

HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST
"Part IX: A Warning To Mature Or Face God's Severe Discipline"
(Hebrews 6:1-8)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

[The illustrations in today's message refer to events that occurred in other churches in other states that are unrelated to this body, and I use them only as impartial teaching tools for us today.]

A young man who attended a Bible Church in another state once came into conflict with a decision of the Church's elders. Accordingly, he started to politick in the congregation against the elders, urging opposition to the elders' beliefs and actions on the issue.

The Pastor and Elders felt they needed to begin giving this man the "first and second" admonition taught in Titus 3:10-11 for divisiveness. To do so, they repeatedly paid him visits and asked him into the board meetings. At length the pastor went over the Scriptures they had used for their administrative decision, but to no avail. The man refused to listen to them, and held firmly to his stand.

A few weeks later, as he was shaving one morning at his bathroom sink, the young man suddenly fell over dead! Though having had no apparent history of the problem, his aorta, a main artery close to the heart had burst, killing him instantly.

It was the consensus of not only that Bible Church's pastor and board members, but the great majority of the congregation as well that the Lord had taken this young man's life because of his repeated and blatant refusals to hear the Biblical teaching of the Church's leaders, and to submit to their Biblical guidance!

This event was told to me by the pastor of this Bible Church to illustrate that God will discipline the believer unto death for refusing to HEED what Scripture is taught to him!

Well, is it TRUE that God will DO such a drastic thing even to a young man who believes in Christ but does not mature by applying Biblical truths to life?!

How do we KNOW, and what difference should it make in our lives?!

(We turn to the sermon's "Need" section as follows . . .)

Need: "If a Christian is happy focusing on sound but basic doctrine instead of APPLYING his beliefs to life's issues, won't God still be happy with him? Why be all motivated to MATURE so quickly?!"

- I. **The writer of Hebrews called his readers to go beyond focusing on basic beliefs to GROW by APPLYING them by FAITH in LIFE:**
 - A. Though basic Christian doctrines are good, the writer of Hebrews urged his readers to go beyond just focusing on them, Heb. 6:1-2.
 - B. The goal was to interact with Christ in whom they believed by prayer to see God bless in meeting one's daily needs, Heb. 5:10-14; 4:14-16.
 1. As we previously discovered, the writer's readers were stalled in their Christian growth via focusing on basic doctrines (6:1-2) and not experiencing Christ's High Priestly ministry in life, 5:10, 11-14.
 2. We learned that priestly ministry involved Christians getting answers to prayer by bringing their needs through their High Priest, Christ in prayer to God the Father, Heb. 5:10 with 4:14-16.
- II. **Then, the writer of Hebrews warned of their hardening and being disciplined by God unto DEATH if they failed to do so, Heb. 6:3-8:**
 - A. Failing to mature by applying doctrines in faith to life's needs leaves one unable to discern good and evil, Heb. 5:13-14.
 - B. That failure **inevitably** leads to one's making *some* choices that **counter** God's holiness, making God *angry*, 1 Pet. 1:15; Heb. 12:29.
 - C. Thus, Hebrews 6:3-8 warns of a **life-threatening** "hardening" of the believer stalled in immaturity so that God must **discipline** him!
 1. Though some teach Heb.6:3-8 means one can lose his salvation in "falling away," John 5:24 states that once one believes in Christ, his justified status is unconditionally, forever secure. **Thus, Hebrews 6:3-8 does NOT teach believers can LOSE their SALVATION!**
 2. Though others think the text speaks of those who never truly were saved, the terms used can **only** describe **actual believers** in Christ:
 - a. The term "illuminated" (enlightened) used of the people in 6:4a appears in Heb. 10:32 to speak of **becoming a real believer!**
 - b. The term "tasted" in Heb. 6:4 and 6:5 is used in Hebrews 2:9 to speak of the **actual** event of Christ's death, meaning the people in Heb. 6:4-5 had **actually** received Christ's eternal life!

