

# Grow Up

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[ 0 : 00 ] Would you stand with me as we honor God's Word again, reading together Hebrews chapter 5, verses 11 through 14.

! Without this, we have much to say, and it's hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the organs of God.

You need milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his Word. Would you please be seated? Grow up. You've heard those words, I'm sure, at some point in your life.

Usually it's said in response to something that you did that annoyed someone, a moment where you didn't act your age or show the level of maturity that was expected of you.

[ 1 : 23 ] Those two words, grow up, were a sharp reminder to you to meet the level of maturity you should have reached by now.

One of the most effective ways, I think, to get a younger kid to act more mature is for an older kid to tell them, you're a baby or stop acting like a baby.

Deep down, every child has a powerful desire to grow up. Young kids look forward to becoming big kids because it means being trusted to do big things.

When I was a youth pastor, we took our youth group on summer mission trips and Jack, our son, who was very young at the time, would come with us.

Those trips lasted a week and we would go to cities like Nashville and Minneapolis. We typically would bring a group of 15 or so and we partnered with other churches and their youth groups, resulting in a large group of about 50 or 60 students and adults.

[ 2 : 32 ] And together we served, we ate, we stayed in the same location, which was usually a church building. But before we left on those trips, Danny and I would sit down with Jack and we would tell him, we got special permission to take you on this mission trip with us.

You're going to be the only little kid with a bunch of big kids. So if you go with us, you have to act like a big kid, which means no crying, no whining, and no complaining.

And he was excited to go. He promised us that he would act like a big kid and he did great on those trips. The other kids just loved him. And there were only a few times when Jack needed a reminder to act like a big kid.

And when we would tell him that, he would instantly start acting more mature. The writer of Hebrews does something similar here. Like a loving parent, he admonishes his readers to grow up. They're acting like babies in the faith when they should be grown up to the point where they no longer need their mother's milk and can eat solid food.

[ 3 : 49 ] He's urging his readers to act their spiritual age and develop an appetite for the solid food that is found in God's Word. Specifically, he's referring to the theological truths he's just addressed about Jesus being our superior high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

He'll pick that up again in chapter 7, but he interrupts that theological discussion here to exhort and to chastise his readers for their spiritual dullness, their infantile attitudes and immature approach to God's Word.

He wants to continue talking about Christ's priesthood, but he stops because he knows his audience. And he is aware that some of them are tempted at this point to mentally check out. They're still learning the alphabet when they should be spelling words. They're still trying to grasp how to add when they should be able to multiply and divide. They're still struggling to color within

the lines when they should be able to paint pictures.

They're like the kid in middle school who keeps getting held back and can grow a beard, but he can't grow up and act his age. It's not that the writer of Hebrews' audience is incapable of understanding the theological truths he's sharing.

[ 5 : 13 ] It's that they're too lazy to even try. They lack the mature ears and minds and hearts that are needed to grasp the deeper truths found in God's Word.

Although they have the ability to consume solid spiritual food, they do not yet have the appetite for it. This isn't the case for all of them.

There are some who possess the energy and the desire to investigate and understand spiritual concepts that can sometimes be hard to explain, but they desire to grow.

They want to be big kids in the faith. They want to know more about Jesus. They want to become more like Jesus. They are willing to train and to practice and to push themselves toward spiritual maturity.

The writer of Hebrews desires this for all of his readers. He wants them to grow up. He wants them to develop into spiritually mature Christians.

[ 6 : 14 ] And in these verses, he tells his readers and he tells us how to achieve that. The main idea for this morning's sermon. Spiritual maturity is achieved through the consistent practice of discernment.

Spiritual maturity is achieved through the consistent practice of discernment. I'll address discernment more when we make our way to verse 14, but right now I want to talk about spiritual maturity in general.

First, you can't reach spiritual maturity if you don't know Jesus savingly. If you don't have spiritual life in Christ, then there is nothing to mature.

There is nothing to grow. But once you are saved, you receive the spiritual life of Christ. After salvation, every Christian begins the process of spiritual growth.

We call this sanctification. The intent of this growth is to mature spiritually and to reach the final stage of our salvation, which is glorification.

