

# How to Overcome Spiritual Childishness

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, I've known your pastor 20 years, and he's not gotten funnier as the times going on. Just kidding, actually. It's a blessing to be here today.

I only know one Canadian joke, actually. You really put your cup in here? It's a cup holder by the pulpit. I love that. I only know one Canadian joke, and that is you don't want Canada to take over the world because then you'll all be sorry.

Now I'm done. I don't have any other Canadian jokes. But, yeah, my wife and I actually, we visited Chilliwack for the first time six years ago, and I grew up, as BK said, I didn't actually grow up in Possum Trot, but it was in the phone book next to Frog Jump.

And the town I grew up in was about 10,000 people, and this is the Bible Belt in the United States, and it had 40 churches in it, so 10,000 people with 40 churches. We actually had a church street that went down the center of town, and there was a Baptist church, Presbyterian church, Methodist church, Lutheran church, Episcopalian church, and then the Pentecostals that were really loud on Sundays.

And when we moved to Chilliwack, I was told this is the Bible Belt in Canada. And there's a lot of churches in Chilliwack. There's about 60 churches in the town. They're a very different flavor of churches, you know, Dutch Reformed and Mennonite and that type of thing, much quieter than the Pentecostals, I think.

[ 1 : 1 7 ] But it's interesting that there are a lot of similar challenges between the two Bible Belts. It took me about a year or two to realize the Bible Belt in Chilliwack cuts off about the middle of Abbotsford.

It's about a 45-minute window of a Bible Belt. Where I grew up, you could go from Indiana to Texas, and you're still in the Bible Belt. It's a massive church. My wife grew up in a church of 20,000 people in Bellevue Baptist Church, where Adrian Rogers was the pastor.

But the Lord has really blessed our work there. It's been wonderful to be there. I'm so glad Richard's here with us today. Richard, you knew some people from Squamish Baptist and wanted to come visit.

But I visited six years ago for the first candidating trip. Since then, we've brought on elders and deacons at our church, and we've walked through the COVID battles, as everybody else has here in British Columbia.

And now we're in a season where we're seeing a lot of new people coming through. Chilliwack has changed tremendously, even in the five years I've been there. But the Lord has chosen to establish His church there through Grace Fellowship, and it is a privilege.

[ 2 : 2 0 ] And it's an honor to be here with you today as well. And if you would, just open your Bibles with me to Hebrews chapter 5. That's what we're going to be turning to this morning, because our church is going through the book of Hebrews together.

And we just finished chapter 5, and I was talking with my elder board about this opportunity. And they said, well, why don't you preach the sermon you did a couple of weeks ago on this passage when you go to Squamish Baptist.

And so that's what I want to do with you. And let's read in chapter 5 of the book of Hebrews. It says, And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest. But He who said to Him, You are my Son, today I have begotten you. Just as He says also in another passage, You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying, and tears to the one able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was His Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

[ 3 : 52 ] And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Concerning Him, we have much to say, and it's hard to explain since you have become so dull of hearing.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Therefore, leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

And this we will do if God permits. We'll end the reading there. You know, I don't know about you, but when I read this, it's hard for me not to get a general feeling of disappointment coming out of the text.

[ 5 : 06 ] Because the author seems upset with the audience here, because he says, concerning Jesus, I have much to tell you, and I'd like to go on, but I can't, because you can't handle it. Because you're so dull of hearing.

I've told our people before that the book of Hebrews can be outlined this way. The theme is that of Christ, or the greatness of Christ, compared to everything the Old Testament has to offer.

And in order to express it, in chapter 1, it tells you that Jesus is God. In chapter 2, it tells you He's a man. And then in chapter 3 and following, it tells you what the God-man did.

This is what Jesus did in His dual offices. In chapter 5, He became a high priest for you. Which is really the turning point of the book, because from this point onward, He's going to spend the rest of His time explaining this concept.

But as soon as He mentions it, He slows down first, in order to take a hard look at His audience. And He says, but before I get into that, I've got to be honest, I don't think you can take it. Because you're so immature.

[ 6 : 12 ] It's a wonderful sermon for a visiting pastor to preach at a church, isn't it? I can say all this, and then head for the door. Later on in the passage, He's going to call them childish for this reason.

Then as you just read, He'll call them babies, because they need someone to feed them milk. And teach them the elementary things, or ABCs all over again. That's what the Greek word means. It refers to someone who sits down with you and goes, A, B, C, D.

But it all stems from the fact that they don't want to grow up as a church. It reminds me of a sermon Jonathan Edwards preached to his congregation in the 18th century, right before they fired him, when he said that they were as stupid as stones.

Makes you wonder why they fired him, doesn't it? But the reason he said it is because it's so easy to come to church and act that way as Christians sometimes. Because we struggle, we have a tendency to come in and struggle with the same things over and over again, don't we?

We're anxious today, anxious tomorrow. We're proud in church today, we're proud in church tomorrow. Not only do we do that, but we neglect basic things like our Bible study when we know we shouldn't.

[ 7 : 21 ] We don't prioritize the word of God like we're supposed to. We don't pray, we don't share our faith, even though we know those things are important. Why? Because we're acting like children. We do it because we know we're supposed to do better than that, but we forget.

