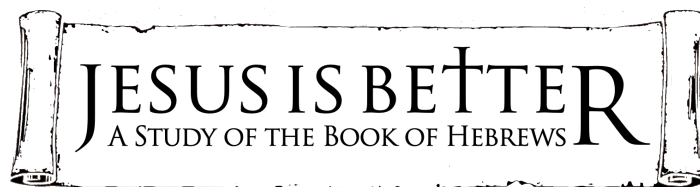


9: **Grow Up or Turn Back?** Hebrews 5:11-6:12

The ancient Hebrew audience faced a dilemma, a dilemma that we face as well. With persecution increasing, would they **GROW UP** and stand their ground or **TURN BACK** and run away? What will WE decide?



teachingnotes

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* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible)

Catch the Context

We left off with Hebrews 5:7-10, reminding us of Jesus final moments in Gethsemane just before being arrested and brutally killed.

Hebrews 5:7-10 During his earthly life, He offered prayers and appeals with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although He was the Son, He learned obedience from what He suffered. After He was perfected, **He became the Source of eternal salvation** for all who obey Him, and He was declared by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus lived a perfect life that He exchanged for our imperfect lives, and Jesus **became the Source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him**. Jesus became the final high priest - the mediator between God and mankind (1 Tim 2:5). More next week on what it means that Jesus was **a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek** (Hebrews 7).

Lazy Living?

Hebrews 5:11-12 We have a great deal to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, since **you have become too lazy to understand**. Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's revelation again. You need milk, not solid food.

It's okay for babies to act like babies, needing others to help them grow. So too, young followers of Jesus need the tender patience and elementary teachings, but they can't stay there. Some of them, like some of us, had **become too lazy to understand** the deeper doctrines.

- **Lazy** was a term used of athletes who become out of shape and sluggish,¹ which is the result when an athlete doesn't continue to train & eat right.
- By now, these Christians **ought to be teachers**, helping young believers to grow up in their faith. But you can't feed others when you can't feed yourself.

One of the greatest needs *in every church*, is **maturing believers who make themselves available to help others grow**.

✓ **Are you a young believer?** Seek others to help you GROW. (Check out staff & deacons phones numbers on last page of notes). Or approach a same-sex Christian who would be willing to help you.

- ② Do you fall into the category of being a person of whom it could be said, **"You need milk, not solid food."**? Instead of digging deeper, you need to brush up on the **basic principles of God's revelation again**. Again, find some more mature believers to help you...they will!

MY NOTES

¹ George Guthrie, Hebrews, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 201.

Hebrews 5:13-14 Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for **the mature**—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.

Are you **maturing** in your faith? What practices prove that you are growing?

1. You should be **ABLE** to **distinguish between good and evil**, you are able to discern what's of God and what's not of God. If you don't know what is appropriate behavior and what is not - you are not maturing like you should.
2. **You should be choosing to DO good instead of evil.**

Those 2 tests should help you to answer this question:

BIG QUESTION: Am I Growing Up or Turning Back?

From highchairs to the 'adult table'

Hebrews 6:1-3 Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and **go on to maturity**, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And we will do this if God permits.

To many of us, *these teachings seem more advanced than elementary*. Each of these Hebrew practices were Old Covenant **shadows and symbols intended to lead the Hebrew people** to find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.

Repentance and Faith in God

The Old Covenant taught **repentance from dead works** and **faith in God**, but the New Covenant proved that one could only truly come to God through faith in Jesus. The Jewish apostles of Jesus didn't tell their Hebrew audiences they were good with God because they had repented of their sins and trusted Yahweh. Instead, *they ALWAYS pointed their Hebrew audience to Jesus*.

Jesus said, "**No one comes to the Father except through Me.**" (Jn 14:6) True repentance of sin and faith in God was only found in Jesus.

X *Jews who turned from sin and put faith in God **without following Jesus had an incomplete faith.***

Ritual Washings

The Hebrew audience had grown up with **ritual washings**, rituals that symbolized being cleansed from sin. As Christians, these people now understood that **Jesus, not water**, is who could completely cleanse.

X As a true Jew, Paul no doubt had participated in the religious **ritual washings**. Yet, when Paul came to understand who Jesus really was, he obeyed the command to "**Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins calling on His Name.**" (Acts 22:16 CSB) Physical baptism didn't save Paul. **Calling on His Name** did! Baptism symbolizes the spiritual reality that Paul died to sin and was made alive in Jesus - hence, washing away his sins.

Laying on Hands

Under the Old Covenant a person who brought their animal sacrifice had to **lay their hands on their substitute** and then slaughter it at the tent of meeting (aka Tabernacle - Lev. 1:4; 3:8, 13).

Leviticus 3:8 He must **lay his hand on the head of his offering**, then slaughter it before the tent of meeting. Aaron's sons will splatter its blood on all sides of the altar.

This demonstrated that sin deserved death, as the punishment was transferred to another. In context, this likely points to the incredible fact and hope that **OUR SINS have been transferred onto our SUBSTITUTE** - our SAVIOR, just as Isaiah foretold 700 years before

Isaiah 53:6 We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD [Yahweh] has **punished Him for the iniquity of us all**.