[ 7 : 26 ] The Apostle Paul says that it's a process that will never end in this life. Talking about himself in Philippians chapter 3, verses 12 through 14, he says, Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Like the Apostle Paul, Christians are to press on toward deeper knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. This requires discipline. It means structuring our time to be consistently in God's word, in prayer, in worship, in fellowship, and in service.

These practices only result in spiritual maturity for a person who has been spiritually transformed.

The Bible says that when God saves a person, he seals them with the Holy Spirit who continues to work in their life, shaping them into the image of Jesus through a new desire to be more like Jesus, which means resisting sinful desires which hinder spiritual growth.

[ 9 : 01 ] Galatians 5.16 says, But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. The Greek word translated walk there means to walk with a purpose in view.

Then in Galatians 5.25, Paul uses a different word to describe our walk with the Spirit. There he says, If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

So as we practice the spiritual disciplines through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we walk towards a direction, towards a goal, one step at a time. Not transporting to the finish line, not flying to the finish line, not driving to the finish line, not taking any other shortcut because there is no shortcuts in this, but putting forth the physical exertion, walking, running, putting one foot in front of the other, submitting more and more to the Holy Spirit's control as we increasingly bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Those fruits are in Galatians 5.22-24, A Christian is like a good tree planted in good soil that's constantly watered by the Word of God.

And since it is filled with the life of the Holy Spirit, it naturally grows. It matures and it produces fruit. It's not a matter of if it will produce fruit, but how much fruit it will produce.

[10:53] Christians are at different stages of spiritual maturity, but genuine salvation should lead to spiritual growth. If you are truly saved, you should grow in spiritual maturity.

You should be able to look back to the moment of your salvation, to the present time, and see a change. Christians, the Bible says that God has given you all that you need to grow in spiritual maturity.

2 Peter 1, 3-8 says, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Being effective and fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord results in spiritual maturity.

[12:25] Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are able to discern and get better at discerning what things help us mature spiritually and avoid doing the things that don't.

If you are a Christian, can you look back to the day of your salvation and see that you have matured spiritually? The growth may not be as great as you would like, but there should be growth.

Some evidence of your becoming more like Jesus and less like your old unsaved self. Our text today encourages us all to grow up in Christ and it tells us an important way to do that.

It tells us how to stop acting like babies and start behaving like men and women of God. Our text today also serves as a segue into one of the strongest warning passages in the New Testament.

The writer of Hebrews, inspired by the Holy Spirit, doesn't seem to believe that there is such a thing as a permanent state of spiritual infancy. The purpose of this book is to show that Jesus is superior to all things.

[13:43] By highlighting His supremacy, the writer of Hebrews aims to encourage those who have confessed Christ but may be in danger of drifting away from that truth that they confessed.

He is concerned about the danger of spiritual infancy of many of his readers who haven't shown any evidence of spiritual growth and who may be slipping into apostasy.

An apostate is someone who seems to be a believer but who later totally rejects Christ, turns away from the sound teaching in God's Word and leaves the church.

There are some in this congregation who the writer of Hebrews is writing to who are still drinking milk when they should be eating solid food.

And he sees that as them being in danger of rejecting the great salvation of Jesus Christ, the only hope that anyone has to be saved from their sins. He urges them to examine their true spiritual condition and to see that their undeveloped spiritual growth is evidence of either spiritual lethargy or worse, an absence of genuine salvation, genuine saving faith that grows and develops when one walks with the Spirit.

[15:09] Some of you this morning may be in that category. You're in danger, friend. You need to examine yourself and discern whether or not you are truly in the faith.

I pray that the Lord will be gracious to reveal your true spiritual condition to you this morning that you will either be saved or if you are saved that this text will encourage you to wake up, to snap you out of your spiritual slumber and to encourage you to grow up in Christ.

Our text today serves like an examination of our spiritual condition. It's a three-step examination.

And I hope the results will either bring spiritual life to those of you who don't have it or spiritual maturity to those of you who do.

So we look at the first step in verse 11. It's the diagnosis. You are dull of hearing. The diagnosis.

You are dull of hearing. The writer of Hebrews begins his spiritual examination in verse 11 by stating the diagnosis that he observes in his readers.

About this, he says again, and about this refers to the priesthood of Christ at the order of Melchizedek. We have much to say. And it's hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing.

