

Hebrews 5:11-14; "Spiritual Regression" November 10, 2024

I. Welcome

A. Good morning! Ohayogozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni.

1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*

B. Before we dismiss our kids we're going to take a minute to pray for our dear sister in the Lord, Monica.

1. This is Monica's (LaVerdure) last Sunday with us and so we want to pray for her and the new season God has in store for her.

2. Monica has been a part of the CC Iwakuni family for the last couple of years and has helped serve in our worship ministry. We're grateful for the time we've had with her and want to pray for the new season that is ahead of her. She will be headed back to the United States continuing her career as an Army Veterinarian.

3. If I can have some of the church leadership and those who are willing to simply come lay hands upon our sister in agreement as we pray for her that would be great. (*Pray*)

C. As people make their way back to their seats, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School classrooms as well.

1. (*2nd Service; Remember to dismiss the Bible English class.*)

D. Before we get into our study, I want to simply thank Ethan and Keagan for leading our Wednesday evening night of prayer and worship this last week.

1. Jacob Bywater, Kevin Pulley, Andrew Donaldson, and I were away attending the annual Calvary Chapel Japan Senior Pastor and Leader's Conference in western Tokyo.

2. It was a great time of encouragement and refreshment in the Lord as we went through the book of Titus together.

3. Without the support of those guys staying behind to facilitate our mid-week service we would have had to cancel the service. So, I'm glad they were here to serve the Lord and the body here at Calvary. Again, thank you for your availability and willingness to serve.

E. Also, while up in Tokyo, we brought back with us a friend from Calvary Chapel Okinawa who will be with us for the next couple of months.

1. Eazar DeGuzman has been serving the Lord in Okinawa for the past five years. Before that he served alongside his father, Pastor Lito of Calvary Chapel Manila. He will be with us for the next couple of months simply serving the Lord and helping out where he can.

2. Please say "hi" to him if you see him in the hallways and make him feel welcome and part of the family here at CC Iwakuni.

F. Well, last week we started chapter 5 of the book of Hebrews and covered the first 10 verses in a message I entitled "Overqualified".

1. In our study we looked first at the qualifications of the earthly high priest in verses 1-4 and then we looked at the qualifications of Christ as our Great High Priest in verses 5-10.

2. We noted how Jesus not only met the qualifications for the earthly high priest, but exceeded them. He wasn't just qualified for the role, He was overqualified. Better in every way than the earthly high priests.

3. Today, we're going to pick up where we left off, starting in verse 11, but instead of continuing to discuss the priesthood and the order of Melchizedek, the author is going to once again turn his focus to yet another warning.

4. If you recall from our study thus far through the book of Hebrews, this was something the author would do from time to time throughout this letter. In fact, he will end up doing it a total of five times.

a. The first time he did so was in chapter 2 when he warned his audience against drifting from the Lord and about neglecting their great salvation in verses 1-4. (**Heb. 2:1**)

b. Then again, he paused to make another warning in chapter 3 where he warned his audience about the danger of unbelief; the danger of developing an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God as it stated in verse 12. (**Heb. 3:12**)

c. Today, we'll look at the beginning of his third warning. The warning will begin here in chapter 5 verse 11 and will proceed into and through chapter 6.

G. If you have your Bible with you and you haven't done so already, please make your way to the book of Hebrews chapter 5.

1. If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, feel free to reach down and borrow one of the Bibles situated under some of the chairs around you. We do think it is important to follow along in the Word and be able to read the text for yourself instead of simply relying upon me to read it for you.

2. And once you are there in chapter 5, I'd like to invite you all to rise to your feet in honor of God and His Word.

3. Our text this morning is going to be Hebrews chapter 5 verses 11-14, and the title of our study is going to be "**Spiritual Regression**".

4. For the sake of continuity, I'm going to begin our reading in verse 9, at the beginning of the sentence, as it is written in the NKJV. Some Bible translations have verse 11 as a new sentence, but the NKJV does not. So, we'll begin at verse 9 but focus in upon verses 11-14. Follow along in your Bible, as I read from mine.

5. Again, beginning at verse 9, the author writes... (*R & P*)

II. Introduction;

A. In chapter 5, the author was building his case for how Jesus is better than the original high priest Aaron and how He even comes from a better priesthood, having come from the order of Melchizedek rather than from the tribe of Levi and the descendants of Aaron.

