
Into Thy Word Bible Study in Hebrews

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Hebrews 6:1-12: *Beware of Apostasy!*

General idea: A warning against apostasy, so we take our faith seriously! Apostasy is falling away from the truths of the Word, as in thinking we have nothing left to learn. What you know just scratches the surface of what He has for us all. It is good to know the basics—in fact it is essential that we know what we believe—but if all we do is stay in the basics, we will never progress or advance in our faith and knowledge of Christ. God calls us to be deeply mature in our understating of Him and life. We are to grow and move forward in our spiritual development on the journey of our devotion of Christ. Just as a child grows rather than regresses in what he learns, so it is with our faith. The more we know, the more responsibility we have and the better understanding we have for defending our faith in the onslaughts of the world. We will know what evil and good are as well as the instructions on how to build a life of faith as a church that is triumphant. The more we commune with God, the more He communes to us; we become solid in faith, enlightened in Him, experienced in matters of faith and practice, and thus become of good use to God in the lives of others. If we do not grow, we humiliate Christ and shame His principles and call. We have to see that God's Word, His plan, and His teachings apply to us all. We can never think we have all we need, that we do not need to grow anymore or that discipleship is only for new Christians and not for us. We are called to taste His goodness and grow in it, to let Christ impact us continually and effectually and not to let weeds take up His precious room in our minds and souls. Be patient so you will have confidence as you are called to be better, stronger, and more faithful. For He is just and has a better plan than what you may have for you to carry His care to others as His example and tool. If not, you become the dull tool in the shed of His Church that has little use. Be strong in Him so your trust and assurance is built better and stronger; you are an inheritor of His Kingdom!

Contexts and Background:

This passage shows us the importance of our continual spiritual formation. We are given the object of our faith, Christ; as He is the One who gives us our faith, we are to respond back to Him by faith. If we do not know His Word, the Bible, we do not know much about Christ and thus will not grow in Him. Our lives will backslide and fall to apostasy because of our spiritual laziness. When we fail at studying and following the Bible, the rest of our life will fail as a result! The more we know and learn of the Bible, the better off our lives will be, and our faith and relationships will thrive; we can go through the trials of life and take on the opportunities that Jesus has for us (Heb. 4:11-13, 6: 13-7:28).

Commentary; Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Elementary teaching/doctrine.* Means the *basics* you give to new converts such as then, the converts to Judaism. Also seen in Acts 10 with Cornelius. Referring to who Christ is, what He has done, and our response of repentance. We start off with the basics of the faith, doctrine, and Bible, and then we cultivate our faith as we progress deeper; this must transpire before we can mature or lead others.
- *Go on to.* What Christ has further taught and called us to know and do. Faith is developed in communion with God, by learning about Him and communicating with Him through reading the Bible and being in prayer. If we just stay where we are and forget discipleship, we end up forfeiting the development of our faith and Christian life.
- *Repentance.* Turning away from sin and its darkness to the light of God so we grow in faith. The transformed heart is the antidote to sin (Luke 24:27; Acts 3:19; 20:21)!
- *Lead to death/dead works.* Referring to idols that people worshipped that were lifeless and led the person to nothing at best, and a life of worthlessness and apostasy at worst. Since this is, in context, directed to Christians, this does not mean we lose our salvation; rather, we will lead ourselves into a dead and useless faith, missing out on His blessings and ministry (John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:28-30; Heb. 7:25; 10:13).
- *Baptism/washings.* Perhaps here, this referred to the ceremonial cleanings of the pious Jews and priests. These are empty rituals when we are in Christ. Christian baptism is taken from the Jewish “proselyte” ceremony (newcomer to Judaism), which was a public act of repentance and/or showing one’s conversion to Judaism; it now means our identification in Christ. If we are identified in Christ, we will want to respond to Him in gratitude and grow in Him (Eph 4:5; Heb. 9:10).
- *Laying on of hands.* Being commissioned to do the work of God as in ordination to a church office; it can also mean the healing of the sick, praying for people, and a bestowal of a blessing, all building on the foundation of Christ and His work (Matt. 6:5; 16:18; 19:13-15; Luke 4:40; Acts 6:6; 8:16-17; 13:3; 19:5-6; 28:8; 1 Tim. 1:4; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6).
- *Resurrection of the dead.* Referred to a belief shared by both Judaism and Christianity that our lives here on earth are just the beginnings of what is to come in eternity (John 5:25-29; 11:25; 2 Cor. 4:14).
- *God permitting/if God permits.* Depending on the will of God and/or being reliant upon Him. Maturity realizes the need to seek and acknowledge God’s

help with spiritual growth in daily life. This was also a saying that this will be a difficult but doable task (1 Cor. 16:7).