Which was a major problem for the Jews, by the way. This letter was written to the Hebrew people, that's where the name Hebrews comes from. And this was a common issue with the Jews, is that they were often very, very stubborn people.

In fact, I told our people, our congregation, that the Old Covenant had a very developed, sophisticated way of teaching the Jews that was amazing.

And just to summarize some of it for you for the sake of time, we don't have time to go into this. If you have questions, you can ask Richard about any of this in the back. But the first thing the Old Covenant gave to Israel in order to teach them was the priesthood, which refers to the men who represented God to them.

They had thousands of them at this time in the first century. But the word for priest in Hebrew is kohen, and it comes from the root word to stand, and it refers to the man who stood in the gap between you and God.

[ 8 : 35 ] He put himself right between the two parties because the idea is you can't come to God on your own. You're too sinful for that, so the priest did it for you. He bridged the barrier.

And he also did this by making sacrifices. That's the second thing that the Lord used to reach the Jews under the Old Covenant because the Old Testament made it clear when someone sinned, there was a rift between you and God, and you couldn't just say you're sorry to fix it because blood had to be spilled.

A price had to be paid. Something had to die, which was the purpose of these animals. And in order to offer them, there were five main sacrifices the Jews had to make, and this is all, again, by way of overview.

There was a burn offering. There was a sin offering. There was a guilt offering. And a peace offering. And then a grain offering, which was just composed of grain.

Everything else was an animal that had to die. But the one thing you need to know is that the sacrifices didn't even stop there because there were other times, as opposed to those daily regular offerings, when the Jews had to bring something to the Lord, and they were what is known as the pilgrim feasts.

[ 9 : 45 ] So not only did you have to bring a sacrifice to God when you sinned, but Exodus 23 says that three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to the Lord when all your males shall appear before Him and make a sacrifice there too.

You will do it at the Feast of Unleavened Bread or the Passover. You'll do it at the Feast of Harvest or Pentecost. And you'll do it at the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles.

And other passages go on to say that at Passover you would bring a lamb for your family. At Pentecost, you would bring a set of peace offerings or grain offerings, whatever the Lord laid on your heart.

And at Tabernacles, it would be a series of bulls, rams, lambs, and goats that would be stretched out over a period of a week. And the way it worked is that on the first day of Tabernacles, Numbers 29 says they would give 13 bulls.

Then on the second day of Tabernacles, the nation would give 12 bulls. Bulls are big animals, by the way. I don't know if you've seen a bull lately, but that's a massive animal to kill as a sacrifice. On the third day, they would give 11 and so forth and so on.

[ 10 : 53 ] And in order to do it, they would take the animal to the bull, they would take the animal from their barn, walk with it to Jerusalem, sometimes over 100 miles, traveling with the animal.

And they would slaughter it, they would give it to the priest, who would slaughter it next to the altar, he would cut its throat, let the blood drain into a bowl, then he would take the blood and sprinkle it on the altar before skinning the animal, cutting it up, spreading the pieces on top, and burning it.

Which was a brutal affair, as you can imagine. It was a very, very violent thing. Just to give you perspective on how violent it really was, Numbers 2, verse 32 says, there were more than half a million fighting men who left Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

Now that doesn't account for all the non-fighting men, like the old men and the children. If you put that together, it could have been about a million of them. Which means that whatever the number was during this feast, it was an enormous amount of traffic coming in to kill sacrifices.

One scholar historian said that this was so bad that the priest's legs would have sunk knee-deep in blood as they offered them on those holy days. Now some think that was an exaggeration, but another one said that it would have made the Kidron brook run red with blood, and that was probably true.

[ 12 : 17 ] Because after the priest killed the animals and cut them up, they would take the bodies or the part of the bodies that were not burned completely, the fat and the entrails and the innards, and drag them away from the temple and drop them off in a valley called the Valley of Gehenna, which was located on the southeastern corner of the temple where the Kidron brook flowed through, causing the brook to run red with blood and stink, because they would light all the animals on fire, all the body parts.

They've done excavations at the bottom of that valley and studied the bones and found that many of them came from hundreds of miles away, showing that they did not come from the normal sacrifices.

Those were from the pilgrim fees. But however you looked at it, it is a staggering way of how God looks at sin. He hates it. He can't stand our disobedience, and the Lord did it this way for one reason and one reason only, and that was to teach the Jews a lesson.

And the lesson was that He loved them. Because every time an animal was killed, it was His way of showing that He pardoned their sin. And every time a sacrifice was butchered on the altar, it was His way of demonstrating that their evil deeds had been atoned for, the relationship was restored, there was nothing more to pay, which is what made Israel's response so hideous to Him.

How could you forget something like that? How could you ignore God when He did so much for you by killing animal after animal at every pilgrim feast, Passover, Pentecost, tabernacles, every burn offering, sin offering, guilt offering, peace offering, and grain offering?

[ 13 : 59 ] It's unfathomable. And with that in mind, if you look at Hebrews 5, verse 11 again, I think it might help you to understand what he's driving at here.

Because the author says this to a group of Jews, people who had all that historical background. He says, concerning Christ, concerning Him, concerning Christ, we have much to say and it's hard to explain since you have become so dull of hearing.