1. But right when he wanted to go further and develop his point about the superiority of Jesus Christ and His priesthood, he stops and gives to us his third warning.
 2. This warning is another extended warning that will cover the rest of chapter 5 and a good portion of chapter 6. The author will pick up his train of thought regarding Jesus' priesthood and what it meant for Him to be of the order of Melchizedek, but he won't do so until chapter 7.
 3. In the meantime, we are left with another strong rebuke and warning for us to cover. As we go through this next section of scripture, we're going to see that the author breaks it up into different sections.
 - a. In our text today, the author simply lays out and identifies the problem; namely the spiritual regression of his audience.
 - b. But then in chapter 6, verses 1-3, the author will go on to lay out the solution; the need for his audience to grow into Christian maturity.
 - c. And then finally the author will give another stern warning regarding spiritual apostasy; turning away from the faith and the repercussions that could come in a such a situation in verses 4-12.
 - d. We'll get to those portions and more as the Lord tarries and allows us the opportunity to do so. But for now, we're simply going to focus in upon a very big problem that was identified by the author here at the end of chapter 5.
- B. The author is writing to a bunch of people who are thinking of going back to their old lives, to their old way of living under the law.
1. They were experiencing persecution for their faith in Christ, and some were beginning to think that maybe it would be best to just go back to the way things used to be, to abandon their faith in Christ and return to the laws and rituals of Judaism.
 2. They were being tempted to exchange their eternal relationship with Christ for the temporary rituals of the Law.
 3. The author had many things to write to them about, but his fear is that some had already began to turn back and were in danger of making a very poor decision that could have eternal consequences.
- C. As we go through our text, my hope for us this morning is that we would be able to identify some of the elements involved in spiritual regression; what it is and how we can avoid it ourselves.
1. Let's start by looking at our opening verse once again, verse 11.
- III. Hebrews 5:11;
- A. The author was in the middle of speaking about the order of Melchizedek and he was wanting to further explain the meaning behind the priestly line of Melchizedek and how Jesus was part of it. He had a lot to say about the matter, but he felt that it would be hard to explain to the audience.
1. There are certain things that we come across in the Bible that are hard to explain. They are difficult to interpret, difficult to understand.
 - a. There are things the church has been arguing about for centuries with seemingly no end in sight; no clear answer to land upon.
 - b. Part of the reason there is such a divide is because certain things are just difficult for us to understand, difficult for us to interpret.
 2. We have to remember that we have finite and fallible minds, and when we are reading and studying God's Word, we are trying to make sense of things that were written by an infinite and infallible God.
 - a. God's Word is sometimes challenging for us to comprehend. We try our best to understand it, to interpret it properly, but some things are beyond us, some things simply won't fit into our own preconceived ideas and notions about God; who He is, what He does, and how He operates.
 3. And you know what, I'm ok with that. I don't mind the fact that there are certain things in the Bible that I can't make complete sense of. I'm ok with the fact that I worship a God who is infinite and who is way beyond my own comprehension.
 4. God's word tells me that His thoughts are higher than my thoughts. His ways are higher than my ways.
 - a. Isaiah 55 states "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" (Isa. 55:8-9)
 5. While I am challenged to try and figure certain things out in the Bible, I do take solace in the idea that some things are simply beyond my comprehension, they are beyond my limited understanding; God's ways and thoughts truly are much higher than my own and I'm ok with that.
 - a. God's wisdom is infinitely greater than the wisdom of man. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Co. 1:20)
 - b. He writes in chapter 3, "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness'; and again 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.'" (1 Co. 3:18-20)
 - c. The thoughts of the wise are futile; they're empty and useless. The wisest thoughts of all mankind are nothing but foolishness compared to the thoughts and ways of the Lord.
 6. And so there may be times when we come across a difficult or challenging portion of scripture and we may have to simply leave that one to the Lord and trust that somehow, someday, it will all make sense when we stand before the Lord in His glory.

