit.”¹¹

15. What is the motivation we see for serving and caring for others in verse 10?

16. Besides being just, what else does it say about God that he will not overlook or forget the work we do and the love we show for him?

17. What word in verse 12 is the opposite of *earnest* in verse 11? To experience the full assurance of hope, we should be earnest in our faith and not _____.

Scholar's Note: "The word *hope* (elpis) occurs five times in the book of Hebrews." In most cases it refers to "an objective future reality." In 6:11 however, "it is more probable that hope refers to the subjective experience of hoping." This kind of hoping is not wishful thinking, but is "hope characterized by full assurance," it is "certainty of hope."¹²



Throughout our study of Hebrews so far we have been challenged with truths that create some tension when taken together. We have seen that persevering in faith to the end is the evidence that we are genuinely saved, but it is not if we persevere to the end *then* we will be saved. We have also seen that God is faithful, he will keep us from falling but admonished to take care that you don't fall away. We are told to rest in God but not to be sluggish or lazy. We are supposed to have hope and full assurance and yet at the same time to tremble at the warnings Hebrews gives us. This stuff is definitely meat, not milk!

Our only hope of having the *full assurance of hope* to the end is to cling to Jesus everyday! Our experience of sure hope or the joyful feeling that we are genuinely his, comes to us as we earnestly abide in Jesus each day enjoying our growing affection for him, and seeing the fruit that his Spirit produces as we earnestly abide.

- ❖ At this point in your spiritual life are you earnest or sluggish?
- ❖ What in your spiritual life are you sluggish about?

- ❖ How does focusing on Jesus and the superiority of his work change how we think about being earnest in our faith?

- ❖ How does being aware of the danger of apostasy help you?

18. Verse 12 tells us that through faith and patience we inherit the promises of God. Here in Hebrews “faith” means the ability to take hold of the unseen and assume the promises of future blessings as our own.”¹³ What promise of future blessing do you need to take hold of today?

Picture and Ponder: ...The major emphasis here in Hebrews is on imitating the posture of soul which sees the unseen and makes God’s promises to us our own by anticipation.”¹⁴

One Thing: Look back over this week’s study. Pick one thing that God was stirring in your heart, convicting you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?

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- ¹ Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 83). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.
- ² Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (Vol. 1): An Anchor for the Soul: 001 (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 2405-2406). Crossway. Kindle Edition.
- ³ Richard D. Phillips. Hebrews (Reformed Expository Commentary) (Kindle Location 2268). Kindle Edition.
- ⁴ Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 83). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.
- ⁵ Richard D. Phillips. Hebrews (Reformed Expository Commentary) (Kindle Location 2309). Kindle Edition.
- ⁶ Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 88). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.
- ⁷ MacArthur, John F.. Hebrews (MacArthur Bible Studies) (p. 44). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.
- ⁸ Bible Dictionary, Zondervan's Understand the Bible Reference Series, Douglas, J.D. Revising Editor, Tenney, Merrill C. General Editor. Zondervan 1987
- ⁹ Richard D. Phillips. Hebrews (Reformed Expository Commentary) (Kindle Locations 2447-2449). Kindle Edition.
- ¹⁰ Piper, John. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/when-is-saving-repentance-impossible>
- ¹¹ Pink, Arthur W.. An Exposition of Hebrews (Arthur Pink Collection Book 21) (Kindle Locations 6297-6298). Priscilla Publishing. Kindle Edition.
- ¹² Piper, John. Article, Jan. 1, 2007 <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-use-of-hope-in-hebrews>
- ¹³ Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (Vol. 1): An Anchor for the Soul: 001 (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 2798-2799). Crossway. Kindle Edition.
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