In other words, you guys are doing the same thing your parents did. You're behaving just like the Jews of old. They were dull and you're dull. They were stubborn, you're stubborn.

Earlier in chapter 5, I just showed you how Jesus, we can see how Jesus fulfilled all these sacrifices for us because He took the place of those offerings by being our high priest, standing in the gap and now the writer is saying, but you're forgetting that too.

As those who've come to faith in Christ, you should know that when you sin, you don't have to bring an animal anymore. I'm looking around, nobody brought a goat here today. You guys understand that? Because you can offer Christ and that's enough.

[15:17] And as those who have trusted in Him, you get that when you fail God, you don't have to offer a bunch of sacrifices, you give one sacrifice one death, one cross and it takes care of everything which should make you grateful now.

But for so many Christians it has the opposite effect. They just don't care. We don't even look at the Christian life this way, but when you fail to grow as a Christian and you act childish like these Hebrews did, it's not only sinful, it's ungrateful, isn't it?

Because it shows you don't appreciate all the things God has done for you because it should have been you dying in the temple, it should have been you being killed on the altar, it should have been you being slain by the priest, but it wasn't because of Him.

And now what Christ is asking you to do or telling you to do is to grow in response to that. He doesn't want you to pay Him back, He doesn't want you to earn it, He just wants you to change and leave your life of sin behind.

So why wouldn't we want to do that? There needs to be a sense of seriousness about our sanctification today, which leads to the question, how? Okay, Pastor Jeremy, you said I need to grow in my relationship to Christ, I need to be earnest and that's right, I get that, but it's hard.

[16:39] Now let's be honest, I mean I try and I try and I try to repent of sin and I fail. Anybody know what I'm talking about? Every hand in the room could go up. I work and I work and I work and I don't seem to get anywhere, my sin just keeps coming back to me, every one step forward I take three steps back, what do I do?

And I'm glad you asked that because this passage is written to address that sort of thing. These Jews were failing in the same area, so the writer puts his discussion of Christ's high priesthood on hold for a moment to deal with that and that's what I want to talk to you about today by looking at six principles for how to grow as a Christian.

So if you're taking notes, that's our outline for today. We're going to look at Hebrews 5, verse 11 and following, we're going to look at six practical principles for how to grow as a Christian and the first one is to stop being so dull of hearing.

Now we've said a little bit about this one because that's where the passage starts, but we need to say more because the first principle for how to grow is to stop being dull of hearing, which means you shouldn't be so slow to pay attention to the Bible.

You need to be hungry for it instead. If you look in verse 8, backing up a little bit here, it says this, it says, although he was a son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered.

[18:02] And having been made perfect, he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Concerning him, we have much to say, and it's hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing.

When the author starts off with the phrase concerning him here, you can tell who he's talking about. He's talking about Jesus, the one he's been referring to all throughout chapter 5, because chapter 5, verse 1 says, for every high priest taken among men, which means that this is what Christ is for us now.

He is our high priest. As such, this is what he does. In verse 2, it says he deals gently with us. Verse 6, he came from the line of Melchizedek.

Verse 8 says that he suffered. Verse 9, he became the source of eternal salvation. And with all that laid out for you, verse 11 starts off by saying, concerning this, we have more to say.

In other words, I don't want to stop there with what I'm telling you about Christ. I want to tell you more, but there's a problem, and that is the issue of dullness. The word dull here, it's the Greek word *nathros*.

[ 19 : 16 ] It means dull or slow or lazy with something. But in the spiritual realm, it gives the idea of not making any progress because you have the opportunity to grow right in front of you, but you don't take advantage of it because you're busy.

I'm busy. We're all so busy, right? You guys live in British Columbia. You know what I'm talking about. I'm tired. You're tired. We're all so tired. And this term indicates it wasn't always that way for the Jews because it says you have become dull of hearing.

And that means they didn't start out that way. They became that way. In the beginning, they were fired up about the things of God, and they were hungry for the truth, and they were eager to learn, but all that began to fade with the passing of time.

They made a little compromise here or there. They let their love for the Lord grow cold until the worries and troubles and cares of this world began to choke it away. It's also interesting when he says this is hard to explain.

He doesn't say it's my fault that it's hard to explain. It's hard to explain because I'm such a bad teacher. I don't use enough PowerPoints. I don't wear flashy suits, that sort of thing.

[ 20 : 29 ] He says it's hard to explain because of you. The reason it's so difficult is because you're so apathetic, which is a blunt thing to say, isn't it? It's pretty offensive, but he's doing it to point out the fact that if you don't listen to the Word of God, it's your problem first and no one else's.

Hearing is a one-way street. No one else can hear for you. You're the only person that can do that. Person sitting next to you can't listen for you. Person sitting behind you can't listen for you.

That's all on your shoulders, and one way to grow in the Christian life is to remember that instead of putting the blame on other people. You'll never learn how to grow as a Christian if you keep telling yourself it's the preacher's fault and it's the people's fault and it's the church's fault every time I struggle with something.

You'll never make progress if you keep saying to yourself it's the elders' fault, it's the deacons' fault, it's the music team's fault. If they would just choose different songs, then I would really take off and grow.

No, they wouldn't. No, they wouldn't. Because they're not the ones living your life. You do this on your own.