[16:39] The Greek word translated as dull can also be translated slow, sluggish, or lazy. It's not that the readers are incapable of hearing or understanding.

They aren't dumb. They're lazy. They don't want to listen. They are zoned out. They can hear, but they are choosing not to listen because they aren't really interested.

You can tell the difference when someone is hearing you or when somebody is listening to you, can't you? I remember coaching Jack's little league teams.

After a game, we would gather all the boys together, the coaches, and we would talk about the game. Some kids were looking up. They were looking at us in the eyes.

They were making eye contact. They were nodding their heads as we were going over the things and the games that happened and how we needed to improve as a team. Other kids had their heads down.

[ 17 : 41 ] They were picking at the grass or pulling weeds or playing with their equipment or looking at the other fields and the other games that were going on. Their demeanor, their posture, communicated that they didn't really care.

And we'd have to repeatedly ask the kids, look at me. Listen to what we're saying. A spiritually unhealthy person hears God's Word, but they don't really listen to God's Word.

They know what it says, but they don't do what it says. They don't learn because they don't truly care. God's expectation is that when you hear His Word, you do something about it.

Listen again to the illustration Jesus uses to conclude His Sermon on the Mount as He tells His audience how to apply what He had just taught them. Matthew 7, 24 through 27.

Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

[ 19 : 04 ] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. If you are doing what God's Word says, then you will become spiritually mature. To do what God's Word says, you have to read it, and you have to seek to understand what the Bible says, and it should interest you.

If it doesn't interest you, then you should ask yourself, why? Maybe it's because you don't know where to start, or you don't know how to study the Bible, and you need someone to teach you. If that's the case, then great. Please come find me or Pastor Tyler after church. But if God's Word doesn't interest you, if you aren't interested in knowing the One who created you and the One who came to save you, if you don't have an appetite for that, then friend, what does that say about the true condition of your immortal soul?

We are interested in the things that we love. If you aren't interested in Jesus or the things of God, then what does that say about the love that you profess to have for Him? You may be dull of hearing, or maybe you're content with the level of education and maturity that you have in the Lord. I couldn't imagine telling my wife, you know, I'm at a good place with what I know about you, so don't take this the wrong way because I love you, but I don't care to learn anything else about you. I don't think she would feel truly loved by me. Do you? If you truly love the Lord, you want to know more about Him. You want to learn so that you can know and delight in Him more. So that's the diagnosis. You are spiritually immature because you are dull of hearing. In the next step, the writer lists the deficiencies that contribute to their dull hearing, the deficiencies. You are unskilled in the word of righteousness.

Verse 12, beginning of verse 12 again says, for though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. Being dull hearers resulted in forgetfulness. Instead of being able to teach others, they needed to be taught the basics of the Christian faith, the basic ABCs of what Christians believe. Not all Christians are called or expected to be pastors or elders, but they are expected to be teachers in the sense that they should be able to share the basics of our Christian faith in the gospel with an unbeliever, or to at least be able to disciple a newer believer in the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Again, from Jesus' illustration about the wise and foolish builders, we learn that we have a responsibility to do something with what we hear from God's Word. Like a child who grows and develops, we should get to the point where we can feed ourselves and eventually learn how to cook for ourselves.

[ 22 : 42 ] Some members of the audience addressed by the writer of the Hebrews were at that stage where they should have been able to feed themselves spiritually, but they couldn't even be spoon-fed solid food.

They still needed to be nursed like a baby by its mother. Look at the rest of verse 12. You need milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child. The Greek word translated as child here describes an age range from infancy to a toddler.

Now, I'm about to say something that I don't want you to take the wrong way. I love babies. I love toddlers. I love Palm Sunday. It brings a tear to my eye when I see all of the kids in our church. But toddlers are very selfish people. How many of you with toddlers or have had toddlers have ever seen them show a willingness or an ability to help with chores around the house?

Do toddlers do dishes? No. Do toddlers vacuum the house? No. They'll play with their little toy vacuum like they are, but it doesn't clean anything.

[ 24 : 04 ] Do toddlers mow the lawn? No. Do toddlers prepare food? No. Do toddlers always do what you tell them to do?

No. Do you often have to teach your toddlers the things that you've already taught them before that they should have learned by now? Yes.

