

LESSON 10

From Milk to Solid Food

Hebrews 5:11-14

“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.”

(Hebrews 5:11-12)

Class Overview: In this lesson, we examine Scripture’s clear call to spiritual maturity. While perseverance keeps us faithful, maturity moves us forward. The writer of Hebrews confronts the danger of prolonged spiritual infancy and calls believers to grow in understanding, discernment, and responsibility. Drawing primarily from Hebrews 5:11-14 and supported by other New Testament texts, this lesson emphasizes that our spiritual development is not optional in the Christian life. God expects His people to mature, developing discernment through practice and living out their faith with increasing depth and stability.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain the difference between spiritual infancy and maturity.
2. Understand why prolonged immaturity is spiritually dangerous.
3. Recognize how discernment is developed through practice.
4. Identify habits that hinder or promote spiritual progress.
5. Commit to movement toward maturity in Christ.

Introduction:

GROWTH IS EXPECTED IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE. When a child fails to mature physically or emotionally, concern is immediate and appropriate. We understand instinctively that prolonged immaturity is unhealthy. Yet in spiritual life, stagnation is often tolerated in ways we would never accept elsewhere.

Christian principles do not share that tolerance.

The writer of Hebrews addresses early Jewish Christians who had remained faithful under pressure and endured hardship. They had not abandoned Christ, but they had stopped growing. Time had passed, truth had been heard repeatedly, yet maturity had not followed. Familiarity with Scripture had not produced depth, and exposure had not produced discernment.

This lesson is not written to shame us, but to awaken us. Spiritual infancy is appropriate at the beginning of faith. It is not appropriate to remain there. God does not merely call His people to believe, endure, or remain loyal; He calls them to mature. This is not optional; it is the normal expectation of life in Christ.

Remaining on “milk” may feel safe, but it leaves us dependent, fragile, and unprepared for the weightier demands of faith. Solid food represents depth, discernment, and responsibility. It is not reserved for a select few but is intended for all who are willing to grow through practice and obedience. This lesson invites honest reflection. Not *how long have we believed?* But *how much have we grown?* Perseverance keeps us from quitting, while maturity equips us to live faithfully and wisely for the long haul.

The writer of Hebrews interrupts his teaching to address a serious concern, not about belief or commitment, but about formation. His words are direct because the issue matters. Prolonged immaturity leaves us unprepared for the deeper truth and vulnerable to confusion. As we turn to Hebrews 5, listen for how spiritual maturity is described, why remaining on “milk” is dangerous, and how God calls His people to move forward into greater depth and discernment.

Getting Stronger is Expected, Not Optional (Hebrews 5:11-12)

This section begins with an uncomfortable diagnosis. He says the Hebrew Christians had become “dull of hearing.” It is not that they lacked access to truth, but that they had stopped responding to it. Over time, their attentiveness has faded, and progress stalled. What makes this especially serious is the role that *time* should have played. The writer says, *Although by this time you ought to be teachers...* Time, exposure to truth, and experience in the faith should have produced maturity. Instead, these brethren needed to be taught the basic elements again. Progress gave way to regression.

This reveals a crucial principle: **time alone does not produce spiritual maturity**. This is not automatic. Being around church people, attending classes, or hearing sermons does not guarantee development. Our progress requires engagement, listening with intention, responding with obedience, and allowing God’s Word to shape thinking and behavior. Maturity is an expectation, not a suggestion. God does not call His people merely to begin the Christian life, but to grow steadily within it. Remaining spiritually dependent for long periods leaves us unable to help others and unable to handle deeper truths ourselves. When our development stops, usefulness diminishes.

The common assumption is that spiritual stagnation is harmless, but Hebrews says otherwise. Failing to grow is not neutral; it leaves us unprepared for responsibility and open to confusion. God expects us to move, whether it’s from learning to teaching, from dependence to discernment, or from infancy to maturity. The call here is not condemnation but awakening. God wants us to grow into the fullness of what we were meant to be in Christ.