[ 21 : 43 ] This reminds me of what the Lord said to the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 33. He said, If I bring a sword upon a land and the watchman sounds the trumpet and the people don't listen, the blood will be upon their head.

Not on the watchman's head, but on their head. Not on the messenger's back, but on their back. Why? Because he told them the truth and they didn't listen. He did his job, now his hands are clean.

It reminds me of what Christ said to the disciples in Matthew 10 when he said, Whoever does not receive you nor heed your words as you go out of that city, shake the dust off your feet.

Why? Because you did your job. You gave them the gospel. You told them the word. They didn't listen. So be it. As I read back through this passage and reflect on it, it really struck me this is the most tragic verse in the whole section because this is the place where people fail the most.

You can help a man who is ignorant. You can help a man who is in sin, who's willing to come out of it. You can help a man who doesn't know anything about the Bible. You can never help a man who doesn't listen.

[ 22 : 56 ] Ever. I can get pretty loud at my church but I can never preach loud enough for those who won't listen. Can't be done. I mean, how many people come to church and they're doing well spiritually until they get a promotion at work and stop reading their Bible?

Happens all the time. Very common in Chilliwack because it's very expensive there. You have to work very hard. And so what we see sometimes is people will get a raise and they'll start making a few extra dollars and before you know it they begin to backslide because they throw the Word of God out the window.

I mean, how many people join our fellowship and they become part of Squamish Baptist Church and they're very involved until they start doing a few projects around the home and they start fixing up the flower bed or putting a few extra pieces of grass around the fence and then they're gone.

How many people become passionate until they get married, start a family, and then poof, the zeal was gone. And listen, there's nothing wrong with getting married.

That's a good thing. Nothing wrong fixing up your house. All those things are fine but not if they take away your passion for the Lord. Amen? I mean, remember, dullness is a slow process. It doesn't happen right away.

[ 24 : 08 ] So you have to watch out for it constantly. This phrase, dullness of hearing, it could be used to refer to a lot of things.

It could be used to refer to the fact that they were dull hearing sermons because he says, I know some of this is hard to explain but I can see you drifting off as I say it. I can see you falling asleep.

It could be talking about the fact that they were dull in their quiet times when they were home with their prayer life in their prayer closet. They were dull in their worship. They were dull taking counsel from other Christians.

They were just dull all over the place which is convicting because we've all been there before. So this is an area that we really need to watch and give attention to. But it brings us to another principle for how to grow as a Christian and that is to stop neglecting the elementary things.

We're just going to go through these as we see them in the passage here. But the first one is to stop being dull of hearing. But secondly, to grow you need to stop neglecting the elementary things which means that when you struggle with growing one reason could be because you're forgetting to keep the main thing the main thing.

[ 25 : 21 ] You've got your priorities out of whack. If you look in verse 11 it says, for concerning him we have much to say and it's hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing for though by this time you ought to be teachers you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Now as you read this next verse it's obvious the rebuke continues in the passage. He's been convicting so far you would hope he might let off the gas pedal a little bit but he keeps going because after reproaching them for their slowness he now goes on to say something else and that is that they are not making progress.

If you look in verse 12 he says, for though by this time and the key word there is time. You might want to underline it in your Bibles because what he's saying is that I wouldn't say this to a brand new Christian because they've had time to grow but they haven't had time to grow but you have.

That's the problem. You have no excuse because you've been to Bible school and Bible college and Bible seminary. You've read theology books and devotional books and biblical counseling books.

You've been to Shepherds Conference and G3 Conference together for the Gospel Conference. Some of you have met R.C. Sproul and shook his hand. So this is ridiculous he says. You need to be so much further along.

[ 26 : 57 ] He says, for though by this time you ought to be teachers and that doesn't mean teachers in front of the church. It means teachers behind the scenes. Because by this time I should be seeing the old men teaching the younger men in the church and I should be watching the older women teaching the younger women as Titus 2 talks about to love their husbands, love their children and be sensible, pure and workers in the home.

I should be watching the husbands teach their wives and the parents teach their kids and the young adults teach the teenagers but I'm not. Instead, he says, this is what I see.

You have need again for someone to instruct you in the elementary principles of the oracles of God. And that phrase, elementary principles, is a Greek word that referred to your ABCs.

In fact, it actually referred to a series of small wooden blocks parents in the first century would use to carve their ABCs into so their kids could play with them and learn them.

And the passage says, you guys are like that. Instead of being teachers, you're acting like school kids playing with blocks because you need someone to teach them your ABCs to you a second time.

[ 28 : 09 ] You've already heard them once. Someone's already given it to you before but you're so immature that you forgot it. So he says, I can't go into the deep end yet.

We've got to swim in the shallow pool. We'll talk about this in a minute but verse 12 says, you have come to need milk and not solid food.

And if you notice, again, it tells you that they have come to need this which implies it was a gradual thing too. When they first got saved, they couldn't wait to know more of the deeper things of God.

And when they originally came to Christ, there was a great passion to go further but now the passion has disappeared. This phrase, oracles of God, it refers to the word of God or the Bible in general or the basic things you learn from it when you first become a Christian.

And you guys have heard this before, I'm sure. So I don't need to say too much about it because anytime someone is saved or wants to be saved, we tell them the same thing and that is that you need to see yourself as a sinner who has broken the law of God and deserves to go to hell.