- B. But here is the thing, while there are things that are hard to explain, the issue with the audience of Hebrews was not the content of the message that made it hard to explain, but rather it was the condition of the people that made it hard to explain.
1. The people were not in a place where they were willing and ready to receive. The problem in this particular case wasn't the weight of the lesson, but rather the willingness of the listener.
 2. Our text tells us that the audience had become dull of hearing. And it is important that we pay attention to the tenses that are used here.
 - a. The writer writes, "you have become". It's the perfect tense which tells us that their current condition was the result of something that had happened in the past.
 - b. They weren't always dull of hearing, the implication is that at one time in their past they were sharp listeners, they were tuned in to what the Lord was saying and were receiving from the Lord, but now things are different, they had become dull of hearing.
 3. The word "dull" in the Greek is the word "nothros" and it only is used two times in all the NT and both are found in the book of Hebrews.
 - a. It is found here in verse 11 and then again in verse 12 of chapter 6 where the author writes, "that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (**Heb. 6:12**)
 - b. The word "sluggish" in chapter 6 verse 12 is the same Greek word that is here translated as "dull". The idea behind the word is that of someone who is lazy, or slothful. It speaks of someone being slow to learn not because of their own capacity, but because of their own lack of effort. They are spiritual slugs and sloths.
 - c. Have you ever watched a slug move, or a sloth climb? They are so incredibly SLOW! As slow as slugs and sloths are is how slow these people were to exercise any sort of spiritual discernment.
 4. They were dull of hearing. The idea behind this word is that of understanding. They were slow to understand, slow to comprehend. They were slow to take the truths of God and apply them to their lives.
 - a. The Christians Standard Bible translates the end of verse 11 as "you have become too lazy to understand." (**Heb. 5:11 CSB**)
 5. And so we see that the problem the author was describing was not with the intricacies of the instruction, but rather the laziness of the listener.
 - a. It isn't that the audience wanted to understand and were exercising their spiritual gifts to the best of their ability to try and come to a proper understanding of what was being taught. No, they were simply lazy. They had become lazy in their listening.
 - b. They had become distracted and disinterested in the things of the Lord; they were looking to head back to their old ways.

- c. Their appetite for spiritual things had diminished. They no longer hungered for the things of the Lord. And they ended up regressing in their spiritual walk, reverting back to their old ways, turning back to the days and times where they did not know the Lord personally and intimately. Living like they used to before they believed upon the word of God.
6. One of the clearest signs of spiritual regression is a dullness towards the Word of God; when we grow lazy and we lose interest in the Word of God we are headed for trouble.
 - a. There are those who say, "*I'm just not getting anything out of Bible study. I go to church, I listen to the pastor preach his message, but nothing really registers with me. I read the Bible, but at times it just seems like meaningless words*".
 - b. The problem isn't with God's Word, and the problem probably isn't with the pastor's preaching. More often than not, it is our own lack of hunger for the Word that makes us disinterested in the Word that makes us feel like none of it really matters.
 - c. We don't receive from the Lord, because we genuinely aren't interested in hearing from the Lord. How many of us come to church expecting to hear from the Lord? How many of us come with anticipation and excitement to receive from the Lord? Do we expect God to speak every time we open up our Bibles?
 - d. We need to be careful that we don't allow ourselves to become dull of hearing; that we don't become lazy listeners. Our desire should be that we become active listeners and that we remain active listeners all of our days.

C. Let's continue in our text and take a look at verse 12.

IV. Hebrews 5:12;

- A. The author starts this verse out with a declaration of what should have been. These people should have been teachers of the Word by now.
1. There is a certain expectation of growth that the Lord has for each of us.
 2. We aren't told how long the author's audience have been believers in the Lord. Most scholars put the writing of the book of Hebrews around the mid 60's of the first century. Which means Christianity as a whole had been around for around 30 years by the time of the writing.
 3. It's more than likely that the people the author is writing to are people who have been walking with the Lord for well over a decade, if not two.
 4. The expectation isn't that everyone should be teachers. We don't all have the gift of teaching. But as we walk with the Lord, we ought to be able to share the basic principles and elements of our faith with others.
 - a. The Scriptures exhort us to 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;" (**1 Pt. 3:15**)

