

SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY **(Hebrews 5:11-14)**

I. Indolence towards God's word (Hebrews 5:11).

- a. Learning is the same in any subject.
 - i. You begin with basic things and you add to them.
 - ii. You don't do algebra before you learn addition and subtraction.
 - iii. You don't learn to write until you learn to spell and so on.
- b. The same is true with spiritual matters.
- c. Our writer wanted to continue, and later will, talking about the priesthood of Melchisedek, but knew that the brethren to whom he was writing had a problem.
- d. It was a problem of indolence, or laziness.
 - i. The brethren were dull of hearing.
 - ii. Literally, they had lazy ears.
- e. When it came to God's word, they simply had become lazy.
- f. There are different causes for this, but it still happens today.
 - i. Some refuse to take in God's word.
 - (1) We don't read the Bible or read spiritually stimulating articles.
 - (2) We have a number of leftover Spiritual Swords every quarter.
 - (3) We only get 50.
 - (4) Some are not taking advantage of a great spiritual resource.
 - ii. Some don't listen well to the sermons.
 - (1) I know I have a responsibility to stand before you with something to say from God's word.
 - (2) Every preacher has that responsibility.
 - (3) You as a listener, however, have a responsibility to have your ears open.
 - (4) Long ago, Jesus take heed how you hear (Luke 8:18).
 - (5) Our minds have to be open to the spoken word of God.
 - iii. Some just take God's word for granted.
 - (1) I lived in the flight path of the FedEx planes in Memphis.
 - (2) Every night beginning around 8:30, they started coming over my house.
 - (3) Eventually, I got so used to them, I didn't even notice.
 - (4) We can get like that with God's word.
 - (5) The Puritan writer Richard Baxter wrote these words of advice, "Make it your work With diligence to apply the word as you are hearing it... Cast not all upon the minister, as those that will go no further than they are carried by force... You have work to do as well as the preacher, and should all the time be busy as he... you must open your mouths and digest it, for another cannot digest for you... therefore all the while be at work, and abhor the idle heart in hearing, as well as an idle minister."
 - (6) We can just show up on Sundays and expect a sermon and go home, or we can have true worship, which is joint participation.
- g. When we get lazy in our spiritual lives, it shows up in the way we act, and in the sins we commit.

II. An inability to share God's word (Hebrews 5:12a).

- h. Do you remember what you did to obey the gospel?
 - i. You probably are thinking, "Well of course, Ben. Do you think I'm stupid"?
 - ii. Can you tell others?
- i. It's amazing what we can share with others isn't it?
 - i. We can share recipes with others.
 - ii. We can share how to fix a complicated combustible engine.
 - iii. We can share the intricacies of proper throwing mechanics.
 - iv. We can share our insight into our favorite sports teams.
 - v. We can share gossip.
- j. How many of us are sharing the gospel?
- k. Our writer told these brethren that it was past time that they were teachers.
 - i. These brethren had been given the gospel message numerous years before receiving this letter.
 - ii. If it was sent to Jewish converts in the area of Judea, these brethren were some of the first converts.
 - iii. Hebrews was probably written in the early 60's, so about 30 years had passed between the brethren being taught the gospel and their receiving this letter.
- l. It's a shame when the deacon over the education department has to scrounge around for teachers and beg older Christians to teach younger Christians.
- m. These brethren had the need of being taught again the things they had already learned because they had forgotten them or allowed them to stagnate in their mind.
- n. The problem was this could be seen in their lives by their failure to remain faithful.
- o. It is needful for things to be gone over again and that is to be understood.
 - i. However, you and I, if we have been Christians for a while, should be able to teach them to others.
 - ii. Basic, first principle things, such as the plan of salvation, the one church, repentance, and doctrines such as these should not be hard concepts to mature Christians.

III. An insufficient diet (Hebrews 5:12-14).

- p. If you want to get sick, keep eating the wrong kinds foods.
 - i. Physically, ingesting the proper foods is key to good health.
 - ii. If you eat foods that are unhealthy, or refuse to eat, you are going to be unhealthy.
- q. Spiritually speaking, the food on which we must grow is the word of God (1 Peter 2:2).
 - i. Milk is fine for infants.
 - ii. A new convert is not ready for the type of study that a 20 year Christian should be doing.
- r. However, there is in the church, as there was with these brethren, people who are immature because they have not been eating properly.
 - i. Their diet of God's word is spotty at best.
 - ii. Relying on what one gets in 2 30 minute sermons and 2 45 minute class periods won't let you starve, but you won't grow much either.
- s. If we are still having the same problems and committing the same sins, we are

- showing that our spiritual diet is insufficient.
 - i. Someone once said that right learning leads to right living.
 - ii. If we fail to learn right, we can't live right.
 - iii. We won't overcome sin and remain faithful with a weak spiritual diet.
- t. We live in a time with more than enough avenues of study.
 - i. It is amazing what can be found with a simple google search.
 - ii. Sadly, many of us are ignoring the great opportunities for study that we have.
- u. So many tools lie within easy reach, but too many Christians are ignoring them.
- v. We grow when we exercise our senses.
 - i. Spiritually, we are to know right from wrong.
 - ii. We read and take in information to train our senses.
 - iii. The only way to do this is to take in the right information, which is God's word, and use it to find out what is right and wrong.
- w. The only way this is possible is if we use what God provides us.