

“GROWING IN FAITH”

Hebrews 5:11-14

Message 1600

Faith is a part of our human existence. We all have faith. We all exercise faith. The object of our faith, what we believe in, will affect our character and conduct. It will determine what we are and what we do. That's why it is so important that we place our faith in the proper object. It is possible to grow in faith, praise the Lord, as we learn and put to practice what we learn.

I want quickly to say, however, that no one ever reaches his total possibility. We always have room for growth and improvement. The Bible always directs our faith toward God and teaches us how to grow in faith toward Him. **GROWING IN FAITH** is the normal Christian experience. We find teaching for faith growth in Hebrews 5:11-14.

11. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

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

14. 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.

To assure the way to grow in faith, the Apostle evaluates several **CONDITIONS** which may help or hinder us.

THE CONDITION OF STAGNATION is a hindrance to growing in faith. This is attributed to how people hear. “They are dull,” he said, “of hearing.” This means that we, like them, can close our ears. We can choose what we hear and we can choose how we hear. God gave us ears so we could hear. But we need to know how to select the truth, how to reject error.

The writer says that these people came to the condition of stagnation because they were dull of hearing. They stopped choosing, so they simply stopped growing. A stream that has no outlet becomes stagnant. As time goes on the stream will create a swamp that has very little value. So we, without listening with care, can become stagnant so that nothing of any value is produced of our lives and our faith stops growing.

THE CONDITION OF FRUSTRATION also keeps our faith from growing. Frustration can be attributed to the heart. The heart is the seat of decision and emotion. Growth takes place there. I am not talking about that physical member of your body that pumps your blood through your veins. But the Bible refers to the heart of man as the seat of decision and emotions.

The writer gives the evidence that these people had not grown in faith. When they should have been teachers they were still in need of someone teaching them again how to start, the first principles of the oracles of God. Now the foundation, the starting point, is very important. You will never arrive at the right place if you start from the wrong place. And so the starting point is very important. But you should get beyond the starting point. When you don't, you are in the condition of frustration.

A baby's body requires milk. When the child is born it has no teeth and so it should be fed milk. In due time it will develop teeth to chew, so that other food can be fed to it. Every mother wants her child to grow properly, so she doesn't start it on solid foods, but she nurses it.

Now, she certainly would expect the child, after some months of development to evidence the growing experience. And that is exactly what God wants us to do in faith. Avoid the condition of frustration by simply staying by the starting point. Begin to eat solid food. Go on in your growth in faith.

THE CONDITION OF MATURATION is the normal experience of growth. This may be attributed to the mind, which is the seat of reason and thinking. We should, therefore, fill our minds with proper thoughts, with the right kind of thoughts, with thoughts that will help us to grow to full age, as the writer of this text suggests.

God has made us responsible: responsible for choices of right and wrong. This ability is built into our system. We can choose right or we can choose wrong. God made us, as we say, creatures of moral choice. Our consciences guide our choices, and therefore, they need instruction. We instruct our consciences by the Word of God.

It is wonderful that as God has made us responsible, He has also provided the way for us to come to some degree of maturity. But I want quickly to say there is always a possibility of growth. We must remember that, my friend. We never get to the complete maturity point until we reach the end of life. When it comes to fruit on the tree, you know that fully ripe fruit must be harvested. We will be full grown only when we awake in His likeness. So in this life we just keep on growing in faith.

How do you fit into these conditions? Give yourself to careful listening so you will not be in the condition of stagnation. Give yourself to feeding on the meat of the Word so you will not be in the condition of frustration, only using milk as the starting point. Give yourself to teaching your conscience by the Word of God so you will continue growing and coming to maturation, full age.

It is important, to grow in faith. Are you growing in faith?