

Hebrews



**Promises
Faithfully
Kept**

Hebrews 5.11-6.3 (CSB)

Don't Get Stuck in Neverland



Intro:

I've always enjoyed J. M. Barrie's literary work, Peter Pan. I actually started with the movie versions as a kid before picking up the book as an adult.

You are likely familiar with the story about the boy who ran away to Neverland, which you get to by the 2nd start to the right and straight on till morning, where we meet Peter and the lost boys, who then for a period of time, have Wendy as their mother, who makes them take their "medicine" and tells them stories.

Peter is a rough and tumble boy who loves adventures and fights.

In the book and some movies, Peter says, "To die would be an awfully big adventure." Peter was brave in the face of death. But he was afraid of growing up.

In looking at our passage today, we find the author of Hebrews telling his audience, "It is time to grow up."

To put it in terms you may be familiar with from Peter Pan, "Don't get stuck in Neverland."

5:11 We have a great deal to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, since you have become too lazy to understand.

12 Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's revelation again. You need milk, not solid food.

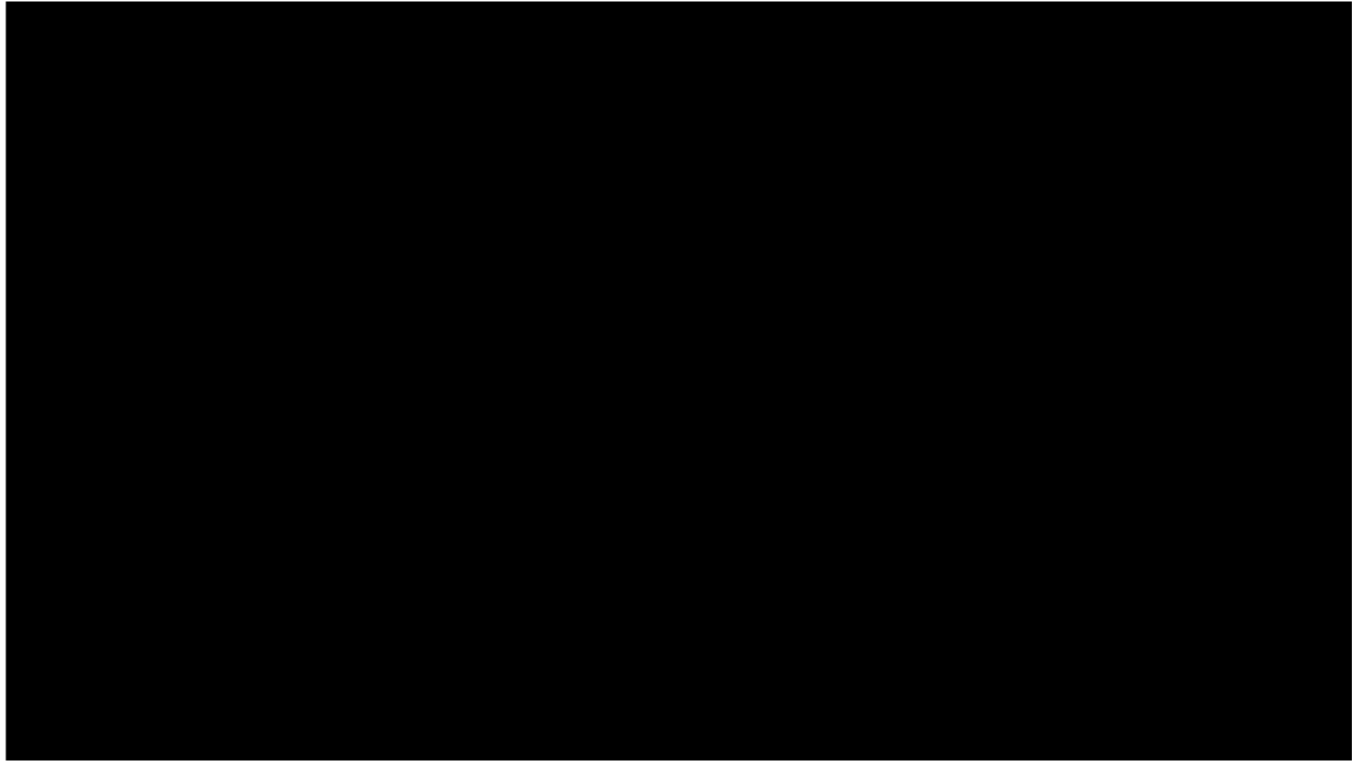
13 Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant.

**14 But solid food is for the
mature—for those whose
senses have been trained to
distinguish between good and
evil.**

6:1 Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God,

2 teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

**3 And we will do this if God
permits.**



Pray

**God has called you to pursue
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God has called you to pursue Christ into mature faith and obedience, not culturally cool or comfortable Christianity.

Christian maturity is holistic, including both knowledge of God personally and knowledge about God. It requires Christ to be displayed through your character. It necessitates long and fresh experience of loving God and others and of obeying Christ in all things.

The knowledge portion is what the author is targeting today, with this knowledge including knowledge about God, Christ, the Spirit, God's Word, and doctrines.

