

# Memory Verse

***Hebrews 5:14***

But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

GRACELIFE CHURCH



# Spiritual Maturity Pt 1

## *A Challenge to Maturity*

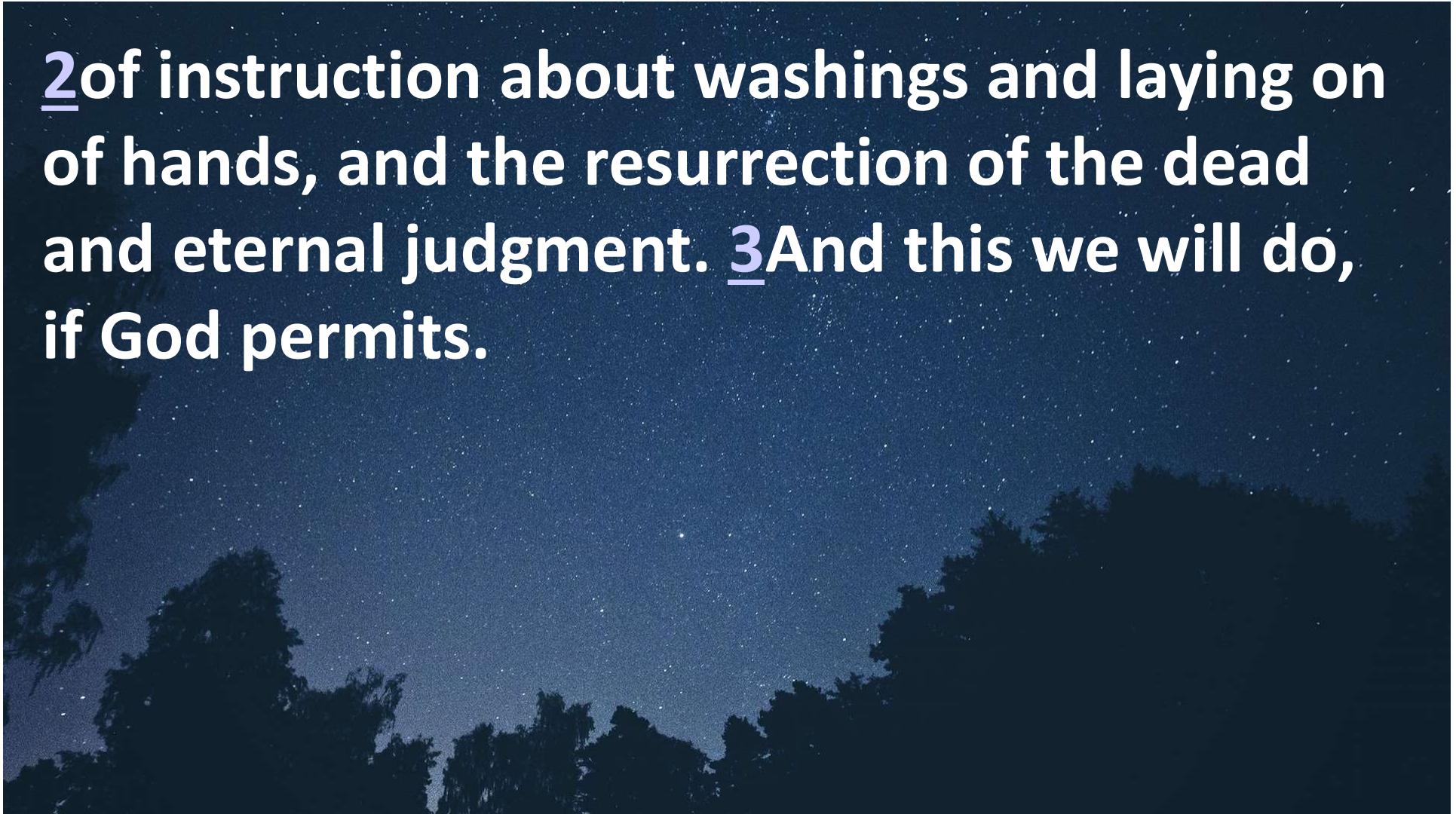
***Hebrews 5:11-6:3***

***Hebrews 5:11-6:3*** - Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull (NET - *sluggish*) of hearing.12For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not

accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

1Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

2of instruction about washings and laying on  
of hands, and the resurrection of the dead  
and eternal judgment. 3And this we will do,  
if God permits.



We begin a 3-part series on **spiritual maturity**. What is it, how do we mature, and what are some practical ways we can grow in the *grace and knowledge of Christ*? We will *cover these* in this series, with a *mixture of exposition and topical studies*.



## A. Context of Hebrews

*Hebrews is one of the most misunderstood books in the New Testament...* Hebrews was written before 70AD, and the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. This was written to *Jewish followers of Christ*, to *encourage* them to *let go* of the Mosaic Law. The *New* has *come*, and the *Old* is *done*. There is a contrast with the *Mosaic Law and Christ*. The

## A. Context of Hebrews

The Mosaic Law and sacrificial system were *good*, but Christ is *better*. The *old way* of doing things was *passing away*, and these believers needed to recognize the *change God was making - transitioning from Law to grace*. These *followers of Christ* were also being pressured to *continue following the Law by their Jewish family and friends...*

## B. 5:11-13 - Spiritual Immaturity

The writer states he was *going to explain more* about Melchizedek... but at this point he **rebukes** them! He said these things were hard to *explain*... The writer says they are **dull** or **sluggish of hearing**. This can also be translated: slow, slothful, lazy, inert, or listless - like a *ship without a rudder* tossed around by the sea and wind.

