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DATE _____

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
BIBLE SCHOOL THIRD EDITION
SESSION 7
PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST PART 1

Let us begin with **Heb. 6:1-2**:

"¹Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, ² Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment,"

Introduction

- Spiritual Infancy is lack of growth after the new birth.
- The spiritual infant is concerned with self rather than service.
- The spiritual infant is concerned with argument rather than action.
- The spiritual infant looks to people rather than the Master.

God wants you to leave the elementary principles of Christ -- to leave, (not abandon), the elementary principles about Christ. He wants you to progress beyond them.

A. What are the elementary principles?

They are mentioned as ***repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection, and eternal judgment.*** In short these are basic doctrines.

1. Now, we must realize that the most basic and fundamental doctrine we must know and believe is that Jesus is God in flesh (**John 1:1,14**) who bore our sins in his body on the cross (**1 Pet. 2:24**), who died, was buried, and rose from the dead (**1 Cor. 15:1-4**), and that we are justified by faith (**Rom. 4:1-5; 5:1**).
 - a. It is only due to Christ's work on the cross that we are able to press on to maturity. Now, back to the text.
2. The Greek in **Hebrews 6:1** says literally, ***"Therefore leaving the word of Christ of the beginning"*** The word "beginning" in Greek is "arche." It means beginning, or origin.
 - a. Christ's teachings on the basics are what the author of Hebrews is getting at. The basics are to be studied, and fed upon as an infant would feed upon milk.

- b. Once the foundation has been laid you are to improve not only in your understanding but in your practice and attitudes concerning spiritual things.
3. Doctrine is important, very important.
- a. Without it we cannot be saved and be established in the faith.
 - b. It defines who we believe in, what we believe concerning Him, and what He requires of us.
 - c. There are essentials to the faith that the Bible states are non-negotiable: The deity of Christ, the resurrection, salvation by grace.
 - d. It could be said that doctrine is of the mind because the answer to doctrinal questions often involves nothing more than memory.
 - 1. What does it mean to repent?
 - 2. What is baptism and is it necessary for salvation?
 - 3. What is the Trinity?
 - 4. What are the two natures of Christ?
 - 5. What is the Bible about?
 - 6. Are the Spiritual gifts still around?
 - 7. Who is the author of faith?
 - 8. What is the significance of the laying on of hands?
 - 9. What is the resurrection and the final judgment?
 - 10. What purpose does the Law serve in guiding our Christian lives?
 - 11. What will happen when Jesus returns?

12. These all are important questions, and the answers guide our understanding. Our understanding is what guides our actions and words.
- e. Doctrine is of the mind. It is, in one sense, easier than those teachings of Christ that deal with the heart.
 1. Because with the mind you only need to understand.
 2. With the heart you need to obey.

Maturity is when your understanding of truth and your action are one and the same.

4. God wants you to mature in Christ.
 - a. He wants you to grow. He wants you to mature.

Hebrews 6:1 says,

The English Standard version says, ***"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity."***

The KJV says, ***"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection..."***

NASB says, ***"Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity..."***

- c. The word for "perfection" or "maturity" in the Greek is "teleiotes."
 1. It means "a perfecter" or one who has in his own person raised faith to its perfection and so sets before us the highest example of faith."
- c. This is the level of maturity that God wants from you: A perfect faith. The only way to perfect your relationship with God and improve your walk in holiness, is do it by faith and obedience to His word.
 1. God does not command where He does not provide or empower.

- a. God works faith in the believer (John 6:29).
 - b. God has given everyone a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3).
 - c. ***"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves,"*** (James 1:22).
2. You can mature and grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus.
- d. As I said, the word in Greek for maturity or perfection here is "teleiotes." It comes from the Greek word "telos" which means to make perfect, to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end, to accomplish.
 - e. Phil. 1:6 says, ***"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."***
 - f. By doing a study of the word "telos" in the Bible we discover some interesting points about its usage.
 - 1. It is used in the context of doing the will of God.
 - a. Col. 4:12, ***"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."***
 - 2. It is used in the context of being able to distinguish good from evil.

Heb. 5:14, ***"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."***
 - 3. It is used to mean sacrifice.
 - a. Matt. 19:21, ***"Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.""***
 - 4. It is used to mean love.

- a. **Matthew 5:43-48** *"You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." ⁴⁴But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

Perhaps this last one is the most important.

5. Sacrifice, obedience to God, distinguishing good from evil, all are perfected in love. All are only possible in love.

- a. Jesus told us what the first and greatest commandment is. He said, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"* (**Matt. 22:37,39**).
- b. Jesus also said, *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"* (**John 13:34-35**).

5. **God wants you to progress beyond the elementary foundations of the faith, because...**

a. True spiritual maturity is of the Spirit not simply of the mind, which is why Paul says *"...let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...* He is saying let us progress beyond the basics and start living what we claim to know.

b. It could be said that the level of maturity that is desired by Paul could be summed up in the doctrine of love. Because that is what Jesus is, incarnate love.

1. **1 Cor. 13:4-8** says, *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in*

evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails.

c. Love that is other centered.

1. You've heard it said a hundred times: *"For God so loved the world He gave..."* (John 3:16)

Love gives.

a. Love sacrifices, love considers another more important, love rejoices in the wellbeing and safety of another, love begets honesty, integrity, and character. Love unites people together, brings out forgiveness, and even anoints the hearts of God's people to contemplate on holiness, purity, forgiveness, humility, patience, and more.

d. God wants you to be mature.

Hebrews 6:1a; *"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection;..."*

Notice in the following verses (vv. 4-6), the writer speaks of being enlightened, tasting the heavenly gift, having been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and those having fallen away cannot be renewed again to repentance because they "again crucify to themselves the Son of God." This sermon isn't about what this means. Rather, it is about the centrality of Christ and his sacrifice on the cross.

1. Maturity doesn't just mean knowing more doctrine.
2. Maturity doesn't just mean you don't argue with your spouse as much.
3. Maturity doesn't just mean you no longer steal or lie.
4. Maturity can only be judged by the standard of Christ
5. In Christ means becoming more like Christ

- a. Jesus said, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me,"* (Luke 9:23).
- b. Jesus was God in flesh who possessed all authority in heaven and earth. He had the right to do whatever he wanted with us, this world, and the entire universe. But what did he choose to do?
 - 1. He humbled himself (Phil. 2:5-8).
 - 2. He taught others (Matt. 5)
 - 3. He loved all sorts of people (Mark 10:21; John 11:5-7)
 - 4. He forgave people of their sins
 - 5. He died for us (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
- c. This is what it means to be Christ-like, to be mature. It means to be humble, to teach, to love, to forgive, and if need be, to die for someone else.
- d. This is only possible with the indwelling of God in the person of Christ through whom we are called into fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9).

Conclusion

In infancy there is selfishness, quarreling, arguments, divisions, unreconciled relationships, unforgiven memories, and all such sins.

In maturity there is unity, reconciliation, healing, and of course, the manifestation of the love of Christ. Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we are able to escape the bonds of self-centered sin and grow in a loving relationship with Christ as we press on towards maturity.

Are you manifesting the true maturity that God wants of you? Are you seeking to grow in the grace, knowledge, and love of God? It is not mere doctrine that makes one mature. It is living the love of God in your heart, words, and deeds.

The only way maturity is achieved is when our eyes are on Christ.