



Hebrews 5:11-6:12 – Warning: Don't fall away!

It is amazing to watch the transformation that happens when people are around babies. It is not just grandparents either although they are the worst. You know what I'm talking about. People start acting like babies.

What if they lived like that? You would turn up to people's house and they'd be sitting around in nappies drinking milk from baby bottles.

There is something very wrong when people who should be grown up are still acting like babies. This is what this passage today is about.

So let's look at this passage under three points.

Act your age. You can't go back and you must go forwards.

Firstly..

1. Act your age

You have been Christians for a while start acting like.

Read: 5:11-12

He calls the readers **slow learners**. He is not saying they are academically slow or some how mentally retarded. The word is actually the word for lazy. See v6:12. So they are not acting on what they know. They are letting the word of God sail right pass them instead of grabbing it. As we have heard before it not just about listening but obeying what you hear.

In fact the expectation he has of them in verse 12 is that they should be **teachers**. They should have so listened that they have understood and know things well enough to be able to teach others. Instead of them teaching others they someone to teach them.

It is like most people's response to the **Flight safety instructions** on a plane – you switch and say oh I know that stuff.

You might know the basics when you hear them but you can't explain to someone else if you had to. If the plane was going down you be asking the person next to you. How do you do this?

So even hearing preaching as one preacher says is like a dull routine.

The next image he uses to talk about their position is that they are **babies**. **V.13**

Why? What's the root of the problem? Verse 14 says they don't have their faculties trained to distinguish good from evil. What is good from what is bad, what is right from what is wrong. They ought to be morally alert and sharp and discerning and discriminating in their battle with sin and evil. But they aren't.

So why aren't these people mature, and ready to move on to more advanced teaching? They are lazy. Why? No practice. Verse 14 says they have not taken the word of righteousness and exercised with it. They have not worked out fully the practical, moral implications of the knowledge they do have. And so they are not ready for the meat of advanced teaching.

I went to schoolies week on the Gold Coast in 1988. It is an easy opportunity for anyone to be irresponsible. It is only one week. You need to let your hair down after studying so hard. No

one really knows you because you are away from home. Yeah you know you have just finished school but why not delay the reality of needing to now act like an adult. Very tempting.

How many of us have not wanted a day without any responsibility? We don't want to have to do anything. To forget the pressure of exams and financial restraints; the person who is single, tired of making every decision on their own; the mother who is expected to know where each child and pitiful husband has left clothing, homework, keys, wallet. Just one day without responsibility?

But the mark of maturity is responsibility, and so it is for Christians. We cannot simply know the truth, we must live out the truth, we must persevere in trusting Christ.

Have you **don't have to be trained to be lazy**? It is so easy to become lazy in our Bible Reading or listening. Or reading of Christian books. Slowly forgetting our need for it we lose our desire for it.

Instead **we are to train**. The Greek word for "trained" in this verse is the word from which we get "gymnasium".

How are we trained? By constant use. As you only get fit if we go to the gym or exercise regularly so we only get spiritually fit or mature but regular spiritual exercise.

You won't survive by a bit on Sunday. We cannot live from Sunday to Sunday as we cannot expect to survive a meal once a week. Or even become teachers by even by a glance at the Bible.

Just like you can't expect to get by owning exercise equipment.

If we are those who truly belong to Jesus we must act our age because...

2. You can't go back 6:1-8

Not moving on from the basics means you are going backwards in your Christian life.

Read: v.1

The readers are not to go back and keep laying the foundation of their faith. They are to build on them. Once a builder lays the foundations he doesn't keep relaying them. It is like the person who has the same simple understanding of their faith as they did when they first believed.

The writer calls them the 'elementary teachings'. He lists them. They are all things at the beginning of the Christian life. It is essential for the basics to be in place but you must move on with them as the foundation. It is seen in an on the edge kind of commitment to church. This is what the writer of Hebrews is seeing in these Christians he is writing to. In doing this he says they are going backwards. This is why he gives the warning later in this section. If it was alright to stay this way he wouldn't warn them which he does next.

