

**Lesson One**

**Introduction**

**Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1-6 (NLT)**

**11**There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are **spiritually dull and don’t seem to listen.** **12**You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again **the basic things about God’s word.** You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. **13**For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn’t know how to do what is right. **14**Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

**6**So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don’t need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. **2**You don’t need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. **3**And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.

**4**For it is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, **5**who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come— **6**and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people back to repentance; by rejecting the Son of God, they themselves are nailing him to the cross once again and holding him up to public shame.

In the past, we have talked about who may have written the letter to the Hebrews. It is popular to come up with an obscure guess since no one knows for sure, who actually wrote it. I have heard people say the author may have been Titus, Timothy and even Priscilla.

Some Bible scholars believe that the letter to the Hebrews and the letter to the Galatians were written together and later separated.

Personally, I believe the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Hebrews and during this teaching; I will refer to Paul as the author.

Paul was teaching about how Jesus is our High Priest. He goes on to say that there were many other things he would like to teach about that but the people were not able to understand it because they had become **“spiritually dull and don’t seem to listen.”** The King James Version of the Bible says they had become **“dull of hearing.”**

**Hebrews 5:12-14 (ESV)**

**12**For though by this time **you ought to be teachers**, you need someone to **teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God**. You need milk, not solid food, **13**for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. **14**But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

*You have been professed Christians long enough to be teachers, but because of your laziness and dullness in grasping truth, you must be taught a second time the first simple doctrines of Christ. You have not grown at all. You are still unweaned babies (*[*1Cor. 3:2*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Co+3%3A2)*;* [*1Pet. 2:2*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Pe+2%3A2)*). Milk-feeding was a metaphor used by many writers, both sacred and profane, to express the first principles of religion and science. They applied sucking to learning; infant to every beginner; and meat to those who had learned the first principles of truth.*

Dake's Annotated Reference Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments of the Authorized or King James Version Text.

**1 Corinthians 3:1, 2 (NLT)**

Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn’t talk to you as I would to **spiritual people** **(those who are in the Spirit)**. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were **infants in Christ.** **2**I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren’t ready for anything stronger. And you still aren’t ready,

Paul was not complementing the Corinthians. As you read the first letter to the church at Corinth, it is easy to see that they were very spiritually immature. **They were VERY RELIGIOUS but NOT SPIRITUAL**.

Not only did Paul have trouble with believers who were lackadaisical in their Christian walk. Peter had trouble too. I can guarantee you, ANY pastor or even Sunday School teacher has the same problem.

**1 Peter 2:1-3 (NLT)**

So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. **2**Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, **3**now that you have had a taste of the Lord’s kindness.

**As a teacher of God’s Word, it is my desire that all of you hunger and thirst for God’s Word! Why? Because the Word of God is alive and real and it will change your life!**

There was a particular evening in my life when I had a visitation from the Lord. The Lord sat down beside me at my kitchen table and began to reveal His call on my life. He led me from scripture to scripture showing me what I am called to do. One of the things He spoke to me was, **“Build foundations in the peoples’ lives so that they may be strong and stand and not fall!”**

One of the many scriptures the Lord revealed to me about my calling in life was:

**1 Timothy 4:16 (NASB)**

Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

The Lord gave me the job to make sure I teach foundational things and to make sure those I teach get it! I take all of this very seriously! The Bible tells us that the teachers will be judged more severely (James 3:1).

**It is my job, as your Life Group leader, is to make sure I teach you good, solid Biblical foundations. Then, it is your job to make sure you have a sure foundation built in your spiritual life by applying what you are taught.**

**Matthew 7:24-27 (NLT)**

**24**“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. **25**Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. **26**But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. **27**When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

Any time a huge sky scraper is built, it takes many months to prepare the foundation for that large building.

If a large building were built without a foundation, it would crumble and fall long before the construction was completed.

Our lives are the same way. The Lord wants to build a strong foundation in our lives before the rest of our spiritual life is completed. Even after a building is completed, **it is important to continue to undergird that building and make sure the foundation stays strong!** It is important for us to continue to judge ourselves, or take a look at how we are doing, to make sure we are staying within those foundations that are taught in the Bible.

**1 Corinthians 11:31 (KJV)**
31  For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

What happens though, in our spiritual lives, many times a foundation is not built or if there is a foundation, it may be very shoddy, not being built with the right teachings. That is not always the fault of the immature Christian. Many times, we have pastors that fill pulpits who are not even born again or, they themselves, are spiritual infants who never had a strong Biblical foundation built in their lives! Because of this, we see “tradition” passed down through the church that is nowhere near what the Bible really teaches. **The result of tradition being passed down through the church is a church with no power whatsoever.**

**Mark 7:13 (ESV)**

Thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.