## B. 5:11-13 - Spiritual Immaturity

...By this point in their life, after having known what they know, learned what they have learned and been through what they have been through, they *should have been teachers*. The word means, "an instructor acknowledged for their mastery in their field of learning; in Scripture, a Bible teacher, competent in theology."

From <https://biblehub.com/greek/1320.htm>

## B. 5:11-13 - Spiritual Immaturity

The writer says they needed, once again, to learn the **elementary principles** of the *oracles of God*... The word for "oracles" can refer to the Law - *Acts 7:38, Romans 3:2*, and means *fundamental foundational truths of God* that *cannot be compromised* and *must be held on to faithfully*...

## B. 5:11-13 - Spiritual Immaturity

For these individuals, rather than being *mature teachers* investing their lives into others, they were *babies*, needed milk, and taking from others. They were *spiritual infants*... It's not that we *stop needing milk*, but we *must move beyond milk*. While it is good to “*get back to basics*” at times, we *don't stay there*.

## B. 5:11-13 - Spiritual Immaturity

They were *not maturing*, were *lazy*, and were *babies* in need of milk and *not solid food*, reiterated in verse 13. Those who *rely on milk* are *not experienced* or are *unskilled* in the word or message of righteousness. This is someone who is *ignorant*, or *without experience*...

## C. 5:14 - Spiritual Maturity

ESV - But solid food is for the **mature**, for those who have their powers of **discernment** trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

## C. 5:14 - Spiritual Maturity

In *contrast to milk for the infant, solid food* is for the **mature**. What is “*solid food?*” In this context it is the *more challenging teachings of the Bible, or more difficult doctrines* of the *faith*. Some are outlined in the Bible, and some are based on the doctrines man has formed to try to help us *understand the faith*...

## C. 5:14 - Spiritual Maturity

They, you and I *mature in the faith* as we *train ourselves by constantly practicing what we know is true*. We have our *senses trained*. The word for *training* is where we get the word *gymnasium*. It can also be translated *exercise*.

## C. 5:14 - Spiritual Maturity

If we want to *become stronger in our faith* and in *the faith*, we must **constantly practice**, or **obey** God's truth. The word for "*practice*," or "*constant practice*" refers to something that is a **habit**. This is something that is ***second nature***.

## C. 5:14 - Spiritual Maturity

*We become well learned in the faith,  
by being well practiced in the faith.*

We train ourselves by **constant use** of what we learn, to **discern** or *know the difference*, between good and evil...

## C. 5:14 - Spiritual Maturity

As we *transform*, we *mature* and we will be maturing to the end of our lives... we must learn what God's word says, and *put it into practice* so we can know *right from wrong, good from evil, truth from error, the best from the mediocre*. One reason why some Christians are *easily deceived* is because they **have not put into practice**, as a **habit**, the things they know are true.

## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

In 6:1-3, we find *specific elementary, or beginning teachings* the writer is referring. Remember, this was to a *Jewish audience!* They would have fully understood what was *communicated*. They *believed in Jesus* and were being challenged to *go beyond what they knew to maturity...* The idea is *not to reject the basics, but again, to grow beyond these elementary or basic teachings.*

## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

*Messiah came, they needed to move beyond simple truths. He said *they had the right foundation*. They knew the *foundational truths already*. They should **not** have to learn them again, though the *writer says they did*. He is now saying what that **foundation** is.*

## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

### 1. Repentance from Dead Works

*Verse 1 mentions **repentance from dead works**. This is **repentance from sin**. This is a basic doctrine throughout the Bible. It may be referring to the works that **people think will get them into heaven**, whether they are in the **Mosaic Law** or not.*

## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

### 2. Faith Toward God

He mentions *faith toward God*. This too is a basic, though important, doctrine. We are *saved by faith*, and the writer emphasizes **faith toward God**, who is the **object** of faith.