5. Being able to share spiritual truth with others is a mark of maturity, while **the inability to teach others is a mark of immaturity and spiritual regression.**
 6. These people the author is writing to were immature, they had been walking with the Lord for some time, and yet they were regressing. They were adults that had been walking with the Lord for some time, and yet they needed to be treated like children.
 7. It was as if they were students who were set to graduate but then go back to kindergarten. All the progress they had once made in their walk with the Lord was all lost. And they were having to relearn their ABC's.
- B. That is basically what is meant when the author writes of their need for someone to teach them AGAIN the first principles of the oracles of God.
1. It's important that we note the author is not holding these people accountable for things they have *never learned*.
 - a. Sometimes we may feel guilty for not knowing certain things, or perhaps we may feel ashamed when people talk about things in the Bible we've never heard of before.
 - b. Don't be discouraged because you don't know things, or haven't been taught certain things. God doesn't expect us to learn everything all at once.
 - c. It's a process, God has each of us on a journey that He has constructed and planned out for each and every one of us.
 - d. It's more a question of whether or not we are growing. Do we know more now, then what we did last month, or last year, or from our childhood. The importance is upon growing in our faith and building upon the lessons we have already learned.
 2. You see, in this particular instance, the author isn't holding the people accountable for what they didn't know. These people had learned these things before.
 - a. At one time they were very proficient in these matters and had moved on to other things.
 - b. But now they've gotten to the point where they need someone to come alongside them and teach them the basics again; they need a teacher to teach them their spiritual ABCs all over again.
 3. In our walk with the Lord we are expected to grow. We are expected to build upon the truths and lessons we learned at the beginning of our journey. These truths are the foundation our lives are built upon.
 4. We are not to be passive participants in our walk with the Lord. God desires that we play an active part in our continued growth in the Lord.
 - a. **Nobody drifts into spiritual maturity.** We must determine to pursue it. We must take what we have learned and apply it to our lives continually.

- b. We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are to build our lives upon Christ and the truths of His glorious gospel. That is what is expected.
- C. Instead of being able to process solid food, his audience was in need of milk. This is a picture of a baby. Babies are those who can't process solid food, they are the ones who are in need of milk.
1. The author is using a very familiar illustration to speak of the overall maturity or lack thereof from his audience.
 2. Babies start off drinking only milk. And it isn't until they have developed and grown a bit that they can then start to transition to other food sources, other ways of receiving the necessary vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. They may start to eat cereal, or perhaps rice. Eventually they grow teach and they want to start using them. We may give them some fruit to try, some soft mashed up veggies. We start to feed them or make for them baby food. And before you know it they just start eating off our plates. It's all part of the growth process of a baby.
 3. Instead of growing and maturing into those who eat from the big boy table, the author's audience were instead relegated to waiting for a warmed-up bottle of milk.
 4. Now, don't get me wrong, we all needed milk at one time, and milk can be an important part of an adult life as well.
 - a. Peter writes, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby," (1 Pt. 2:2)
 - b. We are to desire the milk of the Word. The basics of the Word, the first principles of the oracles of God, but the objective is clear; it is so we may grow thereby.
 - c. As adults the expectation is that you would be partaking of larger, meatier meals and maybe you might have a glass of milk with your meal simply as a way to help wash it all down.
- D. Take a look at verse 13 with me.
- V. Hebrews 5:13;
- A. Milk is good. If you're as old as I am, you may recall the old milk slogan from the 80's and early 90's that was found in a number of commercials, "Milk, it does a body good".
1. These commercials were used to highlight all the benefits of milk from helping form strong bones, hair, and teeth. To promoting lean muscle and growth in young kids' bodies.
 2. It was a pretty successful ad campaign. I don't know about the sales, but I know that I drank a lot of milk as a kid, and I still remember some of those commercials 35+ years later.
- B. And what is true for our physical body, is also true of our spiritual body in this case. Milk is good and it does a spiritual body good.

