

GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Hebrews: Mature for the Sake of Perseverance

Hebrews 6:1-8



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The podcast is available on all streaming platforms!**

SERMON NOTES

Have you ever heard people talking about going through some sort of hardship when they were young that forced them to mature quicker than otherwise would have happened? You hear people describe events in their lives that forced them to "grow up quickly." It could be the death of a parent or absent parents that forced you to learn independence. I would argue that in some ways my son, Kaleb, had to "grow up quickly" in terms of maturing in his understanding of life and death, doctrines of suffering and the sovereignty of God.

Why do we say that? What do we mean in those instances? We are saying that someone had to mature for the sake of enduring what they were now facing. What they were going through required them to mature quickly to face it and endure it.

This is exactly what our text is addressing today. This is what all Christians living in a post-Christian culture face. If we do not mature quickly in our faith, there are enough forces and factors surrounding us that will consume us. The Hebrew writer warns Christians that if we do not mature and grow up in our faith, then we will not persevere. It's not enough to say, "You should mature in your faith so you'll know a lot." Or "We should all try to grow in our faith so God will be happy with us." No, that's not the call here. The call of the Hebrew writer is to grow up and mature, don't linger around in immaturity, so that you can endure to the end. You need to mature in order to make it to the finish line.

Exegesis

In Hebrews 1-5, the author exalts Jesus Christ as the supreme revelation of God, greater than angels, Moses, and the high priests. He emphasizes that Jesus is the Son of God, the radiance of God's glory, and the exact imprint of His nature, who upholds the universe by His word. Jesus, fully God and fully man, became our merciful and faithful High Priest, offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin. The

author warns against drifting away from such a great salvation and urges believers to hold fast to their confession, pressing on to maturity in their faith.

That perfectly leads into where the passage goes today.

V 1-2 – ¹Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

It's time to advance forward, not abandon, the basic doctrines of the faith. It's time to go beyond needing the abc's. Imagine if education each year never went beyond teaching the abcs. You never leave them, because you're building off of them and using them in everything else you do. But when it comes to doctrine, you can't just live in the abcs of theology.

I met with a guy this week for lunch and he was telling me about his time as a Christian at one church for many years as just basically hearing the same message each week. It was always just a different version of John 3:16. He said they moved on because they knew there was more than what they were getting.

The Hebrew writer exhorts the church to go on to maturity and not to linger around at the elementary teachings forever. The “elementary doctrines” refer to foundational truths:

- Repentance from dead works (turning from sin/self-righteousness)
- Faith toward God (trusting in Christ)
- Instruction about washings (likely Old Testament purification rites or Christian baptism)
- Laying on of hands (possibly referring to ordination, commissioning, or impartation of blessing)
- Resurrection of the dead (final judgment and eternal life)
- Eternal judgment (future accountability before God)

These are essential doctrines, but they are meant as a foundation, not a stopping point.

We attempt to do this here: 1. in our worship gathering and preaching, 2. through MDWK and Men's/Women's, Equip Seminars, and more, 3. encouraging you to self-feed (Daily Doctrine).

V 3 – ³ *And this we will do if God permits.*

We will mature and press in further if God permits. Ultimately we recognize that God is the One who matures His people. This raises the sovereignty of God and responsibility of man debate. But it's not really a debate. We plant and water (our part) and God brings the growth (His part). We strive and pursue (our part) and God grows and matures us (His part). These are not enemies to each other. When you try to flatten these to one side or the other you always go into error. Those who emphasize God's sovereignty and minimize man's responsibility become passive or neglectful. Those who emphasize man's responsibility and minimize God's sovereignty become prideful or anxious. Someone once asked Charles Spurgeon how he reconciled God's sovereignty and man's responsibility and his answer was, "I don't reconcile friends."

V 4-6 – ⁴ *For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.*

Now we get into some interesting teaching. The Hebrew writer says it is "impossible" for those who once had been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift to be restored to repentance again after falling. What is he talking about? Who is the "those" he is referring to?

This is a primo example of the visible church vs the invisible church. The visible church, including the non-believer, by being in the fellowship have witnesses and experienced grace, the goodness of God, and the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Think about Judas as an example of this very thing.

