

On to Maturity! - Hebrews 5:11-14

Icebreaker: How many books have you read in the last year? Which was your favorite?

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. **(2 Timothy 4:13)**. How much do you value the study of God's Word on a scale from 1 to 5? What competes for your time in studying God's Word and/or reading Christian Classics?

Exercise the spiritual muscle of your brain: **Orthodoxy** – “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.” **(Hebrews 5:11)**

- **Muscles become weak without use.** – How long do you go in between times reading and learning from the Bible? Reading and learning from good Christian books?
- **Laziness is the cause for weakness.** – How much of an issue is laziness for you in your personal study? Why?
- **Milk is needed when meat cannot be handled** – “In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!” **(Hebrews 5:12)**

☞ **Self-reflection: Do I still need milk, or can I move onto meat?** – “Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.” **(Hebrews 5:13)**

How would you answer the above “Self-reflection” question?

Exercise the spiritual muscle of your hands - **Orthopraxy** – “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” **(Hebrews 5:14)**

How do you personally practice (constant use) the Word of God in your life? In what areas have you grown the most? In what/which area do you still need some work?

Going from milk to meat...

Step 1: Create a 5-year plan (time)

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? **(1 Cor 3:1-3)**

Step 2: Pursue the plan at your rate

Step 3: Practice the faith unto maturity (rate + time = distance)

Does the above plan make sense to you and/or is it realistic, why or why not? What would it take for you to engage in it? With your group, jot down some ideas on what you would study/read in that 5 years. Jot down some ideas on how you would go about it (ie: what time of day, how many days of the week, what sacrifices would you have to make, etc.). Of the list I've included below, go through and highlight all that you've read. How many of those books have you never heard of. Pick 2-4 books that look interesting and commit to reading and studying them along with the Bible.

On to Maturity! - Hebrews 5:11-14

I was asked to put together a list of classic Christian books. I've consulted my own library and the library of other pastor/scholars. Here are a few books that I am pleased to share with you. This list is by no means exhaustive and many others would have books to include that blessed their lives. These have blessed mine!

Black = Included in the majority of Pastor/Scholar's Libraries

Red = Reference books

Blue = Pastor Nick's Personal favorites

| <u>Author</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charles Ryrie | The Ryrie Study Bible (Charles Ryrie includes many footnotes to help explain) |
| C.S Lewis | Mere Christianity |
| C.S Lewis | Screwtape letters |
| A.W Tozer | The Pursuit of God |
| Augustine | Confessions of St. Augustine |
| Brother Lawrence | Practicing the Presence of the God |
| J.I Packer | Knowing God |
| Oswald Sanders | Spiritual Leadership |
| Jerry Bridges | Disciplines of Grace |
| Donald Whitney | Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian life |
| Dallas Willard | The Spirit of the Disciplines |
| John Stott | The Cross of Cross |
| John Stott | Basic Christianity |
| John Piper | Desiring God or The Pleasures of God |
| Phillip Yancey | What's So Amazing about Grace |
| Phillip Yancey | The Jesus I never Knew |
| R.C Sproul | The Holiness of God |
| John Owen | Overcoming Sin and Temptation |
| John Bunyan | Pilgrim's Progress |
| Dietrich Bonhoeffer | The Cost of Discipleship |
| Dietrich Bonhoeffer | Life Together |
| Tim Keller | The Reason for God |
| G.K Chesterton | Orthodoxy |
| Augustine | The City of God |
| Athanasius | The Incarnation of the Word of God |
| Oswald Chambers | My Utmost for His Highest |
| Lee Strobel | The Case for Christ |
| Gary Chapman | The Five Love Languages |
| Robert McGee | The Search for Significance |
| E.M Bounds | E.M Bounds on Prayer |
| Randy Alcorn | Heaven |
| Lewis S. Chafer | Major Bible Themes |
| Charles Swindoll | Biblical Character Biographies; "David", "Joseph", "Abraham", "Paul," etc. |
| Howard Hendricks | Living by the Book |
| Nelson Publishers | Nelson's Complete Bible Books and Charts |
| Intervarsity Press | New Bible Dictionary |
| Nelson Publishers | New Illustrated Bible Commentary |