

FOUNDATIONS #3

“Moving Toward Maturity”

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says...

**Let us move on to maturity not laying again the foundation...
Hebrews 6:1**

God expects us to grow up; but we can never move on to maturity in Christ until the foundational doctrines of the faith are firmly laid in our lives.

I. Review

A. Why Study Foundations?

1. We are teaching this series on the foundations of the Christian faith because...

The New Testament compares the church to a building:

**On this rock I will build my church.
Matthew 16:18**

**You are God’s building.
1 Corinthians 3:9**

**...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house...
1 Peter 2:5 NKJV**

2. As in the physical world, so in the spiritual, the most important part of any building is the foundation.

“foundation”

- **The lowest load-bearing part of a building. Oxford Dictionary**
- **The basis or groundwork of anything. Merriam Webster Dictionary**

a. You can’t build a house until the foundation is in place and the foundation always determines the size and weight of what can be built upon it.
b. And so it is in the spiritual realm, as **Derek Prince** once said...

“We can never build a Christian life greater than what our foundation can support.”

3. In our previous teaching, we have seen that the foundation of the Christian faith is not a not a set of rules or doctrines; it is having the revelation of a Person, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God!

a. When God reveled Christ to Simon Peter, Jesus said...

**On this rock I will build my church.
Matthew 16:18**

b. Peter did not receive the blessing because of *what* He knew; it was *whom* He knew!

4. Salvation is revelation!

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

5. So the first foundation is not doctrinal, it is Personal!

Ephesians 2:19-20

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone....

Ephesians 2:21-22

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

6. But once we have the *Person* of Christ as our Cornerstone, we can go on to study the 6 “foundational” *doctrines*, or teachings, which are listed in the 1st 3 verses of the 6th Chapter of the book of Hebrews:

II. The Foundational Doctrines

Hebrews 6:1-3 NKJV

**Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ,
let us move on to maturity
not laying again the foundation of
repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,
of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands,
of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
And this we will do if God permits.**

Before we study each of these 6 doctrines individually, let us look at them as a group.

A. Overview

1. The first thing to notice is that even if we know Christ as the Rock of our salvation, we cannot “move on to maturity” without knowing the Word of God!

a. In my personal experience I have known many Christians who never grow up simply because they do not consistently feed on the Word of God.

b. If we look back into Chapter 5 for context we see that the writer is complaining about the lack of maturity among the believers.

2. In Chapter 5, the writer is teaching a very deep revelation about the high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ when he suddenly interrupts himself...

Hebrews 5:11-12a

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. 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.

a. My paraphrase: “I would like to take you to the college of Christ, but you can't get past 3rd grade. You've been in school so long that by now you ought to be teaching others. But instead, you need someone to teach you the alphabet all over again!”

b. He compares their condition to those who ought to be feeding on the strong meat of the Word but all they can handle is milk:

Hebrews 5:12-14

You are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 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.

c. There's nothing wrong with the "milk" of the Word!

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby...

1 Peter 2:2 KJV

Like newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

1 Peter 2:2 NIV

d. Babies need the "milk" of the Word. But the purpose of the milk is to prepare us for the meat. We aren't meant for milk for all our lives. We need to grow up!

3. This is why Chapter 6 begins with a "Therefore"...

Hebrews 6:1-3 NKJV

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us move on to maturity not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.

4. We are to move on toward maturity by learning the Word of God; but we are not ready for the "strong meat" of the Word until we have mastered the "milk" of the Word, the 6 foundational doctrines listed here.

The 'milk' of the foundational doctrines prepare us to receive the "strong meat" of the Word so we can move on to maturity.

a. I like to think of these 6 doctrines as the foundation for all other doctrines!

5. But I have known many Christians who cannot handle the “meat” of the Word because they have never mastered the “milk” of the Word. I learned this lesson very early on in my pastoral ministry. Examples:

- I remember a man who confronted me privately after a service demanding to know what I thought about the identity of the “144,000” Israelites who are “sealed” in Revelation 7. He considered himself an expert on the end-times and wanted to know if I shared his views. He went on and on until I remember the Holy Spirit prompted me to interrupt him with a question: I asked him, “Sir, do you love your wife?” He was stunned. Conversation ended!
- I also remember a mistake I made when I was trying to teach “meaty” biblical doctrines of *election* and *predestination*, to those who had not yet digested the “milky” biblical doctrines of repentance and faith. I think some gagged. Don’t feed steaks to babes.
- I also learned that it is no use feeding the strong meat of the supernatural gifts or on deliverance from demonic power to those who have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

a. All this is how I came to understand the value of helping people with their foundations before taking them on to deeper truth.

6. **Then notice the scope of the 6 doctrines:**

a. The first 2 foundational doctrines are laid at the very beginning of our Christian life:

- Repentance from dead works
- Faith toward God

b. The last 2 foundational doctrines deal with the very end of our Christian faith:

- The resurrection of the dead
- Eternal judgment

c. So the first 2 are how we begin our journey with God; the last 2 remind us of how it will end.

7. Let me conclude with a closer look at the link between the first 2 doctrines and give you something very practical that will help you move toward maturity: never disconnect the 2 doctrines of repentance and faith, or the order in which they appear.

B. The Connection And Order Between Repentance and Faith

1. The modern church tends to focus on the subjects of faith and believing while neglecting the doctrine of repentance; but this is a great mistake!

- a. Faith is critical! We are saved by faith!
- b. Without faith it is impossible to please God!

2. But the order of the foundations teaches us that repentance comes before faith!

“The New Testament is unanimous on this one point: true repentance must always go before true faith. Without true repentance there can never be true faith.”

Derek Prince

(If you get nothing else tonight, get this!)

- a. Jesus 1st sermon:

Mark 1:14-15

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel...and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.

“The first command that ever fell from the lips of Jesus was not to believe but to repent. First repent, then believe.”

Derek Prince

- b. Jesus preaches the same message after the resurrection:

Luke 24:46-47

Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance

and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem’.

c. After Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost, they asked...

Acts 2:37 “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’

Acts 2:38

d. Later, we have Paul departing Ephesus:

Acts 20:20-21

“I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

e. At the end of the Bible, Jesus speaks to 7 churches in the Book of Revelation. He commands 5 of the 7 to repent!

Revelation 3:19 NIV

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

3. So Jesus still commands church people to repent. Which brings me to one last thought...

III. Close: Repentance and Faith Never Go Out of Style!

A. The Foundations Are Still Working

1. Repentance from sin and faith toward God not only mark the beginning of our walk with Christ; but they remain at work throughout the life of those who want to move on to maturity!

“Repentance is a characteristic of a whole life, not just the action of a single moment.”

Sinclair B. Ferguson

2. Some who hear this message may wonder if they have ever truly repented or truly believed. Evangelist Paul Washer has this for you:

“The evidence that you truly repented long ago is that you are still repenting now, and even to a greater degree.”

Paul Washer

3. Repentance always reminds us of our need for God; and so it is the doorway to faith in God. We never outgrow our need for repentance and faith.

“The Christian who has stopped repenting has stopped growing.”

Arthur W. Pink

With the foundations of repentance and faith, we can move on toward maturity!

4. We can move on to maturity if we can continue to connect our need for faith with our need for repentance!

CLOSING PRAYER

Moving Toward Maturity