Christians have come to the place, because of the traditions of men which make the Word of God of no effect, to believe that the gifts of the Spirit are no longer in operation. They do not believe that it is God’s will to heal. In fact, they have no idea what God’s will truly is about these matters. That is why you hear them praying, “Lord if it is your will” where they SHOULD know what God’s will is in most circumstances.

**I don’t know about you but I do not want to be part of a powerless church! We have a powerful, mighty God who loves us and wants us to have all good things in this life!**

Just recently, we’ve seen God move mightily in your lives. Penny Futch was told that she was going blind. Well, we didn’t accept that and we asked God to heal that situation and He did! We prayed for Gale Burke after she had received a bad report from her doctor. The next time she went, she received a good report! That is OUR GOD! We should never give any place to doubt when we KNOW our Father!

Traditions make the “Word of God void.” What did Isaiah say about the Word of God?

**Isaiah 55:10, 11 (NLT)**

"The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. 11It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

Look what happens when the rain the snow fall. They produce two things; **seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry**!

If the farmer never got seed when he planted and harvested, everyone would starve to death!

When seed is watered, it not only produces more seed but it produces an abundance and through that, the hungry are fed!

God’s Word **ALWAYS PRODUCES FRUIT!**

**Does that mean that when we pray, sometimes God will answer our prayers and other times He won’t? NO! His Word ALWAYS PRODUCES FRUIT and I cannot find any scriptures that say God will not answer our prayers if we are praying according to His will!!!**

**It is very easy to see where people are in their spiritual growth. I’ve heard people say that they believe God heals but that sometimes God puts sickness on people or that it may be God’s will for someone to be sick because God is getting some kind of glory from that. That thinking comes from MAN’S TRADITION! Someone prayed for healing at some point in the past and they didn’t see the person who was prayed for get healed so they decided there can’t be anything wrong with them so they deduced that God doesn’t heal anymore or that He put that sickness on that person. We get all kinds of weird ideas because we try to make God’s Word fit our experience instead of taking God’s Word for exactly what it says!**

**As we go through this study, I want to encourage you to forget everything you have learned in the past. Forget what this pastor taught or what that evangelist taught. Let’s look at what God’s Word says and believe it instead of what any man has to say!**

Look at what Paul said to the Hebrews again in Hebrews chapter 6.

**Hebrews 6:1, 2 (NLT)**

1So **let us stop** going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and **become mature in our understanding**. Surely we don’t need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. **2**You don’t need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Once I know that all of you understand all of the basic doctrines of Christ, we will be able to go one. This is what Paul was saying to the Hebrews.

One day, I was meditating on the Word of God and I began to wonder what the difference is between the **“milk and the meat”** of the Word of God.

The difference comes down to our **level of perception** of the Word or how deeply we understand it. No matter how many times you read **John 3:16**, for example, it says the same thing. **It can be milk or it can be meat to the believer.** You may notice how you will be reading the Word of God and all of a sudden, a passage of scripture will “drop” into your spirit. That is when it becomes meat to you.

At all times, we will have some of the Word that will be milk to us and parts of it that will be meat. I still enjoy a glass of cold milk with my food but I can eat meat anytime I wish. If you give a piece of steak to a small baby, they will choke on it. This is the way spiritual babies are; they are not ready for the meat because of one of two reasons. The first is that they are very young Christians. Maybe they haven’t been born again very long and it is expected that the Word of God will be milk to them. The second reason is because they haven’t paid attention when they have been taught the Word and they haven’t studied it for themselves. This is a sad state of affairs!

There are Christians that have been saved for many years yet, they are still spiritual babies. Some of them can even be pastors of churches or deacons. Those positions do not mean that they are spiritually mature!

We saw that Isaiah said:

**Isaiah 55:11**

11It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it **always produces fruit**. It **will accomplish all I want it to**, and it **will prosper everywhere I send it**.

**The Word**

1. **Always PRODUCES fruit (NOT just sometimes)**
2. **ACCOMPLISHES ALL that God wants it to, ALWAYS**
3. **PROSPERS everywhere God sends it, ALWAYS**

**Produce** – to bring into existence; give rise to; cause.

**Accomplish** – To bring to its goal or conclusion; carry out; perform; finish.

**Prosper** – to be successful or fortunate, especially in financial respects; thrive; flourish.

Much of this is dependent upon our faith many times! ALL of God’s promises are conditional!

To be born again, we must believe with our heart and confess with our mouth!