Read vv 4-8

Hard to think he is talking about Christians. It doesn't tie in with other passages like John 10 that say that God keeps his people to the end.

It would fit more with Mark 4 and the parable of the sower where some people receive the word with joy then trouble or persecution comes and they fall away. This is not just slipping but abandon faith and return to old ways.

VV.7&8 illustrate for us the results of the life of fruitlessness. If you are a Christian you will have fruit of that in your life. If you are not you will be fruitless and so be cursed and burned.

Apparently the addictive nature of web browsing on the internet can leave you with an attention span of 9 seconds - the same as a **goldfish**. The nature of the internet means that we are always flitting from one web site to another, remaining for a few seconds on each. The best of websites are called 'sticky sites', web sites designed to attract readers and keep them there. Then there are **emails**, which as one psychiatrist points out, are "very seductive": "You can't leave them alone when your computer beeps to tell you have a new message, even though you are working on quite an important task." Of course, perseverance is hardly a mark of our age: with computers, phones and mobile phones, we are easily distracted, and not very good at sticking with what we are doing, even if it is important. According to the book of Hebrews, perseverance is the mark of true Christian faith.

If you are a believer with a **tender conscience**, a Christian troubled by past sin genuinely repented of, a believer disturbed by present sin earnestly struggled with, doubting that you really are a Christian, fearing that you have blown it once too often; if that's you, you must hear the encouragement of all that God has done in your life, and you must know that you cannot go back.

If you are a **complacent believer**, living in continual disobedience and presuming upon God's grace, falsely assuming, "that God's kindness means that he is winking at [your] sin".

This warning is meant to arrest our attention, not to undermine a right confidence, but to demand a right perseverance. For the way that God keeps us trusting in his certain promises is through the warnings of his word.

If you are anxious b/c you think a **friend or loved one** is a Hebrews 6 type person and so can't be brought back. Don't be too quick to categorise them. They may not be. They maybe slack or may not have been a believer. So don't use this passage for an excuse for lack of pray for them or inactivity for not encouraging them or warning them. This the very means by which God keeps people.

Act your age. You can't go back.

3. You must go forwards 6:9-12

Assured faith goes onto maturity and perseveres.

Read: 9-12

The writer goes on to give an encouragement. Some of these believers were drifting. Some were hardening. Some worse. But it hadn't always been that way. He is confident that they will go on to maturity.

There had been a time when they were doing well living against the flow of public opinion, happy to be identified with Christ and his people in opposition. But instead of persevering in that faith they were drifting, and so the writer encourages each one of his readers not to give up. Past practice is only an encouragement if we are committed to present perseverance.

v.11 They are to go on with the same focus and hard work to the end. True faith perseveres.

v.12 They are not to be lazy and let the teaching about Jesus wash over them. As if it is so familiar they don't need to hear it. They are to imitate those who persevered and received their inheritance. True faith perseveres. The way they persevere is to listen to the means by which God keeps them. The warnings not to fall away.

Belinda and I have been married for 15 years. We've had some hard months. It wasn't so much because our relationship was struggling but because we had hit a new stage of life and our relationship hadn't been under the trial of this before. It is easy to begin to think there is something wrong with the relationship when external pressures have an impact on you.

What you have to hold onto is what you have. And for us it is 15 years of marriage. You are not going to throw away all the good times because of one hard spot.

It is easy in our Christian lives to hit a hard spot because of external pressure to start losing focus in our relationship. In reality to give up on all that we have in Christ.

There 3 types of people:-

1. Those who aren't lazy. This is many of you and so because you are mature you will hear the warning and take notice of it not thinking it is not for you. Why? Because you listen to the word of God.

2. The lazy. You are not grabbing hold of what you are hearing in fact you may not be hearing very much because you have lost the desire to read and to be fully committed to church and anything that will help you grow. This has not always been the case. You need to hear the warning. This will be the very thing that brings you to draw closer.

3. Not a Christian. This is all very new to you. Very confronting. Don't be lazy and not do anything about what you heard. Don't act like a baby with no responsibility. You have heard an important warning find out what you can do to escape the terrible consequences of ignoring it.