[ 29 : 17 ] If it were not for the fact that Jesus died for you, suffered in your place and became that great high priest and took the place of the offering. He did all that for you if you will call out on his name and believe and as you do that, you'll begin to grow and start the process of sanctification by reading your Bible and praying and sharing your faith and spending time with believers in the church and fellowshiping and staying away from things that tempt you.

But all that's wrapped up in this word. The basic things. The necessary things. And the author brings them up to say they're good and important but they won't do you any good if you keep neglecting them.

And they won't help you if someone has to keep teaching them to you over and over and over again because you forget. I grew up playing tennis and when you play sports they always tell you that when you're losing the answer is always the same.



You have to go back to the basics. And in tennis I remember when I was hitting the ball incorrectly they would always say the same things to me. I could repeat them in my sleep but you need to bend your knees, take your racket back quickly, keep your eye on the ball, keep your head down, stop losing your temper.

I've heard that one quite a bit. Get your feet back into position because that's how you fix it. You do the things you learned at first. The same way in the Christian life. And the way this applies to our lives is that I don't know where everyone's at on this today but I can promise you if you're struggling with something this morning I'll solve it by asking you a question.

[ 30 : 50 ] When's the last time you reflected on the gospel? When's the last time you remembered the simple truth that Jesus died for you? I mean if anything will take you away from dullness it's that, isn't it?

When I preached through Hebrews 5 with our church several of our people told me that the sermon really hit them and helped them because it's on that subject. Or if you find yourself having a hard time growing let's ask this when's the last time you shared the faith with someone?

When's the last time you joined an evangelism team and went up to a stranger and said are you a good person? Have you compared yourself to the Ten Commandments? That'll help you grow right away.

If you find yourself getting lazy when's the last time you opened up to someone and found help in the church? If you find yourself being lethargic when's the last time you had a quiet time and spent an hour with the Lord?

This is not rocket science. If you have a problem the answer's always the same. you go back to the things you did in the beginning. Martin Luther used to tell the story of the time a woman in his church came to him and said Pastor Luther why do you keep telling us the gospel every Sunday?

[ 32 : 08 ] To which he said because dear woman you keep forgetting it. If you remembered it the first time I wouldn't have to say it again. It's the same way here and that takes you to another principle for how to grow as a Christian and that is to show some discernment.

A third practical principle for how to grow in this text is to show some discernment which means you have to learn how to tell right from wrong. If you look in verse actually we'll get to the verse in a moment but this is what a mature person does and when you come to this point in the chapter you can tell what the author's doing here because he starts giving you another illustration to describe the issue of childishness.

If you look in verse 11 he tells them that they're dull and then in verse 12 he says they're acting like ignorant children who need to hear their ABCs again and now in the next verse he's going to call them babies to kick it up a notch.

He says I want to feed all this good hearty stuff to you but you can't stomach it because you're like an infant because the idea is not only do you need someone to pull out the building blocks and go over the alphabet with you but you need someone to put it in a bottle put the bib around your neck hold your head back and do baby talk while you drink it and say goo goo ga ga.

It's a funny picture because if you look in verse 12 he says even though by this time you ought to be teachers now you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God and you have come to need milk and not solid food for everyone who protakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness.

[ 33 : 59 ] And what that means is that there's nothing wrong drinking milk because adults do that too but the issue is that that's all you're drinking. The problem is that you don't have anything else in your diet but milk and that's wrong.

To look at this more closely the entire verse says for everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness for he is an infant. In other words when someone acts that way and they never go past the primary stages of the Christian life it shows they don't even know the Bible at all or there's a breakdown there because the Bible is meant to help you grow and not stay in the same place forever.

I mean those people who go through their entire lives calling themselves baby Christians have a real problem here. It shows they may not be Christians at all because nobody should stay that way forever.

If you went out of church today and you saw a 22 year old man walking down the street dressed like a baby you would say that's not normal, right? Even in BC that's strange. It would be the same way if you saw a 22 year old Christian doing the same thing.

Listen, when you have to go to someone and say did you read your Bible today? Don't you know you should read your Bible? It's important to read your Bible. Have you read your Bible? The Bible's important. There's something wrong there already. You shouldn't have to say that to somebody if they're a Christian.

[ 35 : 22 ] And if you go to them and say did you go to church today? When's the last time you went to church? Can I take you to church? Have you been to a church? Same thing. That's not healthy behavior. Have you prayed?

You know you're supposed to pray. Let's pray together. When have you prayed? They need to grow up. 1 Peter 2 verse 2 says like newborn babes long for the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

And the idea there is that babies long for milk so they can grow in it. They don't long for milk so they can stay in the infant stage. Because the idea here is that as you learn the word of let me read verse 14 to you.

Verse 14 says this it says but solid food is for the mature who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. And the idea there is that as you learn the word of God and you put it into practice and you apply these basic things of reading your Bible and going to church and praying this is what the word does.

It helps you learn how to exercise good judgment. It trains you up in that. It gives you the skills necessary to move forward in the Christian life.

[ 36 : 38 ] The reason this one is so important friends is because there are hundreds of decisions you have to make on a daily basis that are not spelled out in the Bible but they are made as you apply the principles of the Bible to them.