Prolonged Immaturity Leaves Us Vulnerable (Hebrews 5:13)

Remaining on “milk” is not harmless. Anyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness. The issue is not sincerity or effort; *it is depth*. Spiritual immaturity limits understanding and leaves us unable to handle the full weight of God’s truth. In this verse, *milk* represents what is basic, introductory, and easily digested. That is appropriate for those who are new to the faith. But when we remain there over time, it creates vulnerability. Without it, our faith becomes reactive rather than rooted. Immature Christians are more easily confused, unsettled by false teaching, or overwhelmed when faith becomes costly.

This vulnerability does not usually show up in obvious rebellion. More often, it appears as instability: being pulled by emotions, influenced by popular opinion, or unsure how to apply truth when life becomes complicated. Without maturity, we lack the discernment needed to distinguish truth from error or wisdom from impulse. Prolonged immaturity reveals a deeper disconnect from God's Word. When we stay at the basics, we remain dependent on others and cannot stand firm on our own. God's desire is not to keep His people perpetually dependent, but to strengthen them so they can stand, discern, and help others. Maturity protects faith. Without it, we remain exposed and unprepared for the challenges that inevitably come.

Maturity is Developed Through Practice and Discernment (Hebrews 5:14)

What does spiritual maturity look like, and how does it develop? Verse 14 says that solid food is meant for the mature, which means those who have trained their senses through practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore, maturity is not just about knowing more; it's about applying truth wisely and consistently. Two key ideas shape this verse: **training** and **practice**. Discernment does not appear instantly. It is developed over time as we repeatedly choose obedience, wrestle with Scripture, and learn to apply God's truth in real-life situations. It all happens as faith is lived, not merely learned. This means maturity cannot be rushed or substituted. It is not produced by shortcuts, titles, or spiritual language. It comes through sustained engagement with God's Word and faithful practice of what is learned. As we obey, reflect, and grow, our spiritual senses are sharpened.

Discernment is especially important because mature Christians are better equipped to recognize what goes along with God's will and what does not. They are less swayed by emotional reactions, cultural pressures, or shallow reasoning. Instead, they develop stability and wisdom rooted in Scripture. Maturity is the goal toward which perseverance and obedience are moving. Faith that endures and responds to God's Word develops depth. Solid food represents not elite knowledge, but readiness; readiness to handle truth, responsibility, and the weight of faithful living. We need to look forward. God's desire is not to leave us dependent or unsure, but to grow us into discerning, stable followers who reflect Christ with clarity and conviction.

For Application

God calls His people not only to believe and endure, but also to grow. Spiritual maturity is not based on personality, gifting, or position; it is the natural result of a life formed by God's Word and lived in obedience. Staying on spiritual "milk" might seem comfortable, but it makes us dependent, vulnerable, and unready for the responsibilities of faith. Therefore, **we need to assess where our development may have slowed down.** Simply being in the faith does not ensure maturity. Reading Scripture does not automatically lead to discernment. Becoming mature demands effort—listening attentively, practicing obedience, and allowing God's Word to influence how we think and live.

Maturity is not about knowing everything or never struggling. It is about developing spiritual discernment through faithful practice. As we repeatedly choose truth over impulse and obedience over

convenience, our faith becomes steadier and more resilient. **We must not rush this; we must pursue it.** God desires us to move forward, to become stable, discerning, and useful in His service. When we commit to it, the church is built up, Christ is honored, and faith becomes capable of carrying greater responsibility.

Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

Memory Verse:






“But solid food is for the mature – for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.” — Hebrews 5:14 (CSB)

Weekly Challenge:






This week, identify one area of your spiritual life where your development has slowed or become comfortable. Commit to one practice that will move you beyond spiritual “milk”—such as deeper study of Scripture, applying a difficult biblical command, or seeking godly counsel for discernment. Pray daily for God to sharpen your spiritual discernment and reflect at the end of the week on how practice and obedience are shaping your maturity.

For Reflection

1. Why does Scripture present spiritual growth as an expectation rather than an option for Christians?


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2. What are some signs that a Christian may be remaining on “milk” rather than moving toward maturity?


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3. Why does prolonged spiritual immaturity leave us vulnerable to confusion or instability?

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4. How does consistent practice of God's Word help develop spiritual discernment over time?

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5. What is one specific step you can take this week toward greater maturity in Christ?

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