Toddlers are almost always takers, not givers. That's not their fault because they're toddlers.

We expect them to act like that. But eventually, as they grow, they should reach a level of maturity when they are expected to do those things.

If you are acting like a toddler when you are 15, 20, 30, 40 years old or older, something is seriously wrong with you.

[ 25 : 01 ] My parents sometimes visit our church. What would you think if the next time they came and I'd say I was at the front and I saw them in the back doors and I ran to them. I said, Mama, Dada, what if my mom then pulled out a bottle of milk and I sat on her lap while she fed it to me?

What if I didn't get my way about something in the church, maybe a business meeting, and instead of talking and discussing, I just fell on the ground and started flopping my hands around and holding my breath and rolling around crying on the floor?

You'd think something is seriously wrong. That's funny, but this isn't. A lot of churches are being led by spiritual toddlers, and a lot of church members act like spiritual babies when they don't get their way.

Is that how Jesus acted? Is that how Jesus behaved? He got angry about things that were worth getting angry about. He got sad over things that were worth getting sad about.

He cried over things that were worth crying about. But he didn't act like a toddler. He didn't serve himself. He didn't seek to get his own way. He humbled himself. At all points, he obeyed his father's will.

[ 26 : 22 ] He gave his life. To give us life. Philippians 2, 1 through 16. I want to read that whole passage. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, writing to Christians in the church, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

[ 27 : 46 ] For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

How can you know Jesus, read that, and not have a desire to grow up and stop acting like a baby and have this desire to commit yourself to be more like him?

The writer of Hebrews tells us why. It's the result, for those who don't, it's the result of being unskilled in the word of righteousness.

The spiritually immature are lazy in their hearing, which causes them to act like toddlers and be unskilled in their ability to handle God's word. The Bible is more widely available in our country today than it ever has been in the history of this world.

You can get it in any form you want in our country. You can get it in a hard copy, an electronic copy. You can get an audio recording and have somebody read the Bible to you.

[ 29 : 11 ] You can get it for free. If you don't have a Bible, take one of the Bibles in the pews home with you today. I stopped counting how many Bibles I have in my office once I got to ten.

Seems like any pastor's conference I go to, they hand us a free Bible. I have tons of Bibles. That's just in my office. The Bible has never been more accessible to a culture than ours and more ignored by a culture with that kind of access to God's word than ours.

I'm not so much talking about our culture as I am the church. Let me share some recent 2025 results from Barna's study just on the topic of sin. This was a survey of Christians in America. Keep in mind that two-thirds of our adult population consider themselves to be Christians. That's 172 million people. Among key findings, 95% of self-identified Christians believe sin exists. 60% believe they are sinners. 66% believe everyone has sinned. And 72% believe people are basically good at heart.

[ 30 : 24 ] These numbers don't add up, especially to God's word. But you're thinking, you believe this and then not? It just shows the confusion in our culture because people ignore what God's word says. Among Protestants, 70% of mainline church attendees said they personally sin.

70%. And the larger population, adult members of Gen Z, that's 18 to 24-year-olds, are least likely to believe everyone sins, polling at 41%, followed by millennials at 49%, Gen X, 53%, and baby boomers at 57%.

Barna identifies six beliefs as central to the Christian narrative. These are the foundational, some of what is in the foundational principles in elementary doctrines that the writer of Hebrews is talking about here.

Sin is real. Every person who has ever or will ever live is a sinner. Every Christian is a sinner from conception. The only solution to the eternal consequences of sin is the forgiveness of those sins extended through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And people are not good at heart but are corrupt by nature, which causes their sinful behavior against God's will and standards. And this is how the study concludes with these words. As our nation is reeling from the tensions and sadness heightened by recent episodes of political violence, suicides, rampant crime, and other threats to our way of life and existence, the opportunity for the church to restore sanity and security by unashamedly proclaiming the truths conveyed in the Bible is undeniable.

[ 31 : 59 ] The only question is who will be bold enough to steadfastly share God's truth with a people who so desperately need His forgiveness and loving guidance.

Church, we are called to be the salt and the light of the world. We aren't called to run away but to go into the world and to share the gospel.

We are called by the Lord to be lifelong learners who are skilled in handling His Word and who are able to teach others.

