(11) About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain --- since you have become dull of hearing! 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, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

(6:1) Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.

(4) For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come --- and then have fallen away --- to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding Him up to contempt.

(7) For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

<u>Think on these things:</u>

1) Vs. 11-12 speak about "time" as a Christian going to church. The writer to Hebrews says he has "much to say" about Melchizedek (v.10), but it is "hard to explain." Why does he say it's so hard; what has happened to these long-believing Christians (v.11)? What is a reasonable expectation for anyone who has been a long-time follower of Jesus, going to church all those years?

   Why is it so hard? _____

   _____

   What is the expectation for long-time Christians? _____

   _____

2) What is a sad situation for some people who have been going to church for a long time (v.12b)?

   _____

   _____

3) What is the perceived problem for people like this, as the author explains in v.13?

   _____

   _____

4) By contrast, there are Christians who are acknowledged as mature. How did they come to be this way (v.14)? If the mature are this way, what can we conclude about the immature (child)? What key characteristic separates the two (v.14b)?

   Mature? _____

   Immature? _____

   Key characteristic? _____

5) Reading vs. 6:1-2, name the Bible teachings that are considered "elementary," meaning every Christian should fully know these things?

   _____

   _____

6) Going on to maturity "we will do if God permits!" (v.3) How did Paul tell Timothy was the way to understanding the deeper things of God in 2 Timothy 3:14-17?

   _____

   _____

7) What is a real concern about Christians who walk away from God (vs.4-6)? Do you think these folks were genuine Christians to begin with, that is, can a Christian walk away from faith in God? What is the way for sinful Christians to behave? See 1 John 1:6-9.

   _____

   _____

8) As for the analogy of rainfall on crops in vs. 7-8, let's consider one of the parables Jesus shared in Matthew 13:24-30. Can you think of an individual you knew at church years ago who seems to have quit the church and is not presently worshipping God? Do you think they will still be saved? Do any of us really know who will or will not be saved? If not, who does? What can you do for them?

   Do you think people can walk away if genuinely saved? _____

   Who really knows who will or will not be saved? _____

   What can you do if you are concerned about him/her/them? _____

   _____

People and situations I want to pray for this week: