

## Milk and Meat: The Christian and Moral Discernment

Hebrews 5:11-14

One of the major criticisms that people give me is that I focus far too much on the grace and goodness of God and not nearly enough on the moral responsibilities and ethical behavior of Christians. I plead guilty. That's because the Word of God is more focused on revealing God than reforming man. However, there are some passages, like this one, that focus on why a Christian ought to be moral in his life and conduct.

### I. There is a concern we can become “dull of hearing” (v. 11).

*“Concerning Christ we have much to say ... but you have **become dull of hearing**”* (v. 11).

The word “dull” means sluggish. *“Show diligence until the end and **be not sluggish**, [same word], but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises”* (Heb. 6:12).

To be dull of hearing means you hear the promises of God but do not mix them with faith.

*“And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient. They were not able to enter because of **unbelief**”* (Hebrews 3:18-19).

Notice the switch from “disobedient” to “unbelief.” The root of all disobedience is unbelief.

*When God's promises bring no excitement of faith within you, then you are dull of hearing.*

### II. There is a cure for this “dullness of hearing” (v. 12-14).

How do you get well? If you have the disease called “dull of hearing” then what is the cure?

A person who is dull of hearing is compared to a babe (v. 12b-13) that has to drink milk.

There is nothing diseased about a baby's dependence on milk, so why use imagery of babies?

These Hebrew Christians were not babes in Christ. They were older and mature in their faith.

But they had become stuck. They could not understand the deeper things of God. **Why?**

What causes a Christian to be stunted in his growth in the knowledge of God and His grace?

When they were babes in Christ they did not properly exercise with the milk they had (v. 14).

You become mature (and can handle *meat*) by the “practice” of exercising your *mind* to discern between what is good and evil. *“Because of practice they [the mature] have their senses [internal, moral, spiritual senses] trained to discern good and evil”* (v. 14).

Considering and acting on what is morally good and bad for you leads to spiritual growth.

### III. There is a caution for those who may feel themselves “dull of hearing” (Hebrews 6).

We will study this chapter in the weeks to come, but right now I will just introduce you to the logic of the writer of Hebrews. If you don't go on, there is no evidence of true grace.

You cannot shame someone into understanding truth. You don't jump from milk to meat.

**A. Drink the milk of God's Word** ... Read the Bible and sit under teaching and listen to the good news found in God's Word. And then you give heed. You are earnest and diligent to apply your heart and mind to what is being said. *You are not passive and cavalier and indifferent.* Babes long for milk and are incredibly focused when thirsty.

**B. Savor the milk of God's Word** ... *“Taste and see that the Lord is good”* (Ps. 34:8).

When the promises of God and the God of the promises are tasted, the milk satisfies.

**C. Contemplate how your life should change** ... With a heart excited about God, discern good and evil. There are hundreds of decisions that you must make day in and day out which are not spelled out explicitly in the Bible. Take them each seriously.