**Romans 10:9 (KJV)**
9  That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)**

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

**Do you believe God’s Word?**

If God says it, in His Word, **WILL YOU BELIEVE IT** even if you don’t understand it or if you have been taught something contrary to what He says?

Will you start living your life like **God’s Word is absolutely true?**

**If you aren’t seeing God move mightily in your life, judge yourself and see what you are missing. It is sure isn’t God’s problem!**

**Numbers 23:19 (KJV)**
19  God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

**THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SCRIPTURE IN THE BIBLE!**

As we go through this study, let’s forget anything we have ever heard taught about the Word of God. Let’s wipe our slate clean and start over with JUST the Word of God, like we are hearing it for the very first time and let’s see what the unadulterated, uncompromised Word of God says!

Let me encourage you to be like the believers in Berea were.

**Acts 17:10-11 (KJV)**
10  And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night (from Thessalonica) unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.
11   These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

**Noble** – Of an exalted moral or mental character or excellence

The believers in Berea were excited to hear the Word of God when Paul and Silas taught them. They received the Word with “all readiness of mind.” This means that they didn’t go there to be confrontational but they listened intently to the Word of God expecting to receive TRUTH from the Word. Then, they searched what scriptures they had, to see if what Paul and Silas were saying was right.

**If I can get you to receive the Word of God with readiness of mind and then get you to study what I have taught you, we have all won, even if you don’t completely agree with me!**

If you disagree with something I teach, make sure that your disagreement is based on God’s Word and not tradition you have been taught. I enjoy a Godly debate when scripture is used and it is done in love. We can all benefit by that type of debate and in the end, we may disagree but we can still walk as brethren.

**In the Essentials, Unity. In the Non-Essentials, Liberty!**

**2 Peter 1:20 (KJV)**
20  Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

We can certainly disagree on scripture and still walk as brethren as long as it is not on ESSENTIAL doctrines.

Paul and Peter disagreed over the importance of circumcision and they had a big council in Jerusalem over the matter. Paul was proven to be right and some other things came out of that council. (Acts 15).

It was agreed that Paul would go to the gentiles with the gospel and Peter would go to the Jews. They also agreed on the following doctrine:

**Acts 15:20 (KJV)**
20  But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

Paul argued that circumcision no longer meant the physical, but a spiritual practice. ([Romans 2:25-29](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Romans&verse=2:25-29&src=NIV)) And in that sense, he wrote: "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised" ([1 Corinthians 7:18](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1%20Corinthians&verse=7:18&src=NIV)) - probably a reference to the practice of [epispasm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epispasm) (foreskin restoration).[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_controversy_in_early_Christianity#cite_note-32)

Later Paul more explicitly denounced the practice, rejecting and condemning those who promoted circumcision to Gentile Christians. Paul warned that the advocates of circumcision were "false brothers".([Gal 2:4](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Gal&verse=2:4&src=NIV)) He accused Galatian Christians who advocated circumcision of turning from the Spirit to the flesh: "Are you so foolish, that, whereas you began in the Spirit, you would now be made perfect by the flesh?" ([Gal 3:3](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Gal&verse=3:3&src=NIV)) He accused [advocates of circumcision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_advocacy) of wanting to make a good showing in the flesh ([Gal 6:12](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Gal&verse=6:12&src=NIV)) and of glorying or boasting of the flesh. ([Gal 3:13](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Gal&verse=3:13&src=NIV)) Some believe Paul wrote the entire [Epistle to the Galatians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Galatians) attacking circumcision and any requirement for the keeping of Jewish law by Christians, saying in chapter five: "Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all." ([Galatians 5:2](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Galatians&verse=5:2&src=NIV))

In a late letter he warned Christians to "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the [concision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concision)," (κατατομή, [*katatomē*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katatom%C4%93))[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_controversy_in_early_Christianity#cite_note-33) saying that Christians were the true circumcision because they worshipped in the [Spirit of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit_%28Christianity%29). ([Phil 3:2-3](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Phil&verse=3:2-3&src=NIV))

[Florentine Bechtel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florentine_Bechtel) notes in the Catholic Encyclopedia (1910): Judaizers:

Paul, on the other hand, not only did not object to the observance of the Mosaic Law, as long as it did not interfere with the [liberty of the Gentiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_liberty), but he conformed to its prescriptions when occasion required ([1 Corinthians 9:20](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=1%20Corinthians&verse=9:20&src=!)). Thus he shortly after circumcised Timothy ([Acts 16:1-3](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Acts&verse=16:1-3&src=!)), and he was in the very act of observing the Mosaic ritual when he was arrested at Jerusalem ([Acts 21:26](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Acts&verse=21:26&src=!)).[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_controversy_in_early_Christianity#cite_note-34)

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