

## I Must Be a Teacher

Most parents anxiously watch, with baby book in hand, to see that their children do everything on time. When should a child first roll over, crawl, take his first steps and speak his first word? At what point should he go on to eat cereal, mashed vegetables and meat? The list is endless. If a child achieves any of these a few days early, parents rejoice and brag. If a few days late, they make a speedy appointment with the doctor.

The writer of Hebrews gave a brief description of the way young Christians ought to develop. He saw the full-grown Christian as one who could teach others God's Truth. He said it began with going from drinking milk, representative of the simpler parts of the Truth, to feeding on the meat of God's Word, or the more complex teachings. Of course, the Hebrew brethren had failed to go on to meat eating and were unprepared to teach! "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food" (5:12).

Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who would "hunger and thirst after righteousness." He said they would be filled (Matthew 5:6). During the temptations in the wilderness, the Lord told Satan, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). Feeding the spiritual man is vital, since the physical man is dying! "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Unfortunately, some Christians never grow up and are unable to appreciate the "meat and potatoes" of God's Word. "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Such people tend to follow men instead of the Savior. They seek to satisfy their own desires and fail to seek the will of the Lord.

Coming to a fuller knowledge of God's will for my life means I must grow through experience. "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:13). The word translated "unskilled" can be defined as having no experience. I might say, "Well, I have been a part of the body of Christ for over 30 years. How dare you say I have no experience!" Unfortunately, **there is a difference between having 30 years of experience and one year of experience 30 times**. If I never learn from my mistakes and do not overcome the obstacles before me, I cannot grow in knowledge. No wonder Paul told Timothy, his son in the Gospel, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). He also explained, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The mature believer will be one who has exercised discernment in his life's choices. "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). If I want to grow, I must learn to "Test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The only way to learn how to use Scripture to determine what is right or wrong for me to practice is to consider a matter in light of God's Word and let His will guide my choices.

That was precisely what the Hebrew brethren had failed to do. The author of the book that bore their name wanted to go into a detailed discussion of Melchizedek's priesthood and its foreshadowing of the role of Christ, but they had been dull, sluggish or lazy (Hebrews 5:5-11). Believers who would positively impact those around them must be diligent seekers ready to teach others by answering their questions with the biblical reasons for their hopes. Peter instructed the scattered believers by saying, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed" (1 Peter 3:15-16).

I am not experiencing proper growth as a child of God if I have not gone on to a knowledge of the deeper teachings of His Word. If I cannot tell others the reason I have hope of going home to heaven, then I am stunted in my growth. In short, I need to immerse myself in the Word of God, ask God to help me have wisdom to apply it to my life and then show others what I have learned through the experience.

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