- *Enlightened/illuminated* means having been converted to Christianity by Christ's "once and for all" sacrifice as taken by fact and faith—not just an intellectual idea. Adhering to the faith starts with the knowledge of God and practice of the Christian life, that it has been set in us by the Holy Spirit and cultivated by our practice. This may also have been an expression in the early church for repentance and baptism together (John 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; Heb. 10:2, 10, 26, 32).
- *Tasted*. Meaning having experienced the Christian life and being knowledgeable of Who Christ was and what He did. May also refer to communion.
- *Shared in the Holy Spirit*. Experiencing by viewing others and/or receiving Christ's regeneration; also the practicing of spiritual gifts. Also, further evidence in the genuineness of the conversion may refer that Christians are the sole beneficiaries of the work and gifting by the Holy Spirit.
- *Word of God*. Referring to God's precepts now as revealed in the Bible.
- *Powers*. Refers to seeing miracles, the work of the Apostles, and/or signs and wonders (Heb. 2:4).
- *Coming age*. A Jewish expression of the age of the Messiah and a Talmudic expression, of sorts, of His Millennial reign. This also refers to Christians as we experience a sample of eternity to come through our relationship with Christ (Mk 10:30; 1 Tim. 6:19; Heb. 4:10).
- *Fall away*. The conscious decision to turn away from God's Truth and to live in sin. Not referring to losing one's salvation; rather backsliding or moving away from Truth to pride or refusing to grow in Christ (1 John 2:19; 5:16)
- *Crucifying the Son of God*. Intentionally rebelling against God. This is bad because we know better! The more knowledge we have, the more responsibility we have. We hurt Christ when we disrespect Him and ignore His Truths and call. We can repent, but if our hearts become hard and we do not ask for forgiveness, God may not forgive; thus we become responsible for His death because this is a declaration that Christ was not worthy of absorbing our sin. When we know Christ, we are held accountable for what we know and for pursuing more faith and practice from learning of and from Him (Num. 14:22-23; Acts 18:5-6; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; James 5:19-20).
- *Public disgrace/contempt*. It is a revealing of one's public confession of faith as one deliberately sins, or rejects essential truth, or refuses to practice the

Faith. This is not about doubting faith or questioning God when life gets tough; it is sinning and seeking rationale and excuses for it.

- *Land that drinks...produces thorns.* A short parable, of an image of wickedness and the contrast to righteousness. The *land* represents God's blessing to His people in Judaism; *thorns* refers to our sin and its consequences. *Rain* is a metaphor for God's Word and Spirit (Isa. 5:1-7; 44:3-4; 55:10-11; Matt. 13:7-23; John 15:5-6; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; 1 John 5:16).
- *Danger of being cursed.* Meaning you should know better; sin has consequences! Or, one's actions prove he or she had never been saved (Matt. 13:1-23).
- *Not forget your work/ministry to the saints.* Continually helping those in need and following Christ's commands. May also refer to helping those in need by financial support and encouragement or teaching (Matt. 6:2-4; Rom. 15:25).
- *Diligence.* A moral exhortation to strive to continue to grow in the faith, and be a positive role model of Christ to the Church and world. Also a call to prove our faith by allowing our profession of faith to become complete in action (2 Pet. 1:10).
- *Lazy/sluggish.* As in a dull tool that can't be used effectively. We are called to the dependence of the will of God as only Christ can open our minds and hearts and bring us to spiritual maturity.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

What is God telling us? How sad it is when Christians go un-disciplined because they do not think it is necessary or important or relevant—to miss the fact that Christ Himself tells us that the chief role and duty of a church is to train and disciple its people so they can know and grow in Christ and thus be an impact in the world. When we do not do this, we end up useless, as leftover crumbs under the feast table of the kingdom. Perhaps some milk has been drunk, but no meat, no impact, no worthiness of contact of our life in Him to our situation and opportunities, so we miss out on the marvels of being used in His kingdom (Matt. 28:11-20; 2 Cor. 5:20; Heb. 4:11).

Another question is presented in this passage: how long can you go on in your Christian faith without learning and growing? How will you lead your life or do what is right? To do what is right, we have to know what is right; to grow in Christ, we have to know Christ, and we know Him by knowing His Word. For us to mature in our faith formation we have to grow; and we grow by listening to the solid food God has for us in His Word. In this way, we will be trained to know how to lead godly lives and be a resource and inspiration and perhaps an instructor in the ways of the faith to others too.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What gives you great comfort in times of trouble and stress?
2. What causes Christians to become the dull tool in the shed of His Church that has little use? How will you lead your life being dull or do what is right by not knowing what is right?
3. Why would some Christians think *I have all I need, I do not need to grow anymore; or, discipleship is only for new Christians and not for me?*
4. Why is it good to know the essentials of what we believe? What happens when all we do is stay in the basics and never progress or advance in our faith?
5. Why do some Christians think they do not need to grow in Christ? What would be some good excuses not to have a heart and mind that pursues or pleases God?
6. For us to mature in our “spiritual formation” (growing in sanctification in Christ) we have to grow and we grow by...?
7. How would you explain Apostasy? What kind of warning against apostasy would you need in order to take your faith seriously if you were backsliding?
8. What are the instructions on how to build a life of faith found in this passage? How could these build your church to be more triumphant? What would your church look like if this was done?

9. How would a better understanding of Christ and His teachings have an impact on you to defend your faith and the onslaughts of the world?
10. The more we commune in God, the more He communes to us. How has this been so with you?
11. How have you seen some Christians (do not name names) humiliate Christ and shame His principles and call? Why do they do so?
12. What do you need to do more of to understand that God's Word, His plan, and His teachings apply to you? What are you going to do about it?

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