

Growing To Maturity



The Book of Hebrews Labor of Love When I feel sluggish...

The preacher warned the Hebrews to ‘take care’ lest they fall away from the faith. (Heb 3:13) In this passage he challenges us to keep growing in Christ and then gives

another warning about turning from the faith. The good news is that the Hebrews had NOT fallen away...**but were becoming a little ‘sluggish.’**

A. Challenge to **Grow** Heb 6:1-3

- 1. The normal Christian life:** The preacher is speaking to 2nd century born-again Jews. They were NOT new believers—they had come out of ritualistic Judaism and been with the Lord for a few years. But many of them had NOT grown in the Lord. They seemed satisfied with the basic teaching of the faith—and were unwilling to go deeper in His Word.

B. Warning About NOT **Growing** Heb 6:4-8

- 1. Can a believer fall away from the Lord?** It is important to note that this passage like the rest of the book of Hebrews IS addressed to believers.
 - a. The theological significance of this passage:** The key to understanding this and other passages like it has mostly to do with the broader issue of what is called “The Doctrine of Free Will.”

(1) If you believe that according to Ephesians 1 that God ‘predestined’ before the creation of the world, some to be saved and some to go to hell—then you believe in limited free will and ‘*once saved always saved.*’ [Theistic Determinism]

(2) If you believe that according to Ephesians 1 that those who, ‘through’ free will accept the free gift of salvation are the ones who are predestined to His will—then you believe in unlimited free will and that it is possible that someone can exercise free will after believing, and choose to renounce and reject the work of Christ on the cross. *10:26-29* **This would involve an extreme case of apostasy.** *II Thes 3:1-12*

- b. Example of nature:** [:7-8] The preacher uses an agricultural metaphor to bring clarity to his point. The word ‘rejected’ in verse :8 means ‘worthless.’ See John 3:7-9

C. **Growing in Faith and Patience** Heb 6:9-12

- 1. Now concerning us:** [:9] If you are reading this handout, like the Hebrews were listening to the preacher—you do not have to worry about ‘having fallen away.’ God is ‘confident’ of better things for you—specifically your salvation.
- 2. Continue in love:** [:10] The evidence of our faith is that we labor (serve) the Lord for no other reason than we LOVE Him. We both ‘have’ and ‘do’ continue to minister to one another because HE first loved us...and we show His love by loving others.
- 3. Don’t get lazy:** [:11-12] The preacher gives one of his now familiar admonitions to be ‘diligent’ in the work of the Lord and to NOT become lazy (sluggish). **How do I do that?** Imitate those who were faithful and had patience to the end. Many are listed in God’s Hall of Faith in Hebrews chapter 11.

Hebrews 6:1-12 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, ***let us go on*** to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, **2** of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **3** And this we will do if God permits.

4 For it is impossible for ***those*** who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, **5** and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, **6 *if they fall away***, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, ***receives blessing from God***; **8** but if it bears thorns and briers, it is ***rejected*** and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning ***you***, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. **10** For God is not unjust to forget your ***work and labor of love*** which you have shown toward His name, in that you ***have ministered to the saints***, and ***do minister***. **11** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, **12** that you ***do not become sluggish***, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.