

Constant Use and Balanced  
November 25, 2018

I **SLIDE** Pruning is a sign of Jesus' love and presence

A) **Hebrews 5:14-6:1 (NIV)** <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. <sup>1</sup> Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity.

B) **SLIDE** Definitions

- 1) Constant use: habit; practice or exercise
- 2) Train: exercise, as an athlete; train in godliness; exercise by training and discipline
- 3) Distinguish: discern; judge (not people but good and evil);
- 4) Good and Evil: in a moral sense; as determined by God's word;
- 5) **Proverbs 15:3 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup> The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

C) **SLIDE** Constant Use

- 1) Mature has nothing to do with age
- 2) Person can be 80 and still exist on milk
- 3) Maturity comes from the constant use of God's word
- 4) Through the exercise, training, and disciplined use of God's word, we mature in our faith
- 5) We are saved by the word and not by works
- 6) We are cleansed by the power of the word
- 7) However, we grow by the constant use of that word
- 8) When we put the Word into practice, we will discover that we need to be pruned, refined
- 9) Through constant use, our faith grows
- 10) However, if all we do is talk about the word, then we do not have to be pruned because we will change the word to fit our talk
- 11) But, when we commit to living that word, then we are constantly being refined because Jesus loves us and wants us to produce much fruit

#### D) Teaching

- 1) Took four years of college
- 2) Last semester, I took methods class and did my student teaching
- 3) Got my degree
- 4) So, according to the law, I was a qualified teacher
- 5) However, when I walked into my classroom for the first time, I was put to the test
- 6) For the first time, I was responsible
- 7) For the first time, I had to put into practice what I had learned
- 8) Over time, I learned what was good and what was not
- 9) Over time, I learned to teach
- 10) In other words, I was not longer a teacher because a piece of paper said I was
- 11) I was a teacher by the constant use of what I had learned and by the constant use of *God's word*
- 12) After constant practice, I no longer had to read about how to teach
- 13) Instead, out of habit, I knew how to teach, how to apply what I had learned, and what did not work

#### E) **SLIDE** Mature

- 1) Interestingly, those who are called *the mature* are mature because they have disciplined themselves:
- 2) Spiritually mature Christians constantly examine themselves (NOT OTHERS), turn away from sin, and learn what actions, thoughts, and attitudes will please *God*.
- 3) These people "have trained themselves" to *distinguish good from evil*.
- 4) In order to grow from infancy to maturity, we must learn discernment.
- 5) We must train our consciences, senses, and minds to distinguish good from evil - from *God's view* and not the world's

- 6) We must incorporate from the word of God principles of right thinking and right action whereby we can correctly judge moral situations that occur.

F) **SLIDE** Good from evil

- 1) This is not a natural trait
- 2) As a matter of fact, it is just the opposite
- 3) Just as I had to practice and train to become an effective teacher, we are to use, practice God's word until it becomes natural
- 4) Can we recognize temptation before it traps us?
- 5) Can we recognize what not to say AND then not say it?
- 6) Can we tell the difference between a correct use of Scripture and a mistaken one?
- 7) **SLIDE** Can we identify false doctrines?
- 8) Can we identify legalism as opposed to grace?
- 9) Can we welcome God's pruning with thanks?
- 10) Can we give reasons for our beliefs and faith in Jesus?
- 11) Can we avoid arguments that divide us?
- 12) Do we ask what we can do for the church instead of what the church can do for us?
- 13) Do we accept spiritual correction, or do we get upset and walk away?

G) Constant use is how we mature

## II Balanced

A) Wendy

- 1) She said she was going to have to work to keep things balanced
- 2) **SLIDE** That word jumped out at me: BALANCED
- 3) We need to have a balanced life if we are going to put His word into constant use
- 4) If we do not, then we will never have time to do what He wants us to do
- 5) All of us have many demands on our time

- 6) We all have things we want to do
- 7) Often, these things can take precedent over our spiritual walk
- 8) Maintaining a balanced life means we leave room for the constant use of God's word
- 9) Johnny Carson
  - a) Balancing act
  - b) Balancing spinning plates on slender rods
  - c) **SLIDE** Ran from one to the other to keep one from falling
  - d) **SLIDE**
  - e) This often resembles our lives
  - f) We run from one thing to another to keep it spinning
  - g) Somewhere in the midst of all of this, we have a plate called "Church"
- 10) This is not the Balanced the Lord wants
- 11) He wants to establish firmly all aspects of our lives and wants us to trust Him to keep the plates spinning
- 12) When He balances our lives, we will have peace, times to relax, and times to serve

### III **SLIDE** Baptism

#### A) Constant Use and Balanced Life

- 1) Lead us into maturity
- 2) Takes us from milk to solid food
- 3) Enables us to produce fruit that can feed a starving world

#### B) Baptism