I've seen this thing up close in our church. We've had two guys that come to mind who showed up here with their wives and appeared from everything indicator to be strong believers. One eventually abandoned his family and faith and wrecked his life. The other left the church and faith because he adopted worldly ideologies as a result of his wife's influence.

To "fall away" is to be an apostate. And the reason he says it is impossible, not hard or unlikely, to restore them again is because it is ultimately a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. This is the hardening of the heart. This is Romans 1 "given over" to their sinful desires. This is why we have warning passages all throughout Scripture. This is why we see Jesus warn in Matthew 7 about people saying "Lord Lord" at the judgment. This is why some receive the seed at first glance but it isn't good soil (Matthew 13) and why we are told to abide in the vine (John 15).

Since "because" they reject Christ. They are publicly denying/dishonoring Christ. Falling away is not a mere backsliding. It is willful turning away from Christ.

V 7-8 – ⁷For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ⁸But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

This closing illustration shows the contrast between fruitful land and worthless land. The question you should be asking is: which kind of field are you?

One of the ways you can begin to interpret this passage and make sense of it is by noticing his use of "us/we" language when describing the church and "they/those" language when describing the apostate. In Hebrews 6:1-8, the author uses "us/we" language 2 times and "them/those" language 4 times. This reinforces the dichotomy in the passage—distinguishing between the church, who is called to maturity, and apostates, who have fallen away and cannot be restored to repentance.

1 John 2:19 -- "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us."

This is another example of the us/they dichotomy. What keeps you in the "us/we" category instead of the "they/those" category? You endure to the end. You persevere. And the way you are exhorted to do that in this passage is to mature.

Let me highlight a few things out of this passage for our consideration:

1. The Danger of Cultural Christianity

This passage challenges the modern "nominal Christianity" where people think that exposure to the gospel or church involvement is enough. The warning against falling away is relevant in an age where many deconstruct their faith due to cultural pressures. Casual Christianity will lead you to being taken captive. You'll syncretize your Christian beliefs with ideologies of this world. You'll claim Jesus and live like the Devil. Fight this. Avoid it at all costs.

2. The Necessity of Doctrine in an Age Allergic to Doctrine

The idea of "leaving elementary doctrines" does not mean forsaking them, but growing deeper in understanding. Many churches today avoid theological depth, leading to spiritual immaturity and vulnerability to apostasy. We don't teach baby Christianity in our kids ministry or student ministry. There is no Jr. Holy Spirit or Jr. Bible. We teach the faith. Arise Camps is about giving students the truth, high-octane full lead. But the same is true with everything else. We want it to be clear for the new believer or young believer, but it is not catered to them. We need to grow up in our faith.

3. Perseverance vs. Easy-Believism

Some claim that a one-time decision for Christ guarantees salvation, but this passage warns against complacency. I'm not saying people haven't truly come to faith by walking an aisle or reciting a sinner's prayer. What I'm saying is that is not the call of the Scriptures. The Scriptures call us to trust Christ and follow Him. To endure. Salvation is by grace alone, but true faith endures (Phil. 2:12-13). Don't put your faith in something you did. Put your faith in Christ. Don't trust in your prayer. Trust in Jesus.

4. The Danger of "Experience-Based" Faith

Those described in vv. 4-6 had profound experiences but lacked genuine saving faith. Many today chase spiritual highs without true regeneration, making them susceptible to falling away when trials come. Many today look for big worship experiences and emotional gatherings. Don't chase a spiritual high or experience. Be rooted in truth and grounded in His Word.

This passage is both a warning and an encouragement. Those who belong to Christ will persevere, but perseverance requires maturity. The call is not just to avoid falling away, but to thrive in Christ—bearing fruit for His glory.



- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you grow in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you go to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?
- What is a sin you have been struggling with that you need to repent of?



- **REVIEW**

- Read Hebrews 6:1-8 and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different translation.
- Additional Scripture
 - 1 Corinthians 2:6-9
 - 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
 - Philippians 2:12-13
 - Hebrews 5:14
 - James 1:22-25
 - 1 Peter 2:2
- What big takeaways did you have from the sermon?
 - What did this teach you about God?
 - What did this teach you about man?
 - What did this teach you about salvation?

