

Basic Christianity - Spiritual Maturity | Hebrews

5:11-6:3 | 7/17/16

- Introduction
 - Today we are going to take a look at the importance of spiritual maturity.
 - Sometimes people think that it's good enough that they know the absolute basics about being a Christian and leave it at that, with no desire to have a deeper relationship with God or to learn more about what God desires from them.
 - Some look at being a Christian as simply a check box, that yes I believe so I'm saved and going to heaven. Then they choose to live their lives anyway they please.
 - They look for just enough to get by instead of desiring spiritual maturity.
 - If you look at spiritual maturity as a class you have those that do just enough to pass the class with a D-, while there are those that strive for an A+.
 - We are going to look at why it is important that we do desire to strive for spiritual maturity.
 - There are several benefits to us personally and also for others. Because if we strive to be spiritually mature we will be able to do what God has called us to do more effectively.
 - It also keeps us in a closer relationship with God.
 - If one is very spiritually immature, it could be easier for them to drift away from God.
 - But if they are mature and firmly rooted this isn't likely to happen.
- The problem of spiritual immaturity | Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1-3
 - **Read Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1-3**
 - The Hebrew writer was concerned about the spiritual maturity of his listeners.
 - He was genuinely concerned for them knowing how important it is for all Christians.
 - He wanted them to be able to move on from the foundations to learn more about the deeper truths about Christ and to have a closer relationship with Him.
 - He was needing to talk to them about Jesus' Melchizedek priesthood which is a difficult subject.
 - But he shows us and also by Peter and Paul in other passages how important our spiritual maturity really is.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1
 - "Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as babies in Christ."
 - God has called Christians to embrace His Spirit, to obey Him, to live our lives by applying His truths.
 - But if we never grow it is very difficult to do this.
 - **His audience were not "new" Christians because he had expected them to become teachers.**
 - We move on but yet we do not abandon the foundational truths, because we cannot stand without them.
 - While he is concerned about maturity he is not telling us to abandon our foundation.
 - As he speaks of moving on this is not to discount them of course because without the foundation of repentance and faith we have nothing.
 - Repentance, Faith, resurrection and eternal judgment

- **However, there is a time when we fully understand these things that we need to move on to other spiritual truths that God wants us to learn.**
 - The growth does not simply end the day we become saved, in fact it is only just the beginning.
 - To be a Christian is a lifelong process where we are continually growing in our faith and have a closer relationship to God.
- If we are “lazy” or “dull in hearing” in our spiritual walk we will not be able to comprehend God’s truths that He desires to teach us.
 - **When Christians become lazy in their spiritual walk they are not open to learning the truths that God desires for them to learn.**
 - This is no different than if you were taking a class for some subject of study you were interested in.
 - You took the class to learn, but if you didn’t put any time into it or you were dull in hearing to the teachings how can you learn, how can you grow?
 - **Just because you aced preschool doesn’t mean you’re done and you don’t need to learn anything else!**
 - **We must guard ourselves from spiritual laziness and simply taking God’s truth for granted. That we know enough to get by and that’s OK.**
 - The entire bible is God’s inspired Word to us. While we certainly don’t have to understand everything to be saved, the benefits to learning as much as we can and applying it to our lives, will strengthen our faith and we will grow in our spiritual maturity.
 - **If a few verses from the Bible can lead us to saving faith and a relationship with Christ, why would we not want to see what the rest of Scripture can do for us?**
 - **Why would we not want a closer relationship with our creator?**
 - **What are some reasons that cause Christians to refrain from growing spiritually?**
- Signs and effects of spiritual immaturity
 - Hebrews 5:13
 - “Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant.
 - **The Christian who remains spiritually immature is inexperienced, meaning the Christian has not yet been able to apply the righteousness of God in their lives.**
 - The spiritually mature Christian will apply God’s truths to all aspects of their life.
 - The Christian who is immature will have several signs.
 - The spiritually immature Christian, will look like the unbelievers in the world.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3
 - **“Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as babies in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. In fact, you are still not ready, because you are still fleshly. For since there is envy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and living like unbelievers?”**
 - That had to have hit Paul’s listeners to the core, Paul made it clear that they being Christians didn’t look any different than the unbelievers in the world.

- One of the things about living a Christian life is that we are SUPPOSED to be different, we will look different. A Christian will not be conformed to the world.
 - **If we look no different than the world this is a major flag that we are spiritually immature.**
- This doesn't mean that we have to be perfect and that we will never sin, but a Christian will strive to obey God and to live their lives in obedience to His commands.
 - **This is counter to our culture!**
- Christians are to be pure and faultless so that we will stand out from the rest of the world.
 - Philippians 2:15
 - "So that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world."
 - How can we "shine" if we don't look any different?
- The spiritually immature Christian will not uphold biblical values in the face of opposition and persecution.
 - The Bible more and more goes against the grain of society especially on many social issues.
 - The Christian is called to stand firm on God's truths, but one that is immature in the face of opposition will follow the worldly perspective or popular opinion.
 - Especially if following Christian values and truths would be looked down upon from a worldly perspective.
 - Abortion, sexual immorality and marriage etc.,
 - **The spiritually mature Christian will stand counter to the world and will uphold biblical values in the face of opposition and persecution.**
 - The mature Christian will know that the Scriptures have the final authority over man.
 - That regardless of popular public opinion or even the law of the land that the Bible shows us absolute truth and what is right and what is wrong.
 - A mature Christian will stand their ground even in the face of opposition from the world.
 - The mature Christian will not compromise their beliefs so that they can "fit in" with the world.
- The spiritually immature Christian will not devote much time to prayer, studying God's Word or striving to be around other believers.
 - The one who is immature does not see the need to be in frequent correspondence with God. They will pray very infrequently.
 - **The immature Christian will go to God in their time of need when life is hard.**
 - **But the immature Christian when life is seemingly going OK will neglect their relationship.**
 - Prayer is only used when the Christian "needs" something.
 - The mature Christian strives to have a close relationship with God and frequently prays.