I'll give you a list of these like what to watch on TV or whether to watch TV at all. What investments to make with your money? What insurance to buy? What kind of car to drive? What to wear? What to eat?

What to drink? Where to go on vacation? Where to go for work? Where to go for school? I mean all that stuff is not found in chapter and verse in the Bible. It's found when you take the overarching themes of wisdom and discernment and discretion that are found in the Bible and you live them out.

That's what a mature person does. Anytime someone in my church comes to me and asks me what kind of car God wants them to drive I know there's automatically a problem there.

I mean they don't have cars in the Bible right? I can tell you what kind of donkey you should drive in the Bible but a camel say that as a joke but not a dog. The Lord gives you freedom in that as long as you're practicing biblical stewardship and you're avoiding greed and things like that but it all goes back to the issue of growth.

[ 37 : 56 ] You wouldn't want as we all know you wouldn't want a child to pick out your car for you. They'd pick out the worst car imaginable because they have no sense of right and wrong but adults do.

That's what it means to grow. And another principle here for how to grow as a Christian is this you need to press on to maturity. A fourth principle for how to grow as a Christian is to press on to maturity which means that if you find yourself struggling in any of these areas the solution is simple and that is that you're not supposed to dwell on it or worry about it just make some changes by the grace of God and move on.

And I won't spend as much time on this one because it's very short in the passage but if you look in chapter 6 verse 1 he says, therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ let us press on to maturity.

Now when I first read this passage I thought it was kind of strange because I couldn't figure out why the chapter division was here. It seems like it might it could come later in chapter 6 verse 4 because that begins a brand new thought.

There he gets into the famous passage where it says for in the case of those who have been enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and have fallen away it's impossible to renew them to repentance. That might be a good place to put the chapter division because here he continues the train of thought that he was holding earlier when he says therefore leaving the elementary things about the Christ let us press on to maturity.

[ 39 : 35 ] And what the idea there is that this is how you leave those earlier things you press on and the word leaving it doesn't mean you need to abandon those things you learned before because you shouldn't abandon them there's never a time when you leave the fundamentals of the faith all together it just means you need to use them as a catalyst to advance on to other things.

There's two commands in this verse leave it and press on stop looking this way but look that way instead don't get all emotional about it don't get sentimental don't say what do I do if I find myself struggling to grow in the Christian life you know what to do take the Bible and apply it.

The word press on here it's translated go on in some translations or push ahead you could render it tough it out excel still more plug away show some tenacity give it some pluck put in a little sweat equity why because there's no other way to grow as a Christian you have to put your hand to the tractor and plow you know I don't know about you but I thought the author was going to give me something more elaborate than that I was hoping as I got to this point in the passage he would tell me that in order to grow I had to go on a spiritual retreat in the mountains of Squamish and enjoy that go spend a night on the gondola you know take in the mountains but he doesn't thought maybe he would tell me to go to one of those big crusades on TV and spend \$50 to hear somebody speak and give me four steps to fix my life he doesn't say that either thought he might tell me to go to Bible college or seminary that's where sanctification really happens no he just tells you to persevere which means if you're battling with lust this is what you do you press on if you're struggling with pride this is how you get over it you keep going by the mercies of God if you're wrestling with anger battling anxiety the answer is the same for all of it don't quit and I wish I could say more about that but the passage doesn't here because it gives us another principle for growth in the

Christian life and that is to stand on your foundation foundation a fifth principle for how to grow in the Christian life is to stand on your foundation which means if you know the truth put your foot down and stop second guessing it all the time the verse one says therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ let us press on to maturity not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and a faith toward God of instruction about washings and laying out of hands and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment now this is another point that we don't have to say a lot about even though it takes up a lot of space in the passage because they repeat some of these earlier things that we've said because the author uses another illustration here when he says to press on to maturity not laying again a foundation and the image there is that of a builder who keeps laying a foundation and then getting dissatisfied with it so he tears it up and he lays another one and then he tears it up and he lays another one then he tears it up and he lays another one which is a really silly thing to do we have a lot of contractors in Chilliwack right now

I see quite a few around Squamish as well and they're doing some amazing things I've seen some of those guys build houses on top of mountains and put excavators up there and there's three wheels on the ground and one hanging off the ledge but I've never seen anyone tear up the same groundwork over and over and over again that's just dumb nobody should do that but that's what these people were doing in the church because they would trust in Christ lay a foundation with him leave their old Jewish ways behind only to go back and have to start all over again and repeat and repeat the process and in order to explain this the passage gives you six things these people lay aside when they came to faith in the Lord and they're all Jewish in nature which is why when you read them it's a little hard to pick up on what he's saying but they all have a Hebrew background but it says they should not lay again a foundation of repentance from dead works and that means dead Jewish works or the dead works of the law that could save no one things like the sacrifices and the offerings and ceremonies we talked about earlier no one gets to heaven through that the term could also refer to the dead works of sin because in order to be saved you have to repent of that too and it also mentions faith towards

