

**I. Introduction and review.**

**II. Your immaturity and dullness is shameful. 5:11-14**

- A. It is hard to explain important doctrinal truth to people like you. v. 11**
1. There is much more you need to know about Christ's Melchizidekian high priesthood. v. 11a 7:1-10:18
  2. The problem is not:
    - a. The complexity of the subject matter.
    - b. The skill of the teacher/preacher.
    - c. Your lack of intellectual ability.
  3. Our failure to communicate is due to the dullness of your hearing. v. 11b 6:12 1:1f 2:1 3:7-8 4:2 5:9 10:25 Jer. 6:10 Ezek. 12:2 Zech. 7:11f
  4. The consequences of such spiritual dullness are severe. 6:4f Luke 8:18
  5. Yet there is hope for a cure. 6:1,12
- B. While you ought to be mature, you have regressed to spiritual infancy. v. 12-13**
1. You have been believers for a long time. v. 12a 6:10 10:32-34 Acts 2:10 Rom. 1:8
  2. You ought, by now, to be able to teach others. v. 12b 3:13 Ro. 15:14 Titus 2:3-5
  3. You haven't merely failed to make progress. You have gone backwards.
  4. You need to be re-taught your spiritual ABCs. v. 12c Acts 7:38 Rom. 3:2
  5. You require spiritual milk and cannot stomach solid food. v. 12d-13 I Co. 3:1-2
  6. How can this happen? 5:14
- C. Those who are mature can handle solid food because they are well trained. v. 14**
1. God wants you to be mature in faith. v. 14a 6:1 I Co. 2:6 Eph. 4:13-14 Co. 1:28
  2. You need to go into spiritual training: diet and exercise. 12:11 I Ti. 4:7
  3. Growth takes place as you hear, believe, and obey the Word. Ro. 12:2 Ps. 1:2
  4. Then you will enjoy the meat of sound doctrine.
  5. You also will be discerning.

**III. It is time for you to grow up. 6:1-3**

- A. You need to press on to maturity. v. 1**
1. After rebuking them, our author calls them to remedy the situation.
  2. Instead of giving in to their infantile appetites he pushes them on to maturity.
- B. Build on the foundation which has already been laid. v. 1b-2**
1. What is the significance of these six foundational truths? v. 1b-2 5:12-13
    - a. Are these basic elements of Judaism which have been left behind?
    - b. Is this a summary of the apostolic teaching about Christ? Acts 2:42
    - c. Or are these Old Covenant truths which are fulfilled in Christ?
  2. These truths are in three pairs.
  3. Our inward response to God's message: *Repentance from dead works and faith toward God.* v. 1b 9:14 11:6 4:2 6:12 10:22 Mt. 3:7f 4:17 Acts 17:30 2:38 Ge. 15:6
  4. Outward ceremonial components of the life of faith: *Instruction about washings and laying on of hands.* v. 2a 9:9-14 1:3 Ezek. 36:25 Isa. 44:3 Nu. 19:9 Lev. 4
  5. The future: *The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.* v. 2b 9:27 Job 19:26 Jo. 5:22,27-29 11:25-26 Acts 23:8 I Co. 15 Mt. 25:31f Rev. 20:11f

- C. You will only mature only if God permits it. v. 3
1. Maturity is your duty: You are responsible to strive to faithfully and obediently hear God's Word. v. 1a 4:11 Phil. 2:12
  2. Maturity is God's gift: You can only succeed by God's sovereign grace. 13:20-21 Phil. 2:13 1:6 John 6:44 15:5 Js. 4:13-15
  3. We who proclaim God's Word must leave the results to God. I Cor. 3:7
  4. There are some who are beyond helping. 6:4-8

#### IV. Concluding applications.

- A. This text describes the immature spiritual condition of the contemporary church.
1. Deep doctrinal biblical exposition is frowned upon.
  2. Preaching God's Word is no longer central in the life of the church. II Ti. 4:1-3
  3. Authoritative proclamation is offensive in our pluralistic postmodern age. John 14:6 Acts 4:12
  4. Some have shortened or eliminated the sermon from worship. How long should the sermon be? Acts 20:7
  5. The wrong things are valued in those who lead the churches.
  6. Worship has become man-centered entertainment.
  7. Professing Christians are immature and lacking discernment. Eph. 4:14
  8. The church is regressing.
- B. We, too, need to beware of spiritual regression.
1. Dullness can happen to people who have been believers for a long time.
  2. It is possible to sit under good teaching and to be unchanged by it.
  3. We should all be mature spiritual carnivores (meat-eaters).

#### Discussion questions

1. Why was it hard for the author of Hebrews to explain the doctrine of Christ's high priesthood to his readers?
2. Had they always been dull of hearing?
3. What happened to them?
4. How does someone become a mature believer - able to enjoy spiritual meat?
5. What solution does the author propose to rescue his readers from their spiritual infancy?
6. What is the significance of the foundational truths he lists? v. 1b-2
7. Do you understand those basic doctrines and how they point to Christ?
8. Is it possible for a determined teacher to bring spiritual babes to maturity?
9. Can we grow up spiritually by our own efforts?
10. How would you evaluate the spiritual maturity of the evangelical church in America?