- The mature Christians understands how important it is to have that close relationship. That God is our Heavenly Father and he desires us to come to Him.
 - The mature Christian will pray and go to God for all aspects of their life regardless if they have a need or not.
 - They will rarely study the Bible, let alone read it on their own time. They lack a hunger for God's Word.
 - The spiritually immature Christian will rarely read the Scriptures nor feel that it is all that necessary.
 - Opening their Bible on Sunday morning is sufficient enough and there isn't any need to study throughout the week.
 - They acknowledge that it is good to ready and study but will rarely if ever make time to do it.
 - **Scripture is not a priority.**
 - The mature Christian makes reading and studying Gods' Word a priority in their life.
 - They have a hunger to be in the Scriptures and to study God's truths.
 - The mature Christian knows that God will speak through His Word and seek Him in His Word.
 - They lack the desire or passion to be around other believers by attending church or small group.
 - The spiritually immature Christian will attend church out of obligation, not because they really want to.
 - There is little to no desires for Small group bible study, Sunday School, Wednesday nights, revival and other special events.
 - They would prefer to socialize with the unbelievers in the world and their activities as opposed to their fellow Christians.
 - The mature Christian attends church and small groups because they want to.
 - The mature Christian knows that they get fed by coming to church and hearing the Word of God.
 - They know how important it is to have fellowship with other believers to learn and to grow.
- The spiritually immature Christian will have a greater struggle during times of trials or sufferings.
 - All Christians regardless of your level of spiritual maturity will go through a hard time. This could be divine, self-inflicted or Satan initiated.
 - However, the Christian who is immature will have a much more difficult time.
 - They will lack the strong faith to completely give their situation over to God.
 - A spiritually mature Christian understands that there will be difficult times and that all situations can be given to God.
 - But one who is immature will be quicker to attempt to try and solve their problem on their own without God.
 - They may question God's ability to help them.
 - One who is spiritually mature knows that God can do anything and He has the ability to help us in any circumstance.

- But one who is immature may question God’s ability to help them during a difficult time.
 - **What do you see as the greatest sign or negative effect of spiritual immaturity?**
 - **Why do you think that a spiritually immature Christian would have a harder time than one that is more mature during a trial or time of suffering?**
 - Situation:
 - A man and his wife are going through difficult times. They are experiencing financial issues, health problems and dealing with the loss of a loved one.
 - Let’s look at this couple from 2 different levels of spiritual maturity.
 - Compare the extremes of immaturity and mature.
 - **I want to know what the likely responses will be from this couple based on their level of spiritual maturity.**
- Spiritual maturity in action.
 - Spiritual maturity has a lot to do with obedience, trust and action
 - It is not simply “bible knowledge”.
 - Just because you are knowledgeable about the Bible does not necessarily mean that you are spiritually mature.
 - **It is how we apply God’s truths.**
 - Faith in God in all aspects of our lives that goes beyond salvation.
 - To choose to be obedient and live it daily.
 - Desire to find our calling, to seek God’s will for our lives.
 - Will trust God in everything regardless of the circumstance.
 - When life is hard they lean on God instead of turning away.
 - The spiritually mature has discernment
 - Hebrews 5:14
 - “But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.”
 - Philippians 1:9-11
 - “And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, so that you can approve the things that are superior and can be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.”
 - The one who has been obedient to God, who embraces His Holy Spirit and studies His Word will grow spiritually.
 - This Godly wisdom that is gained by the Christian provides them with spiritual discernment.
 - The Christian will embrace the Spirit of God in all of their decisions, actions and circumstances.
 - The Christian will allow God’s wisdom and not humanly wisdom to rein.
 - We are to be teachers of God’s Word.
 - According to Scripture all believers are to be teachers of God’s Word.
 - This does not mean that God expects everyone to teach in a formal setting, but God does expect for us to know enough about Him and His Word that we can teach it to others.
 - A new convert is not expected to be teaching from day 1, but that is something that all should strive for.
 - To be a teacher of God’s Word is how we carry out the Great Commission.

- Our spiritual maturity does not just affect ourselves, but it will affect everyone around us.
- If we do not grow in our spiritual maturity it makes it more difficult to carry out the Great Commission.
- Matthew 28:18-20
 - “Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you**. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- We are to make disciples and to teach them everything that God has commanded.
 - Sometimes we get so caught up on leading people to Christ that once we get them there we say OK that one is now saved and we move on.
 - This however is not COMPLETING the commission as Jesus commanded.
 - **Yes, the most important and critical thing we share first is the elementary Gospel for salvation that is absolutely foundational.**
 - But we must not stop there, we must teach them the Scriptures so that they can be a disciple.
 - We must do everything we can to help those baby Christians to also grow in spiritual maturity, to show them what it means to live the Christian life and what God desires from us.
 - **It is our responsibility to do this.**
- Christians should be mentors to other believers.
 - Christians should strive to be more spiritually mature so that they can be a mentor to those who are not yet mature themselves.
 - Those who are spiritually mature must seek and take up those whom they can help guide and teach His Word so that they too can become spiritually mature.
- **Knowing that we are supposed to be teachers, does this affect your view on your spiritual maturity?**