

## Hebrews 5:11-14 – Milk or Meat - Lesson Summary

I'm always amazed by people who are self-motivated and driven. You've likely met some, or perhaps you are one. They're the people who set goals, remain committed, and go above and beyond what most others would in order to achieve. The further these individuals progress at their task, the greater knowledge or skills they acquire. They become experts, leaders, or instructors for those who would follow in their footsteps. This is what the author of Hebrews desired for his audience. He wanted them to be experts in faith, an example to others, and those who would teach others about Christ. Sadly, like many of us, they were not driven in this area. As a result, the author must return to giving them milk, rather than spiritual meat. In order to do so, he addresses their dull hearing, delayed growth, and then provides directions to maturity.

We quickly see that the audience's problem is not that they don't have access to the information they need, but instead, they are failing to consider it. They know the truth but they are no longer living through it or allowing it to guide and direct their lives. They've become indifferent, disinterested, and even forgetful of God's promises and deliverance through Christ. One commentator puts it this way, "They became intellectually dull because they were sluggish at heart." Could the same be said about you and I? Have we become dull of hearing when it comes to the message of the Gospel? When we do so, we face a similar situation as those the author was writing to. Our dull hearing leads to delayed growth.

The reality of delayed growth is that it leads to ineffectiveness. The author's clear expectation for his audience is that by this time they would be teaching others about the good news of the Gospel of Christ. He desired that they would be modeling in both word and deed the goodness of God in Christ. However, their dull hearing has prevented them from doing so and now they must start over with spiritual milk. They don't just need a reminder, but instead, to relearn the basics of their faith. It would be understandable at this point if the author simply walked away from pastoring this group. If we're honest, it's easiest to just walk away from those who are not dedicated to a task. However, his pastoral heart motivates his desire to share what the direction to maturity looks like.

His final challenge in these verses is that they would grow in discernment. Discernment is the key to spiritual maturity. Without discernment our spiritual immaturity will lead to moral immaturity. We don't need to look far to see how many churches are struggling in this way. Churches have caved to cultural pressure to become more accepting. There is a lack of accountability within the church. God's Word is minimized to good suggestions but certainly not truth. We have become dull of hearing, our growth delayed, and are now needing to be called to maturity. Maturity begins with discernment, and discernment flows from an understanding of Truth. In order to be discerning of what is right or wrong, truth or lie, good or bad, or wise or foolish, we must understand what God's Word says. The lens through which we view the world must be that of the Gospel. Only the Gospel provides the discernment necessary for pursuing a life of faith in a broken world and our sinful heart. Is God calling you to maturity? Is He exposing your dull hearing and delayed growth? If so, take heart, He isn't doing so in order to condemn you, but rather to mature your faith in Christ.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1) Consider all of the letter of Hebrews until this point. What are some of the ways the audience appears to be immature in their faith?
- 2) What are some of the areas in your life where you may be struggling with immaturity? How might you challenge yourself to grow in maturity instead?
- 3) Think about the movies/TV you watch, music you listen to, books you read, and news you hear. How could you engage these things with a Gospel focus?