



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 6:1-12

I vividly remember going to Bible Camp every summer as a child and then as a teenager. The time away from the “regular” world and schedules provided a fantastic time of in-depth Bible Study and meditation upon the truths of God. (The tradition continues to this day for our family - we love attending Family and Youth Bible Camp, <http://fybiblecamp.com/>) Undoubtedly, camp attendees were challenged to grow deeper in their faith, and to put off the “sin that so easily entangles.” (Hebrews 12:1)

But as a teenager I began to notice a pattern among many of the young people that would prove to be disturbing and disconcerting. What I noticed was this: people would display a conviction of sin in their lives by raising a hand or coming to the altar in repentance. All of that is wonderful, but what happened a week later, or a month after that, or six weeks down the road was that they would be right back to their old sinful way of living. If they destroyed their Metallica and ACDC cd’s, they would be back in the store buying them again. If they had committed to purity concerning their relationships with the opposite sex, they would be right back to the inappropriate behavior that characterized their lives before Bible Camp. Now this wasn’t everyone - but it happened in many of these teenager’s lives.

What was going on?

And what is going on? - when professing Christians return to their old ways of life?

One of the things that is not happening is growth in spiritual maturity! This seems to be our author’s main concern here in this passage - leaving the “elementary doctrine” and moving on to maturity. And to add punch to his argument, he delivers a powerful warning that the situation I just described is not to be true of followers of Jesus Christ.

So what is going on here? How do we deal with these warning verses in light of the full revelation of God? Rather than wrestle with that question in this study, I am just going to let it stand. But if you are interested in further study as how to handle this passage, please check out <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-17-when-repentance-becomes-impossible-hebrews-64-8>

One thing is certain, the author’s desire and mine is that you will “show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Hebrews 6:11, 12)

Watch It  Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #11; Heb. 6:9-20 www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples

Open it

1. What is something that you misunderstood as a child? For example, one of my friends thought that the hymn “Onward Christian Soldiers” was “Onward 6-gun Holders”.

Read it

Hebrews 6:1-12

Explore it

2. What does our author want his readers to pursue? (v.1)
3. If a so-called Christian “falls away,” what is it impossible for them to do? (v.6)
4. Why is this impossible? (v.6)
5. What does solid food empower the believer to discern? (v.7,8)
6. Does the writer of Hebrews think that this will happen to his audience? (v.9)
7. What does he hope this warning will produce? (v.11)

Apply it

“Elementary Doctrine”

What are these basic, foundational truths of Christianity?

In this case, the *elementary principles* to move beyond are all items in the "common ground" between Christianity and Judaism. This was a "safe" common ground these Jewish Christians retreated to.

i. Because Christianity did grow out of Judaism, it was a more subtle temptation for a Jewish Christian to slip back into Judaism than it was for a formerly pagan Christian to go back to his pagan ways.

ii. Of course, these Jewish Christians did not want to abandon *religion*, but they did want to make it less distinctively *Christian*. Therefore, they went back to this "common ground" to avoid persecution. Living in this comfortable common ground, you would not stick out so much. A Jew and a Christian together could say, "Let's repent, let's have faith, let's perform ceremonial washings," and so forth. But this was a subtle denial of Jesus.

iii. This is entirely characteristic of those who feel discouraged, and wish to give up. There is always the temptation to still be religious, but not so "fanatical" about Jesus.¹

8. What is the writer referring to in stating, "...leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ..."? (Read Hebrews 5:12-14)

9. Describe the overall situation. What is the writer trying to identify in the lives of these believers?

¹https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Hbr/Hbr_6.cfm

10. How difficult has it been to grow in your faith? Are you different now than you were when you first put your faith in Christ? What have been some of the challenges you have faced (or are facing) that have hindered your development as a fully devoted disciple of Jesus Christ?

11. Now this question might make you do a little research: *What are the six basic teachings (“elementary doctrine” or “elementary teaching”) found in v.1 and 2, and what is their meaning?*

12. We are encouraged to grow past these basics of belief and into all that God has saved us to be. The alternative is frightening! What are some things Christians can do to keep from falling away, and to keep each other from falling away?

13. Have you helped a fellow Christian in their walk with God or has someone helped you to grow in your faith? Take a moment to share with the group an instance where God used you in someone's life or God used someone in your life to grow your faith. Then pray for God to give you an opportunity to do this!

14. Should we give assurance of salvation to a professing Christian who is not walking with Christ? Why/why not?

15. How does knowing that God sees and does not overlook the way that you work, and love encourage and motivate you to keep going and growing?

16. What are some ways that you “served the saints”? What is your number one ministry? What would you like to do for the Lord and His people but have never gotten the chance yet?

17. How does sluggishness or laziness relate to faith and patience? Is it easier to be patient when you are active?

18. What does this passage say to us personally in terms of our own walk and spiritual maturity? Are we still at the beginning? Are we sliding back towards the influences of the old life? What will we do to press onward?