If you've known Jesus savingly for some time, you ought to have an appetite for the solid food found in His Word. You ought to have an appetite for the meatier theological truths about Him.

You should want to get those things right. You should want to build on the foundation of the Christian faith that you have by pursuing deeper knowledge of God and His Word.

[ 33 : 03 ] You don't have to be a biblical scholar who knows Greek and Hebrew, but you shouldn't be content with acting like a baby instead of being one of the big kids. This problem wasn't unique to the people the book of Hebrews was addressed to.

In 1 Corinthians 3, verses 1 through 3, Paul tells the Corinthian church this, But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it, and even now you are not ready. For you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh

and behaving only in a human way?

There's a correlation here. Spiritual immorality is a result of spiritual immaturity. Being skilled in God's Word means not only understanding it, but applying it.

Hearing and doing. Our church's motto is built on God's Word. That means that as a church, we are going to strive to do what God's Word says.

[ 34 : 14 ] We're going to believe it. We're going to teach it. We're going to live by it. And you know what? That should be the motto of our lives too.

I want to be more like Jesus. Jesus said that those who love Him obey His commands in John 14, 15. His commands are found in the Bible that He's given to us.

To know the Bible is to be skilled in the Word of righteousness. Thus, the church, the person who builds their life on God's Word, will be spiritually mature and maturing, producing fruit, enduring the storms of life, living like Jesus and for Jesus because they have built their lives on the Word of Jesus.

When I went to seminary, I soon realized that I was not as mature in my faith as I should have been at that point. My teachers, I've shared this before, were using terms that I'd never heard before.

I'd be fumbling through my Bible trying to find passages in the minor prophets. I didn't even know that there was a difference between major prophets and minor prophets. But I took notes.

[ 35 : 32 ] I went to the library after class. I looked things up. I studied the Bible. I wanted to catch up. And you know what?

Any Christian can do that. You can take notes. You have people who you can ask your questions to who will help you find answers.

You can grow. You can mature. Look, God desires that for you. He wants you to be mature in the faith. And He will help you.

And He will teach you if you want to learn. In Matthew 11, 28 through 29, Jesus said, Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me. For I am gentle and lonely in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. If you don't have that desire to learn from Jesus, then again, I ask you to think about this.

[ 36 : 37 ] Why not? I'd advise you to spend time reviewing what you truly believe. I'd encourage you to analyze your life. Maybe you just need to grow up. And act your spiritual age.

Maybe you don't really believe what you claim to believe, though. There's hope for you. You can mature if you are saved.

And if you aren't saved, you can turn to God. You can confess your sins and repent of your sins. And He will save you. And He will give you His life.

He will transform you. He will change you. He will cause you to grow. The writer of Hebrews has diagnosed the problem of spiritual maturity. He's shared the deficiencies that cause and result from it.

In the last step, he gives a defense to us to prevent it. The defense. You need to train your power of discernment. And again, he says in verse 14, But solid food is for the mature for those who have their powers of discernment, trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

[ 37 : 49 ] This is the contrast between mature and immature believers. Through faithful, diligent study of God's Word, they become skilled in the Word of righteousness and discernment, distinguishing what is good for them from what is not good for them.

They know what is good for them to eat and what is not good for them to eat. And again, I'm picking on toddlers today. But a toddler will put just about anything into their mouth.

They'll even shove things up their nose. As a pastor, I've received frantic phone calls and text messages from parents asking me to pray for their toddler who may have swallowed a battery, a coin, or something else.

And again, we can't blame toddlers because they don't know any better. They aren't very discerning. If you put something hot or sharp within their reach, they're going to reach out and touch it and get hurt.

They don't know better. Parents of toddlers spend a lot of time teaching their kids what not to do. As they get older, they are better able to explain why they aren't able to do those things that they want to do because it will hurt them.

[ 39 : 04 ] It all boils down to a good parent loving their child and not wanting their child to be hurt. God has given us, He's given you His Word to keep you from sinning in ways that hurt you and hurt others.

He teaches us to discern what is good and what is evil. And it's up to us, though, to practice what He teaches us.

The word train in the Greek is *humnazo*, from which we get our English word for gym. The two words translated as constant practice is one word in the Greek, and it's used to describe a practice that becomes a habit.