[ 44 : 29 ] God as opposed to faith in works because that's another basic principle of Christianity as we said earlier in order to be saved you have to realize that you're saved by faith alone and nothing else not on the things you do like the sacrifices it mentions instructions about washings which doesn't refer to baptism because it says washings plural and baptism is never referred to that way in the New Testament it refers to this is a reference to all the Jewish bathing rituals they would do before they would eat a meal or kill an animal refers to the laying on of hands because before a sacrifice was killed the sinner had to do that he would put his hand on the head of the animal in order to identify with it and say the animal is dying for me verse 2 mentions the resurrection of the dead because the Jews had some funny ideas about that it talks about the eternal judgment of the dead because it's the same way there but the reason the author brings this up here is to ask the question why do you guys want to keep going back to that now

I'm trying to teach you about Christ I'm trying to get your eyes fixed on him I'm trying to show you that he alone can save you but you seem to keep getting distracted by all that stuff that has nothing to do with him which is making you crazy and it's hard to explain how much this meant to the Jews but every one of these would have struck a chord with them you can take the issue of washing here today if you were to go to the city of Jerusalem and go up to the temple mount you can see a series of old caves at the bottom that the Jews would use to wash themselves off before sacrificing in the temple and the way it worked is that they would take their clothes off go down one side of the cave and dunk themselves which is why it wasn't technically a baptism no one was baptizing them they just dunked themselves and then come out the other side and put fresh clothes on to symbolize that they were clean now and they were ready to worship God you can take the issue of the resurrection of the dead as well in this passage if you were to go to this this to Jerusalem again and you would see the Mount of

Olives they have hundreds maybe thousands of grave sites there because the Jews believe that when the Messiah returns he will do it on that mountain and they all want a front row seat they even pay a million dollars for a burial plot there so that they'll be the first in line and what the author the passage is saying here is that while that sounds impressive it's all useless without Christ because without him you're not going to rise and go to heaven anyway amen without him you're going to rise and go to hell so you need to get your priorities straight this morning and the way this relates to us is that it needs to be a warning because if you keep being lazy in the Christian life and if you keep acting like a baby and you keep showing no signs of progress do you know what could happen to you you could end up leaving the faith altogether like some of these Jews did because there's a progression of thought in the passage and that is that if you start out being dull in verse 11 and you don't repent and then you move on to becoming childish in verse 12 and you don't repent and then you act like an infant in verse 13 and don't repent then you walk off the foundation in chapter 6 and you don't repent then you might come to a place where you apostatize and completely walk away from Christ which is why the passage says all these frightening things below this in chapter 6 and I don't have time to get into all this if you want to hear about it I preached on it last week in Chilliwack you can listen to it on our website but give you a sample when he says in verse 4 that for in the case of those who have tasted the heavenly gift and then have fallen away

I don't believe that refers to people who lose their salvation because you can't do that and once saved always saved but I think it refers to people who hung around the church and tasted the heavenly gift that way kind of like a person who tastes a free sample at Costco and says I don't want that anymore and then they left and they never repented it's impossible to win that person back this is the kind of person who prays a prayer when they're a child and walks an aisle and goes to confirmation class and gets sprinkled as a baby and sings in the choir and goes to the youth camp goes to the children's camp attends VBS every year only to leave the faith when they leave their parents house because it meant nothing to them it was just their parents Christianity and the lesson here is you don't want to do that that's a terrible place to be you want to grow and said I know I'm saying that over and over again this morning but let me say it again you want your love for

Christ to go deeper and deeper and deeper with the passing of time I heard one pastor describe it this way when he said that he remembers when an old drunk came up to him on the street one day and said hello preacher I'm one of your converts but I fell away several years ago because I went back to the bottle so the pastor replied then you must be one of my converts and not the Lord's because if you were the Lord you wouldn't act that way he's right God's converts don't fall away like that and it brings us to one more principle here for how to grow and we're going to round it off with this one just to review these other ones the first one is to stop being so dull of hearing and secondly in order to grow you need to stop forgetting the elementary things then you need to learn discernment then you press on then fifthly you stand on your foundation instead of waffling back and forth all the time the way some people do tell you what if the church in Canada is struggling with anything today it's the area of waffling and then we have we have people that come to our church and they tell us they have been looking for a church teaching the Bible and they go to this one and hear one thing they go to that one and hear another thing go to that one here another thing waffle waffle waffle waffle waffle you have to be different than that you have to show some resilience and brings you to one more principle for how to grow and that is that you need to throw yourself on the mercy of God the sixth and final principle for how to grow as a Christian is to throw yourself on God's mercy which means if you want to grow you have to realize there's only one way it happens and that is through God and

[ 51 : 12 ] God alone you can't do it yourself this is good news because as I'm going through this list I can hear some of you thinking well this is hard I mean how am I going to do all this and if you want to know he answers that for you next in the passage because he says in chapter 6 verse 2 he says leaving the elementary teachings about the Christ let us press on to maturity not laying again a foundation of all these things in verse 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment and this we will do if God permits and that's a lovely way to end the passage because after talking about you for so long and your responsibility in this the author now concludes by talking about God and his responsibility and he says this we will do which implies that he's confident he knows the church will respond the right way if God permits and when he says if God permits he's not telling us that you know we will do this if God allows it as if he's some kind of willy-nilly kind of God he's just making a general statement about his sovereignty because he's saying God has the power to help you change in this way and you can look at it like this I mean while it's true that sometimes we don't know what