1. We will never outgrow our need for milk, the first principles of the Word of God, the foundational truths of the Scriptures. But the expectation is that we add to our diet of milk more and more solid food. We need a steady diet of both milk and meat.
2. The audience the author was writing to was seemingly *only* able to partake of milk and as such they became unskilled in the word of righteousness.
 - a. The idea is that they became ignorant of true doctrine. They became ignorant, because they ignored the things that had been taught to them over time. They never bothered to put these truths into action. And ultimately, they became disinterested and lost their appetite for the Lord and His Word.
 - b. They were inexperienced in the word of God. They had been taught the word and had learned all about the basic principles of the faith, but they never experienced what it was like to put those truths into action; to build their lives upon them.
 - c. Some people have been going to church for a long time. And they've heard a lot of sermons, a lot of Sunday School lessons. But those things won't benefit them if they never bother to put those lessons into action and actually build their lives upon those truths they are taught.
3. Those who only partake of milk are unskilled in the word of righteousness and they are spiritual babes according to the end of verse 13.
 - a. Babies are cute and adorable, but it isn't cute to have an adult acting like a baby. Seeing a young adult crying for a bottle of milk or walking around in a diaper sucking his thumb would be disturbing.
 - b. That is what the author is depicting. These are adults, these are people who had already been trained up, they had already learned the important basic principles of the faith. But they have regressed in their spirit, they've gone back in time, and now they are back as if babes again, yet they are full grown adults.
4. To remain in spiritual infancy is not good; it is a big problem. We need to push on in our faith and grow up.
 - a. Paul faced something similar in his ministry with the city of Corinth.
 - b. In 1 Corinthians 3 we read a little about their situation. Paul writes, "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; (1 Co. 3:1-2)
 - c. One of the interesting things to consider about the church in Corinth is that they were a very busy church. Their calendars were filled with all sorts of activities, and they were an extremely gifted body as well. Many of them operated within the gifts of the Spirit as discussed in chapter 14 of the book of 1 Corinthians.

- d. They were busy and gifted, but carnal and immature; babes in Christ.
 - i. May that serve as a good reminder that spiritual giftedness and talent doesn't always equate to spiritual maturity.
 - ii. Sometimes we can mistake one for the other thinking that someone who is really gifted must be super spiritual; this isn't always the case. A person can be very charismatic and super gifted and yet still be very immature in their faith.
5. Spiritual maturity will often be directly **linked to your diet, what you are taking in, more so than what you are giving out.**
 - a. Getting involved in church is great and it can help you grow. The same is true about developing your spiritual gifts and putting them to use in order to edify the body.
 - b. But more important than both of those things is taking in God's Word and building your life upon it. We place a strong importance upon coming and sitting in service and hearing the word of God here at Calvary.
 - c. For those that serve in our children's ministry one service we encourage them to attend the other service.
 - i. Because you can't give out what you first haven't taken in for yourself. If all you do is come and serve and never take in the Word, you're not going to grow the way God intended for you.
 - ii. You need to be taking in a good strong diet of God's Word, so that you can then turn around and pour into others what God has poured into you.
 - d. We need to maintain a steady flow of taking in God's Word and building upon God's word, so that we can grow in our faith and be effective for His Kingdom.
- C. This brings us to the final verse of our text this morning, verse 14. Take a look at it with me and then we will look to wrap up our time of study together.
- VI. Hebrews 5:14;
 - A. Verse 14 starts out talking about to whom solid food belongs to. It's to those who are full of age; for those who are mature. Mature believers partake of solid food.
 1. Babies are unable to process solid food. Their little digestive system isn't able to handle it. But as they grow up, their systems advance with them and they are then able to partake of more complex foods; of solid foods. This is the way in which God has designed our bodies to work.
 2. The same is true spiritually. We start out with the pure milk of the word, the basic principles and foundational truths of the Scriptures. But then as we grow up and mature, we begin to take on more complex doctrines and theologies. We learn to exercise our spiritual discipline that we may continue to grow.

3. Babies tend to just sit around and sleep during their earliest days, but at some point there is an expectation for them to start growing up and doing new things.
 - a. We get excited as parents to highlight all of those new things, all of those “firsts”. First words, first laugh, first time sitting up, first time rolling over, first tooth, and so on and so on. Before long they are learning to crawl, and then walk, and then run. It happens so fast.
4. Our text highlights for us what those new things are for us spiritually. Those who are mature partake of solid food.
 - a. Here at Calvary Chapel Iwakuni, we place a high priority upon the systematic expositional teaching of God’s Word.
 - i. Expository teaching means we try our best to let the text speak for itself. We don’t come in with preconceived ideas and notions that will tint the way we look at the Scriptures. We want to do our best to simply teach what the text says.
 - ii. Systematic teaching speaks of our commitment to teach the Bible verse by verse, chapter by chapter, and book by book. We don’t pick and choose which topics we are going to cover. We simply read through the Bible and allow the Lord to set His agenda.
 - b. And as we commit to doing so, we will come across some challenging portions of Scripture, some real meaty portions if you will. And we need to learn how to take them in and digest them spiritually that we may grow by them.
 - c. We don’t skip the hard stuff and only keep to the basics, we take it in however it comes. Sometimes we are in portions of scripture that are more like milk, simple foundational truths. But then there are times that we get into some things that are more like meat, more complex theologies that stretch us and our understanding of God. Both are good and important for our own spiritual health.
 - d. Some churches out there will only give you the milk. They’ll only give you basic kindergarten material. You’ll get sermonettes for Christianettes; little 20-minute life talks that may have a verse or two referenced in it here or there.
 - e. Too many churches are content to simply give the people easy life lessons that are short and entertaining and devoid of any real meat. Pastors will only speak for 20 or so minutes and within that 20 minutes there will have to be a lot of jokes and a lot of stories to keep the people entertained.
 - f. That’s not our goal here at Calvary. We don’t aim to entertain you, we want to grow you. We want to see you mature in your walk with the Lord and learn how to process the whole counsel of God.
 - g. I’ve had a number of people come to me and ask about the length of our studies. “*Why are the teachings so long? Can’t you shorten them up a bit?*” And many of those people don’t grow, they don’t