- c. The term "partakers" in 6:4 is used in Heb. 12:8 of an experience **every true believer** has, meaning the folk in 6:4 were *believers*.
 - d. **Thus, Hebrews 6:3-8 does NOT refer to those with a FALSE profession of faith, but speaks of TRUE BELIEVERS!**
3. Thus, Hebrews 6:7-8 pictures God's discipline by *death* (1 Jn. 5:16) for **believers** who **harden** themselves by *stalling* from *maturing*:
- a. Verse 7 pictures a land that produces **good crops** after it has been blessed with rain. This illustration signifies the believer who receives God's gift of regeneration then grows he **should**. He develops discernment between good and evil and so lives productively and acceptably in God's view! (cf. 6:4b-5 with 6:7)
 - b. Verse 8 speaks of that **same rain-blessed** land, but views **that** land using the rain to yield *weeds*: (a) a **feminine participle** starts verse 8 (UBS Grk. N.T., p. 757; The Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 129. That makes it refer back to the feminine noun "*earth*" in verse 7. (b) Thus, the author pictures the **same** God-blessed, saved **believer** -- the **same "ground"** of verse 7 -- responding with a **sinful, improper stall of maturity** (weeds)!
 - c. Since such a believer in his lack of discerning good from evil can turn so hard against Christ's holy will that he **will NOT** repent of **sin**, his "growth stall" action destines him for eventual discipline.
 - d. Well, the **context** speaks of discipline unto **death** (cf. Heb. 3:17; 4:1, 11). Thus, the author warns us to mature or *eventually* suffer discipline via **premature physical death** (cf. 1 Jn. 5:16).

Application: *To be ETERNALLY and UNCONDITIONALLY saved from hell unto heaven, (1) we must believe on Christ as our Savior from sin, Jn. 3:16; Jn. 5:24. (2) As believers, we must (a) confess any sins we do (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) heed Scripture for a holy walk with God, 1 John 3:2. (3) However, THOUGH eternally secure in our REGENERATED STATUS, we can be DISCIPLINED by GOD unto a premature physical death if we fail to APPLY basic doctrines to a LIFE of FAITH (Heb. 6:8; 1 Jn. 5:16). (a) Thus, we must RELY on Christ to meet this life's needs by PRAYER and TRUST His Biblical PROMISES pertaining to life's needs, Heb. 4:14-16. (b) Thus, we must also thereby come to DISCERN good from evil in life as a RESULT of this EXPERIENCE, thereby staying upright in our walk in accord with God's will so as to avoid His discipline and enjoy His fulfilling blessings in life, Hebrews 5:13-14!*

Lesson: *We Christians DARE NOT willingly stall into simply focusing on basic Christian doctrines without APPLYING them in a life of faith. Otherwise we can come to HARDEN ourselves against what is truly right so that God has to discipline us even with DEATH! We MUST mature!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Years ago, I was involved a Youth Group in a church where we could get into lively discussions in Bible teaching times.

One summer afternoon, we got into a discussion on handling temptation. A girl in the youth group took the position that "the Devil is just too strong for me."

Some of the kids in the Youth Group knew she was secretly practicing immorality, but didn't dare say anything about it in the class! One of the guys who knew of her sins felt obliged to let the truth out and take the position that we **could overcome** temptation. Trying to be discreet, he merely quoted 1 Corinthians 10:13, saying: "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." He then spoke about leaning on God for the power to overcome all temptations based upon the promise of this verse.

I recall that there was no clear conclusion to the issue in the youth group although a few encouraged the young man to keep to his stand against the rebuttal by the girl with the sin problem! It was quite an event that is etched in my memory!

Well, **long-term**, what a **difference** those two opposing debaters saw in their respective lives as a result of their heeding or not heeding God's Word! (a) The young woman ended up living a life that make even a today's soap operas look tame! Thankfully, she came to her senses years later and yielded her heart to do God's will. However, she left behind her a long trail of broken dreams and bruised relationships! (b) As for the guy who quoted 1 Corinthians 10:13 that Sunday afternoon, he went on to live a productive life as a committed believer! I will never forget how the failure or success in **applying** that passage in 1 Corinthians 10:13 made in those two teen lives!

So, I have witnessed a great contrast between STAYING immature OR choosing to MATURE by APPLYING Scripture to life by faith! Yes -- the RESULTING CONTRASTS of the choice is ENORMOUS! Let us APPLY the doctrines we know to LIFE that we might enjoy great blessing -- NOT God's discipline!