- **DISCUSS**

- What does it mean to “grow up quickly” in faith, and why is it necessary for Christians today?
- Why does the author of Hebrews urge believers to “leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity”?
- What is the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility in spiritual growth?
- How does Hebrews 6:4-6 describe those who fall away?
- What are some modern dangers of cultural Christianity?
- How does this passage challenge the idea of “easy-believism”?
- Why is a faith based only on experiences or emotions dangerous?
- What is a practical step you can take as a result of this sermon?
- How can you ensure that you do not fall away from the faith?

- **MEMORIZE**

- **John 16:33** – *“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*



- **BUILD UP:** How will you be built up this week? We have several discipleship opportunities for you to participate in.
 - **Life Groups** are a time and place to connect and learn to better follow Jesus together while abiding in Him. Life Groups are the primary means of disciple-making at TJC. Our groups focus on connecting, learning, following, and abiding. Groups meet weekly on various days/times across Wilson County. Contact Morgan Cates (morgan@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **MDWK** is a time of education and growth in order to build up the Journey Church body. We offer a handful of intentionally chosen classes that cover a broad range of topics and are taught by quality teachers from within our congregation. Classes are at 6:30p every Wednesday. Contact Morgan Cates (morgan@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Women** seeks to equip women to be rooted in the Word of God and bold in their faith. Our events and small groups focus on letting the gospel shape all spheres of our lives. Gather is the first Saturday of every month. Contact Laura DiLeonardi (laura@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Men** exists to equip men to show Jesus as incomparably glorious in every sphere of their lives. The men’s ministry meets on the 2nd Saturday of every month at 8:00a in the student center. Contact Morgan Cates (morgan@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Students** is passionate to see every parent equipped, every leader developed, and every student disciplined into baptized, self-feeding, disciple making followers of Jesus who are letting the gospel shape every sphere of their lives. Our student ministry meets on Wednesday nights from 6:00p-7:30p for MDWK worship and Sunday mornings at 8:30a and 10:00a for small group. Contact Larry Davis (larry@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Kids** believes that the Gospel saves, sanctifies, gathers and sends. It is our desire to see our kids understand that the Gospel truly does change everything and we will do this primarily by teaching our kids to love Jesus, showing them they can have fun in the process, and making sure they stay safe. Contact Nick Judd (nick@tjclive.com) for more information.
 - **TJC Young Adults** exists to equip young adults ages 18 to 29 in becoming passionate followers of Jesus who enter their life in Christ. We do this through intentional relationships, fellowship, and worship centered around the gospel. The Fount meets Tuesdays at 7:00p. Contact Hunter Christian (hunter@tjclive.com) for more information.
- **SEND OUT:** How do you plan to be sent out to engage the world around you? We have several opportunities for local and international missions.

- **For the City:** Acts 1:8 calls us to be engaged where we live and among the nations. The people of TJC seek to bring truth, grace, and hope to Lebanon and the surrounding area by mobilizing the church to be salt and light, not only for the city, but for your city. Take part in faithfully and obediently using your gifts to declare God's glory among those who are hopeless living among you today. Contact Jeff Long (jeff@tjclive.com) for more information.
- **For the Nations:** At TJC we exist to show Jesus as incomparably glorious to Lebanon and beyond. We are ambitious and passionate about strategically taking an active role in finishing the Great Commission as we actively pursue the unreached peoples of the world by mobilizing the entire church to pray, send, go and welcome international friends among us. Contact Shawn Casto (shawn@tjclive.com) for more information.
- **PRAYER**
 - **Pray over any request from your group members.**
 - **Pray for our staff:** Timo Serrano (Facilities Director)
 - **Pray for our replanters:** Christ's Fellowship
 - **Pray for our short-term teams:**
 - Southeast Asia Team departing on March 7, 2025
 - Europe Team departing on March 21, 2025
 - Southeast Asia Team departing on May 25, 2025
 - Kenya Summer Trip departing on May 25, 2025
 - **Pray for our long-term units on the mission field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
 - **Pray for the unreached.** Want to keep up with Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>