God has permitted other times we do because the Bible says God wants his people to grow that's what he desires for them if you want to write this verse down first Thessalonians 4 verse 3 says that this is the will of God even your sanctification and that means you don't have to wonder what God's purpose is in your life as a believer or try to figure out his will as if it's hiding behind the bushes somewhere it's not hiding this is the will of God he wants you to be sanctified and the news of this passage is that if you do that he'll help you if you pursue sanctification God is on your side the word this in the verse it means all this all the things we've talked about this morning God will help you with there's not a single one that's left out of it so if you need help to stop being dull God will give you the help to stop being dull if you need his grace to remember the basics you can have his grace to remember the basics if you want his power to guide you in discernment he'll give you power for that all the power you'll need verse 3 also says this we will do if God permits not this we might do or this we may do or this we could do it's a sure and certain thing this we will do and this verse is it's so short there's not a lot you can draw out of it unless you tie it back into the previous ones but just take the issue of sluggishness

I'm betting some of you are really struggling with that today I mean I can see it on your faces or at least I could see on the faces of my congregation I know them very well I don't know you well enough to know what your faces look like when you're struggling with something but I could see our church and see that it was a real struggle for them because they come to church and all this stuff feels like it bounces off of them they show up and it all feels flat at times so that the sermon feels flat and the music feels flat and the prayers feel flat you know what you need to do if you find yourself in that predicament you need to call out to the Lord that's the answer you need to ask him for his power to work in your life in that way ask him to turn your heart around he'll do it he's that kind of God or we can look at the issue of childishness and having to keep going back to the basics for some of you I bet that's a problem too because you can't even remember the last time you read the Bible on your own you can't recall the last time you prayed you don't even know the last time you shared the faith with an unbeliever and you know it's wrong it shouldn't be that way you know what the solution is to that same thing call out to the Lord and he will light a fire in your heart for those things take the subject of persevering I bet some of you really don't know how to do that right now because you want to quit today you came to church this morning saying okay preacher one more sermon about something heavy like Melchizedek and I'm out of here I need something practical I have bills to pay I have kids to feed I got a to-do list that's a mile long don't tell me to grow tell me how okay fair enough you need to pray there's no other way growth is hard it's frustrating at times there's so much working against you the only way you can do it is with the grace of God all goes back to him I read a message online when I was preparing for this sermon that summed it up well when it said some people say they need God's help to make it through the day I need

God's help to go to Walmart that place is crazy but it's true you need God's help everywhere you need God's help at your job you need God's help at your school you need God's help at the grocery store you need it at your home and the good news is that you can have all the help you need if you're in Christ he is just one cry away and he'll answer you know I started out this morning talking about the sacrifices but one thing I forgot to mention is that there was a time when those sacrifices stopped for a season in Israel it was known as the years of the uprising when the Jews rebel against the Romans and threw them out it happened in the second century BC about 200 years before the book of Hebrews was written when the Roman ruler of Israel named Antiochus Epiphanes decided that he wanted to Romanize the Jews and abolish all their customs and do away with the sacrifices and circumcision and the Sabbath and all that stuff and as a result the Jews threw him out it's pretty amazing a man named

Mattathias and his five sons waged war against him and defeated them and on AD 164 or BC 164 they marched into the temple and cleansed it and tore down the statue of Zeus and killed all the false priests and relit the candles today and started sacrificing again and today that event is celebrated in a holiday called Hanukkah the festival of lights but the saddest part of that story is that a few centuries later in AD 70 the Romans would have the last laugh because they would come into the temple and raise it to the ground so that the Jews could never sacrifice there again even today there are no sacrifices you go into a synagogue they're not following the Old Testament in a synagogue they can't there's no way to do it but I mention that because what the book of Hebrews is telling you is that even so that's okay because you still have a sacrifice in Christ amen even though you don't have a temple anymore and even though you don't have priests and even though you don't have a place to give an offering you still have an offering in him and if anything it should make you want to grow more and more and more into his image does it have that effect on you today I pray that it does and let me close in a word of prayer heavenly father you are so gracious to us to give us a book like this and a reminder that said in a context a

[ 58 : 59 ] Hebrew context in this way that is so amazing the things you did through the Jews blow our minds and the grace and love and mercy and kindness you showed to them for a millennium are unfathomable but Lord the grace you've given us in Christ is greater and so Lord we do want to change in light of this Lord I pray that there's no believer here this morning that would go out of this room and say I just want to be same old same old for you I just want to live the same life I did before I just want to indulge in the same sins I just want to have the same spirit of apathy Lord I pray all that would be repentant of right away for those who are not in Christ Lord I pray that they can't grow that they would see the fact that they cannot grow in Christ they can't put off their sin because they're dead in it but there is a solution to that as well there is a Savior who died one perfect death who gave one perfect sacrifice and who rose one perfect resurrection that we may all enjoy life in him and they could have that as well if they would believe that this morning Lord I do pray for

Squamish Baptist Church I pray for them as they preach the gospel I pray for their pastor as he stands in his pulpit week after week and faithfully proclaims your word Lord would this be a growing church growing in spiritual things most importantly they please and honor you we pray this in Jesus name amen you you you you you you you you you you you you