

(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.

Think on these things:

- 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? **The people had heard many sermons and teachings over the years, and they have sort of stopped applying the lessons to their lives. Lack of making application equates to being "dull of hearing" (they don't think the messages apply to them anymore...).**

What is the expectation for long-time Christians? **As Christians grow in biblical knowledge and mature in Christ, they ought to become teachers and mentors in the Church.**

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

**They don't fully grasp elementary (basic) Christian teachings from God's Word and must be spoon-fed and given simplistic, milked-down teachings.**

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

**They are unskilled in handling God's righteous Word, ignorant as children and still needing to be taught.**

- 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? **They have practiced discernment, distinguishing right from wrong in culture and life.**

Immature? **They rarely grasp or work out what's right or wrong in behaviors and issues in culture and life.**

Key characteristic? **Mature Christians "practice discernment." They think about what's happening in culture and life, and they apply biblical teachings so that they live righteously.**

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

**1) Not "working" to get to heaven; 2) Believing in Jesus saves us; 3) Rituals and sacraments; 4) Laying on of hands (praying over folks); 5) Resurrection; and 6) Eternal judgment is coming.**

- 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?

**Continue in the faith, learning God's sacred Word to become wiser. To become a "complete" or mature man, fully equipped to do God's good works, understand 2 Timothy 3:16:**

**1) God's Word will teach me God's ways; 2) It will convict and rebuke me for wrong behavior and faulty thinking; 3) It will show me God's correct way to think and act; and 4) it will train and guide me to live righteously in this ungodly world, a testimony (witness) for God to others that He wants to draw to Himself.**

- 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.

**Trying to come back from this "fall" is like showing contempt for Jesus and having Him die again for me. Yes, I believe God always allows choice, even letting believers walk away from Him. Repentant, sorrowful Christians must confess their sins to Jesus to be forgiven.**

- 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? **Yes, even after experiencing the H.S.**

Who really knows who will or will not be saved? **God knows**

What can you do if you are concerned about him/her/them? **Pray for their repentance and restoration. Seek them out if so led by God.**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: