

## IF GOD PERMIT

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Robert P. Myers

**Heb. 5:5** So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

**Heb. 5:11-14** Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. **12** For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. **13** For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. **14** But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

**Heb. 6:1-3** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, **2** Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **3** And this will we do, if God permit.

Hebrew Christians probably knew more about the bible than any other culture of Christians of the first century. They had for the most part all been schooled in the Old Testament and bible study was a family affair where dads catechized their children and regularly participated in religious ceremonies and observances taken right out of the Old Testament history of the Jews (seventh day sabbaths, new moons, feasts of tabernacle, passover and pentecost to name a few). These people knew the bible of that day. Yet the writer of Hebrews in his letter to them upbraids them for not being ready for deeper things of God (v. 12). So it must be said that knowledge of the Bible is never a measure of a persons skill in the proper use of the word.

Notice as the letter goes on what is said about what makes a difference in the use and understanding of the Word of God (**v14**). It is the practice of using the Word of God to get to spiritual adulthood that makes people capable of using the strong meat of the Word. The comparison made here between milk and strong meat being like comparing fundamentals in God's Word with deeper truths is a great way for us to see the concept.

Then we also notice in **V.14** that the effect of using God's Word as a benchmark for our lives is that we get **spiritual exercise** of a kind that fits us for advancing onward and upward in spiritual growth.

Notice that the exercise results in a refined kind of perception; **discerning both good and evil**. I think one of the most important aspects of being a true witness for the holiness of God is to learn to discern both good and evil. I believe that God was very concerned that these Hebrew Christians learn to do it. I believe He has not changed in His concern for believers throughout this age. Without this discernment we will be much like the Hebrew Christians. We will lack the broadness of understanding to get free from the things in our own society that act like a ball and chain to hold us to things that are not Christ.

The Hebrews were greatly influenced by their national religion and based on the tenor of the letter to them, had trouble with the doctrine of perseverance of the saints and God's ability to keep them by His power. They apparently had other problems with gospel grace and primarily because they were unable to sift the good out from the evil in their cultural practices and thoughts. The writer points them to use of God's Word as a way to get skillful in this (v.14 - "by reason of use" - notice his exhortation is not about simply reading the Word but "use" of the Word).

I. Looking further in **Ch. 6., v.1**. We will notice that the Hebrew Christians had not totally ignored learning Christian doctrine.

❖ Look at the doctrines named and notice that they are called "principles" or chief **starting points**, and "foundation" of the Christian faith. This is like talking about laying the first footer of a house, or putting down the first few foundation stones upon which the house is to be set.

❖ There's nothing wrong with the foundation doctrines of the Christian faith. We need to learn them and learn them well.

- We need to know all about **repentance from dead works**; what it really is, how it goes, what brings it about, what happens to a person when it occurs
- We need to know about **faith toward God**; what it really is, how it originates, what it does to the person who receives it, how it affects the eternal fate of a human
- We need to know about the doctrine of baptisms; how many kinds there are, the difference between **water baptism** (as the symbolic ordinance which Christ himself submitted to and then commanded his church to administer) and **Holy Spirit baptism** which happened to the Lord's church on the day of Pentecost, the symbolism of the **baptism of the children of Israel with Moses** in the Red Sea, the **baptism of Jesus into his death** and out by way of His resurrection;
- We need to know about the **laying on of hands**; what it is supposed to represent, why it is done, what is the significance of it, how do the participants interact, what part does God have in it

- We need to know about the **resurrection of the dead**; how it will occur, what will bring it about, why is it possible, what will result from it,
- And we need to know about **eternal judgment**; why it must occur, why it must be Christ who conducts it, who will participate, what will occur, what will be the ultimate end of it

II. This brings us to **v. 3**. Why would God **not** permit us to go on unto perfection?

❖ **If we continued to cling to the imperfect** (“not laying again the foundation” implies redoing what has already been done; it suggests not beginning to build the edifice, (which is the structure of faith within ourselves), but rather, settling for the unfinished.

- Let me say here that any part of God's building is not imperfect and that is not what I am talking about. The imperfect I am talking about is the lack of spiritual development that we suffer if we cling to the fundamentals of faith and fail to rise higher in our spiritual learning and development.
- So, how do we rise beyond this spiritually imperfect condition...that is, how do we "go on unto perfection"?
  - **2Peter 3:18** But **grow in grace**, and *in* the **knowledge of our Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and forever. Amen.

- The unmerited favor of God is a fertile field for the planting, tending, and bringing to ripeness a wide array of spiritual produce. It is an environment where the spiritual creature can grow into a mighty testimony for the Lord by taking advantage of all the expansion possible within the benevolent environment of God’s blessings.

❖ So, continuing to **cling to the elementary** by refusing to grow in grace is one route to stunted spiritual growth.

❖ But we don't have to cling to the elementary, because there is a pathway for growing in grace: See **James 4:6** - But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the **humble**.

- If we are looking to grow in grace, let's learn to be humble before the Lord and He will give more grace.

❖ And there is a pathway for growing in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

- **Philip. 3:4-10** Though I might also have **confidence in the flesh**. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: **5** Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; **6** Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. **7** But **what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ**. **8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* **loss for the excellency of**

**the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:** for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, **9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: **10**

**That I may know him,** and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

❖ So, if we through negligence, laziness, or being distracted and busy with the things of the world, to the exclusion of seeking to know Christ, this will cause us to accept and cling to our spiritually undeveloped condition. This is a case where the Lord would **not** let us go on toward perfection in spiritual growth.

III. Now we see in **vv. 20-21** where this going on toward perfection in spiritual growth leads to: **Heb. 13:20-21** Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, **21** Make you **perfect in every good work to do his will,** working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

❖ Point: Obedience in seeking that spiritual growth brings forth actions that please God and glorify Christ

❖ What resources do we have to help us in perfecting our spiritual good works?

➤ **2Tim. 3:16** All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for **doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17** That the man of God may be **perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

➤ **Point:** Scripture used to establish oneself in doctrine, reproof and correction and instruction will develop perfection in a believers good works.

➤ To resist using the word of God as our foundation and reference for the "how to" for working for the Lord is to cling to the imperfect.

IV. Some closing observations about developing our completeness, or perfection, in Christ

❖ **James 3:2** For in many things we offend all. If any man **offend not in word, the same is a perfect** man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.

➤ **Point:** By the judicious use of the tongue we abandon the imperfect and grow toward perfection.

❖ **Col 3:14** And above all these things *put on* **charity,** which is the **bond of perfectness.**

➤ In regard to how to put on charity or love: **1John 2:5** But whoso **keepeth his word,** in him verily is the **love of God perfected:** hereby know we that we are in him.

➤ More about the love of God being perfected in us: **1John 4:16-17** And we

have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and **he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God**, and God in him. **17 Herein is our love made perfect**, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

❖ A last scriptural admonition from Christ: **Mat. 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

➤ This should be our great goal as we go on unto perfection.