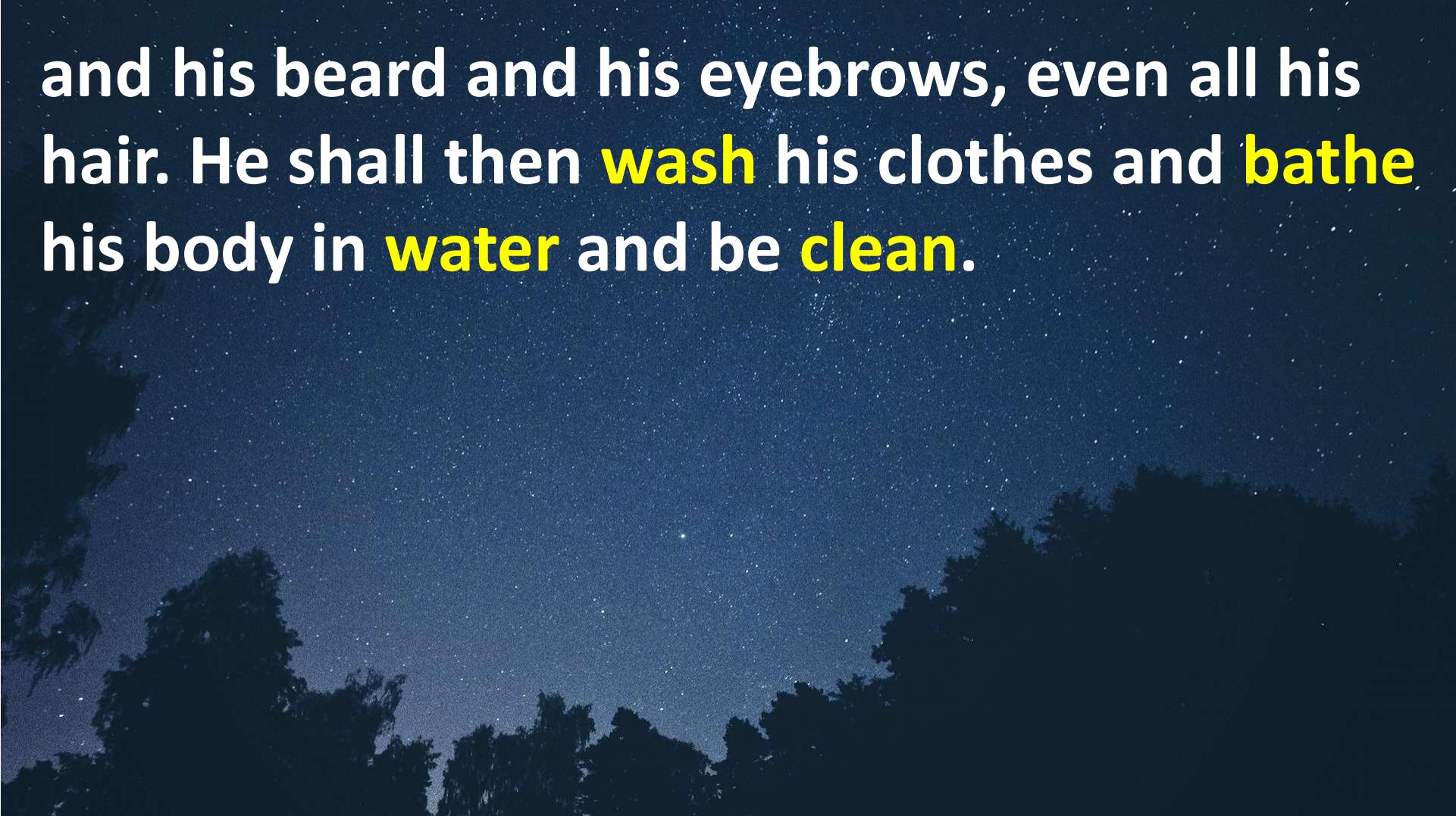
## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

### 3. Instruction about Washings

Some say this is baptism, and while it may refer to a *contrast to Christian baptism and Jewish purification rights*, it is primarily about *ceremonial cleansing practices in the Mosaic Law*. The NET translates this – *ceremonial washings*. These were commanded in the Law. One example is in *Leviticus 14:1-9...*

*Leviticus 14:7-9* - “He shall then **sprinkle** seven times the one who is to be **cleansed** from the leprosy and shall pronounce him **clean**, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. 8“The one to be **cleansed** shall then **wash** his clothes and shave off all his hair and **bathe** in **water** and be **clean**... 9“It will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair: he shall shave his head

and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. He shall then **wash** his clothes and **bathe** his body in **water** and be **clean**.



## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

### 4. Laying on of Hands

There is *nothing magical or mystical* about this, though some think this. In *Jewish religious practices* it referred to a **transfer** – a transfer of **guilt** from *one who offered a sacrifice* to the *animal*; a transfer of **blessing**, such as when a *father blessed his children*. The other part was a **symbolic transfer of authority**.

## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

### 4. Laying on of Hands

In *1 Timothy 5:22*, Paul warned Timothy *not to lay hands on someone too quickly, lest he share in the sins of others.* That warning was not to put an immature person into a position of authority...

## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

### 5. Resurrection of the Dead

This is an *elementary doctrine*. Not only was Jesus physically raised from the dead, but we will be physically resurrected one day, at His return. It is true and something that happened with Jesus and will happen with us. But this is a *basic doctrine*...

## D. 6:1-3 - Spiritual Basics

### 6. Eternal Judgment

The doctrine of **hell** and the **lake of fire**, where *someone will live consciously forever under the wrath of God*, is an elementary doctrine. Sadly, *false teachers within the “church”* and many *cults* and *false religions* deny God will judge someone forever for their sins.

Please take a minute to fill out your  
**NEXT STEPS**

At GraceLife Church, our mission is drawing people  
into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ!

**TODAY'S MESSAGE CHALLENGE IS:**

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# Prayer

**“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6**

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