- stick around, and they end up looking for something else somewhere else.
 - h. But those that stick around begin to develop a hunger for more of God’s Word. They begin to really grow and mature in their walk with the Lord, so much so that they want more.
 - i. They continue to come back week after week because they’ve tasted and seen that the Lord is good. They’ve tasted and seen how His word is powerful, how His word is living and life giving. It grows us and matures us in our faith.
 - j. That is the goal. The goal is to grow us to **a place of maturity**, a place where we hunger for more and more of God and His word.
- B. Verse 14 talks about how by reason of use the mature have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
 1. So not only are the mature the ones who partake of solid food, but they are also those who are described by reason of use. They not only partake of the meat, the solid food, but they also learn how to apply it; they learn how to put it into practice.
 - a. Sometimes we can fall short of this needed step. Some people love to learn God’s Word, they love to study all the different theologies and doctrines, they read commentaries, and listen to podcasts and can tell you all about different nuances of different beliefs, but they never bother to actually put those lessons into use. They never practice what they’ve learned.
 - b. And this is a dangerous place to be as well. We can fill our heads with all sorts of knowledge without ever allowing it to penetrate our hearts. Knowledge for knowledge’s sake usually leads to being puffed up with pride. And can lead to all sorts of other problems.
 - i. The Pharisees of Jesus’ day were like this. They prided themselves upon knowledge, but didn’t allow the word of God to penetrate their hearts and make them more like the Lord.
 2. A true mark of maturity is not how much knowledge we have, **but how much knowledge we apply**. You can have all sorts of knowledge, but if you don’t ever use that knowledge or apply that knowledge it doesn’t do you any good.
 - a. Simply having Bible knowledge doesn’t always equate to spiritual maturity. We need to exercise that knowledge so that we can discern between good and evil.
 - b. The word exercised at the end of verse 14 is the word “gymnazo” it’s where we get our English word gymnasium. It literally means to train, as in hitting the gym in order to train our bodies, to discipline our bodies.
 - c. I know a lot of you guys have learned to discipline your physical bodies; you hit the gym and you train hard. But don’t forget to train your spiritual body as well.

- i. Paul exhorted Timothy to exercise himself toward godliness and said that “bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” (1 Tim. 4:7b-8)
 - d. When we commit to training ourselves spiritually it will benefit us here and now, but also for the rest of all eternity.
- 3. And it will result in us being able to discern between good and evil. It will increase our discernment.
 - a. Children do not have great discernment. Babies will stick pretty much anything in their mouths because they don’t know any better.
 - b. Little kids will do some things that really don’t make a whole lot of sense. They are easily swayed and lured into doing some really dumb things. They’re kids, they aren’t known for their discernment.
 - c. But mature adults should be able to discern between good and evil. They should be able to discern between right and wrong. This ability to discern spiritually is a direct result of us being able to partake of solid food and make use of it; to apply it and train in it.
 - d. The more we spend time in God’s Word and allow it to train us, to mold us and shape us the easier it will be for us to discern when things don’t seem right, when people come along and start saying stuff that doesn’t make sense, you’ll be able to discern between what is good and what is evil. You won’t be led astray.
 - e. In his letter to the church in Ephesus Paul wrote how “we should no longer be children, tossed to and for and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15)
- 4. As we continue to partake of the solid food of the Word of God and train ourselves in it, may we grow in our discernment and no longer allow ourselves to be swayed like children. May we grow into all the Lord has for us. Let’s pray.