Resurrection and Eternal Judgment

What about **resurrection and eternal judgment**? Old Covenant teachings mention this great hope, but there is very little focus on it. Here is one Old Covenant passage where there is clarity about what is to come.

Daniel 12:2 Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, and some to disgrace and eternal contempt.

While the Old Covenant has little to say about this future event, the New Covenant is FULL of language looking toward future **resurrection** along with just **judgment** of Jesus that is to come. The New Covenant teachings make it clear that Jesus will resurrect the dead and judge all people.

John 5:28-29 Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come out—those who have done good things, to the **resurrection of life**, but those who have done wicked things, to the **resurrection of condemnation**.

These Hebrew people, facing persecution were tempted to leave the New Covenant truths and go back to the comfort of what they knew best, what wouldn't cost them as much - the Old Covenant shadows and symbols.

The Warning Shot

Hebrews 6:4-6 (CSB) For it is **impossible to renew to repentance** those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, who shared in the Holy Spirit, who tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age, and who have **fallen away**. This is because, to their own harm, **they are recrucifying the Son of God** and holding him up to contempt.

These once looked like true believers, yet have now **fallen away**. *How does a person "fall away"?*

- ✓ The GOOD NEWS: The Scriptures demonstrate that those who trust in and follow Jesus can rest knowing that Jesus will never leave you! Followers of Jesus will face and sometimes fall to temptation, but this doesn't subtract your salvation.
- ✗ The Scriptures WARN that you can leave Him. This is known as **apostasy = walking away from Jesus**. In this context, this is referring to those who no longer trust that Jesus is enough, those Hebrews who went back to the Old Covenant shadows and symbols. These *people once EMBRACED Jesus and His substitute sacrifice for them, who now DENY His substitute sacrifice for them*. They have changed teams to shout with the crowd that cried out "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*" If they stay in this current state, **it is impossible to renew to repentance** since they deny the work of Jesus on the cross that saves us from sin.
- ➡ This warning should certainly be applied to those who once claimed Jesus who now deny His payment by claiming our good works make us right with God. This should SCARE those who have decided to walk away from following Jesus and going back to live in sin, thinking that judgment will never come.

Luke 12:45-46 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and starts to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, that servant's master will come on a day he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know. He will **cut him to pieces** and **assign him a place with the unfaithful**. - JESUS

BIG QUESTION: Am I Growing Up or Turning Back?

The farming illustration the author uses to drive his point further home sounds similar to the parable Jesus tells about the farmer who scattered the seed on different kinds of farming ground (Mk 4:1-8, 13-20).

Hebrews 6:7-8 (CSB) For the ground that drinks the rain that often falls on it and that produces vegetation useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a **blessing** from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be **cursed**, and at the end will be burned.

Ground is imagery for people. **Rain** is symbolism for the Gospel message. The ground (people) that **produces vegetation** (good fruit) is **blessed by God**. But the ground (people) that **produces thorns and thistles** (unfruitful) is **cursed** and **will be burned**.

❓ **What evidence is your life producing? GOOD FRUIT or BAD STUFF? How Does Your Life answer the BIG QUESTION - Am I Growing Up or Turning Back?**

🚨 When we are sick, symptoms of the sickness drive us to seek out a remedy.

📖 That sick feeling of shame you might have right now can be a GOOD THING, driving you to seek the ONE who can bring you REAL HEALING! When Jesus was questioned about why He spent time with sinful people He responded with these words:

Luke 5:31-32 "It is not those who are healthy who need a **doctor**, but those who are **sick**. I have not come to call the righteous, but **sinner**s to **repentance**."

Warning Shots to Turn People Back to Jesus

Hebrews 6:9-12 Even though we are speaking this way, dearly loved friends, in your case we are confident of things that are better and that pertain to salvation. For God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you demonstrated for His Name by serving the saints—and by continuing to serve them. Now we desire each of you to **demonstrate the same diligence for the full assurance of your hope until the end**, so that you won't become lazy but will be imitators of those who inherit the promises through **faith** and **perseverance**.

Have you been spiritually **lazy** lately or lacked **diligence**? That can change TODAY! As our lost culture continues to challenge what is *TRUE* and *RIGHT* and *GOOD*, you and I are going to have to answer:

BIG QUESTION: Am I Growing Up or Turning Back?

FEET2FAITH

1. *Have questions or aren't confident that you know Jesus? **Talk to a Christian who cares!***
2. ***Dive into the Scriptures and ask God to speak to you.** He will! GROW! Those who aren't growing in the faith are in danger of leaving the faith.*
3. ***Invest time to grow with others.** Serve/plug into a GROUP that meets on or off campus*
 - ***Sunday mornings** (KIDZ 10 & 11am; Students @ 10am; Adult Growth Groups)*
 - ***Tues Night Celebrate Recovery***
 - ***Wed evenings** 6pm (Men's & Ladies Groups, AWANA, 180 Students)*
 - ***Need a group? Call your Staff or Deacons!***

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (673-7952), Tim & Joni Hughey (464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (464-6188), Fain & Linda Poppell (464-1282), or Tom & Martha Waddail (973-0011).