The more you exercise discernment, the more it becomes a habit, and you are able to use discernment without even thinking about it. Adults do this all the time.

If something looks hot, you don't touch it. If something looks sharp, you handle it carefully. You don't put random things in your mouth.

[ 40 : 15 ] Think of it another way. If you needed open-heart surgery, you would want a surgeon with experience and with practice who knew what they were doing. You would want someone to instinctively know what to do, especially if something went wrong, who had that ability to discern without thinking.

You wouldn't want someone who had to consistently consult a textbook while you're opened up on the operating table to see what they need to do next. If you want to be a mature Christian, you must train your power of discernment by constant practice.

This means internalizing the fundamentals of our faith. It means trusting God's Word over your feelings or the opinions of others. It means changing your diet so that you know what is good for you to eat and what is not good for you to eat.

It means putting things before your eyes and into your minds that are healthy for your spirit. And conversely, it means not putting things before your eyes and into your minds that are unhealthy for you spiritually.

Jesus talked about this in Matthew 5, verses 29 through 30. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body and be thrown into hell.

[ 41 : 34 ] If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell. Jesus is being hyperbolic to make an important point.

If something is causing you to sin, if something is stunting your spiritual growth, cut it off or cut it out of your life.

If your smart phone causes you to sin, the smart thing, the discerning thing to do would be to get a dumb phone or to at least set boundaries for yourself.

If a person, a place, or a thing causes you to sin, use discernment to defend yourself against those influences.

You may need to cut those things out of your life. Jesus is saying, you know that it's not good for you.

[ 42 : 39 ] Do something about it. You perform the operation. You do what you need to do. Be obedient to me. Cut it out of your life. Think about those things.

Pray about those things and then do something about it so that you can grow up in Christ. How do we adjust according to what we've just heard? You must watch your diet. Uh-oh. I said it, diet. We don't like that word, do we? If you've ever been on a diet, you know how hard it can be to start a diet. But eventually, as you begin to see the results, as you begin to see the new shape that you are taking, you no longer desire those old foods, at least not in the way that you used to because you know that they're not good for you.

In the same way, the spiritual disciplines are disciplines. It takes time. It takes practice. But there will be results.

One of those results is discernment. And with discernment comes spiritual maturity. And with being more mature, you will be more like Jesus.

[ 43 : 54 ] And who else would you rather be like than Him? If you're here this morning and you have not trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then, friend, I tell this to you.

The Bible says you are being tossed to and fro by every wind of teaching. You are not rooted in anything that can give you life, that can give you health. Maybe you feel that way.

Maybe in hearing God's Word today, you've seen that truth. God has brought you here to hear His Word that you would have spiritual life so that you can grow in spiritual maturity.

As Christians, we're not saved because of what we do. We're saved because of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus lived the sinless life that we couldn't live. He died on the cross to atone for our sins and He rose again the third day, victorious over all the enemies that we could not defeat. And He calls you this morning to turn to Him in faith and to trust in Him and He will save you. For those of us whom the Lord has been gracious to save, I want to close with these words from Philippians 1, 9 through 11 and would pray that you would make this a prayer for yourself and for our church.

[ 45 : 12 ] Let God's Word have the last word. Philippians 1, 9 through 11. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Lord, it is my prayer, it's our prayer that Your love would abound more and more.

Lord, in my life and in the lives of those whom You've been gracious to save, that Lord, we would know Your Word better, that we would be skilled in the Word of righteousness, that we would have knowledge not to puff ourselves up, not to boast, but to give You glory through the lives that we live as living sacrifices, using discernment, putting into our minds and our hearts the things that are good for us, things that You would approve of, the things that are excellent, so that we would be pure and blameless in this world, that our lights would shine brightly in this dark age, that we would share the truth of who You are boldly, and that as a result of that, Lord, just the way we sharpen one another in the church, the way that we are bold with our confession of who You are, that there would be fruit, that there would be the fruit of righteousness that comes only through You, Jesus Christ, our Lord. And we pray that You would receive all the glory and all the praise, for You are worthy, and we thank You for giving us life.

We thank You for giving us Your Spirit. We thank You for giving us Your Word. We thank You, Lord, for using Your Word to spurn us on to become more like You.

[ 47 : 21 ] And who else would we want to be more like than You? In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.  
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