

THE CHRISTIAN AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Hebrews 5:12-14

Dr. Gary G. Dull

INTRO: In my first church in the Washington DC area, I had a family who had a girl whose name was Lee Ann. Lee Ann had some sort of a disease that kept her from developing properly. I came to know her when she was 13 years of age, but she had the physical appearance of a girl much younger than that in that her body was small, she could not speak clearly, she had to be carried everywhere she went, she could not be left alone, and she had to be fed by a bottle. The last I saw her, she was about 16 and in that same condition. Because of the disease, she was very immature for her age. HOW SAD! We often cry over situations like that, but when that same situation occurs in the spiritual whelm, we sort of just pass it off, if we recognize it at all! HOW SAD THAT IS TOO! The reality is, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN SAVED FOR YEARS, BUT THEY HAVE NOT GROWN TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY, AND ARE CONTENT TO STAY SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE! What is wrong with that? What is wrong is that GOD WANTS HIS CHILDREN TO GROW IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND WHEN THE DO NOT, THEY ARE IN SIN AND HE IS DISAPPOINTED! What is your situation? Are you saved? How long have you been saved? Are you growing in spiritual maturity? Those are questions every Christian should consider. Today, we will discuss THE CHRISTIAN AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH!

NOTE: IN THE MIDST OF TEACHING ABOUT THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST, THE WRITER OF HEBREWS BRINGS US TO THE POINT OF REBUKE SAYING, "SOME OF YOU SHOULD BE TEACHERS (SPIRITUALLY MATURE), BUT YOU NEED YET TO BE TAUGHT (SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE)." WHY IS THAT MESSAGE BROUGHT OUT AT THIS POINT? BECAUSE IF WE ARE TO TRULY UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST, WE MUST BE SPIRITUALLY MATURE!

NOTE: THE TEXT REBUKES BY INTRODUCING A SERIES OF TWO CONCEPTS.

I. TWO TYPES OF CHRISTIANS

A. The Users of Milk Vss. 12,13

NOTE: MILK = THE VERY SHALLOW ASPECTS OF THE WORD OF GOD!

1. The Condition

- a. They are Spiritual Babes who have not grown in Christ.
- b. They are Spiritually Unskilled in living for the Lord.
- c. They are Spiritually Dull in having their spiritual senses unexercised.
- d. They are Spiritually Incorrect in that they ought to be teachers.
- e. They are Spiritually Ignorant in that they do not understand spiritual truth.

2. The Consequence

-They are INADEQUATE in the use of their spiritual senses!

- a. We have five NATURAL senses: Hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and feeling.
- b. We have five SPIRITUAL senses that compare to the PHYSICAL senses.

- 1) Hearing that equals FAITH.
- 2) Seeing that equals FRUITFULNESS.
- 3) Smelling that equals DISCERNMENT.
- 4) Tasting that equals ENGRAFTING.
- 5) Feeling that equals DOING.

NOTE: THE SPIRITUAL BABES, USERS OF MILK, ARE VERY LIMITED OR NOT FUNCTIONING IN THE PRACTICE OF THEIR SPIRITUAL SENSES. THAT IS WHY THEY CAN JUSTIFY SINFUL ACTIONS IN THEIR LIVES!

3. The Concern

-THAT THEY WILL REMAIN SPIRITUAL BABES....THAT IS VERY SAD!

B. The Users of Meat Vs. 14

NOTE: MEAT = THE VERY DEEP ASPECTS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

1. The Condition

- a. They are Spiritually of Full Age who have grown in Christ.
- b. They are Spiritually Skilled in living for the Lord.
- c. They are Spiritually Sharp in having their spiritual senses developed.
- d. They are Spiritually Correct in that they are teaching others.
- e. They are Spiritually Intelligent in that they understand spiritual truth.

2. The Consequence

-THEY ARE VERY ADEQUATE IN THE EXERCISING OF THEIR SPIRITUAL SENSES.

- a. Hearing equals FAITH and they have it!
- b. Seeing equals FRUITFULNESS and they have it!
- c. Smelling equals DISCERNMENT and they have it!
- d. Tasting equals ENGRAFTING and they do it!
- e. Feeling equals DOING and they do it!

NOTE: THE SPIRITUAL ADULTS, USERS OF MEAT, ARE VERY PRODUCTIVE AND FUNCTION IN THE PRACTICE OF THEIR SPIRITUAL SENSES...THAT IS THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO FLEE SIN WITH THE RISE OF TEMPTATION.

3. The Concern

-THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND NOT FALL BACK...THAT WOULD BE SAD!

ILLUSTRATION:

APPLICATION: WHAT TYPE OF CHRISTIAN ARE YOU?

II. TWO TYPES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A. Learning (Developing a knowledge of God and His Word).

1. Knowing the Bible

- a. It's Order: The Books of the Bible.
- b. It's Major Themes: Divine Glorification, Salvation, Separation, Proclamation, Individual Glorification.
- c. It's Content:: Specific teaching of life's issues.

2. Knowing God (Beyond Salvation)

- a. Who He Is.
- b. What He Expects.
- c. What He has Promised.

d. How He Rewards.

B. Living (Developing a life style that pleases God).

1. A life of Godly Integrity
2. A life of Godly Character
3. A life of Godly Sanctification
4. A life of Godly Ministry

ILLUSTRATION:

APPLICATION: ARE YOU GROWING OR DORMANT IN YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE?

III. TWO TYPES OF RESPONSES

A. The Choice to Remain a Babe in Christ

1. By doing nothing to grow.
2. By avoiding the study of the Bible.
3. By avoiding Christian fellowship.
4. By avoiding a life of prayer.
5. By following sin.

B. The Choice to Grow to Spiritual Adulthood in Christ

1. By making an effort to grow through yielding to the Holy Spirit daily.
2. By spending quality time in the Bible.
3. By seeking Christian fellowship.
4. By developing a life of prayer.
5. By fleeing sin.

ILLUSTRATION:

APPLICATION: WHAT CHOICE WILL YOU MAKE?

LESSON: IT IS THE DESIRE OF GOD THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN GROWS TO MATURITY! BUT EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST MAKE THAT DECISION FOR HIMSELF. A CHOICE NOT TO GROW IS A CHOICE TO SIN! A CHOICE TO GROW IS A CHOICE OF OBEDIENCE! WHICH WILL IT BE FOR YOU?