Particularly, the author is telling his audience that maturity includes the ability to interact with complex aspects of our faith.

[Quote Mohler, p. 79]

If you are an adult, have been a Christian for several years and require a preacher to speak only about the most basic aspects of faith, then the author is saying you have become lazy.

We all have lazy moments. We can't be "on" at all times. We have to have times when we take a break. But Proverbs says the sluggard is so lazy he won't even lift his spoon from his dish back to his mouth.

Are you becoming a spiritual sluggard?

You are to learn how to clothe yourself in Christ, not keep crying for someone to come change you.

You really don't want people to baby talk to you in any other area of life. Why would you want to continue to be treated like a baby within the church?

You are to pursue theological depth because you want to pursue a relationship with Christ in depth.

You pursue this depth because you want to pass along a healthy version of Christianity, not one atheists, other religions, and your children will easily dismiss.

If you are not progressing in Christian maturity, stop using your same old excuses. Stop blaming others as well.

Take adult responsibility for your response to Christ.

Not just for yourself...

**Pursue Christ in holistic depth
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Pursue Christ in holistic depth so that you can draw others to Christ, not drag them away from Him.

Word/message repeated several times in this passage. We grow by means of the gospel proclaimed and applied. To the degree that this message is applied in your life is the extent to which you are able to mature in knowing Christ. To apply it, you must first believe it and seek to understand it.

You should want to be an example and encourager to others in the faith. We start with childlike faith, but we can't remain children in our understanding of God's Word.

Polycarp was an early second century leader in the church. He was able to point to the example of Christ AND godly men who imitated Christ.

He wrote, “[Christ] endured everything. Therefore, let us become imitators of his patient endurance and glorify him whenever we suffer for the sake of his name. I, therefore, exhort you to obey the word of righteousness [πειθαρχεῖν τῷ λογῷ τῆς δικαιοσύνης] and practice patient endurance to the limit—an endurance of which you have had an object lesson not only in those blessed persons Ignatius, Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in members of your own community as well as in Paul himself and the other apostles” (Phil. 8.1–9.1). (Located in Lane, 138)

If you have noticed a shortage of leaders and teachers or classes in the church, your next thought should not be to complain. You should ask how you can help. If you feel unequipped for leading and teaching, at least ask how you can help. As you take steps in obeying Christ in glad submission to the church, you will grow in maturity.

And where do you think teachers in the church come from? They come from within the church as people filled with the Spirit and gifted for that particular service are given opportunity. They are developed as the established leaders in the church provide assistance, education, support, and accountability to those seeking to grow in caring for others.

Maybe its time for some of you to start taking on more responsibility.

<https://www.theknot.com/content/average-age-of-marriage>

32 for women and 35 for men

Much higher than they used to be.

Marriage is not required for adulthood, but it requires you to be mature as you care for someone else. It is a traditional marker for entering into adult maturity.

Marriage is being put off for educational, career, and financial security. Also, young adults in America would prefer to put off commitment to someone else, perhaps feeling like they are not ready to take on the kind of responsibility needed in having a family.

So adulthood is being put off more and more in our culture.

Our culture has a strong influence toward you taking care of you without care for anyone else, very much like a prolonged childhood.

Are you ready to take responsibility for your actions, for your faith, for others in the church?

Learn to communicate the foundations of our faith AND to enter into deeper, more complex dialogue about Christ and faith.

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David Nasser, who served for 7 years as Liberty's Senior VP for spiritual development, wrote a spiritual growth study 20 years ago, titled A Call to Die. In it he recounts a time that he met a Muslim man about his age. Nasser, in attempting to share about Jesus, found that he was ill-equipped at speaking to our faith beyond the basics. The man asked Nasser why should he believe in Jesus when he already knew more about Nasser's faith than Nasser himself.

If you go to our website, gracerva.com, and look under the About tab, you can scroll down to find an abbreviated version of our foundational beliefs.

Would you be able to defend and explain these beliefs to anyone questioning why they should believe in this same Jesus you believe in?

If you are not able to at this time, are you willing to enter into dialogue with God and the church in a way that will stretch you beyond your current knowledge of truth and beyond your current fruitfulness?

If your answer is no, then are you really following Christ? Or have you been trying to reap the benefits of being around Christ without believing Him or obeying Him?

Next week's text has a sobering warning for you. If you are determined to be lazy and immature, or even negligent in matters of faith, no one will force feed you. But what does that say about you? The best that can be said of you is what Amy Grant says in her song, "Fat Baby." You can look it up later to see the lyrics if you are wondering. The worst that can be said about you is that you never really knew Jesus and have been acting like a cuckoo bird.



A cuckoo bird egg is taken by its mother and placed in a smaller bird's nest, replacing one of the original eggs with the cuckoo egg. The baby cuckoo bird when it is hatched, pushes the other eggs or other babies out of the nest



(sciencenewsforstudents.org)

and demands constant feeding from the parents. The cuckoo being of a much larger build overwhelms the parents with these demands.

Learn to communicate the foundations of our faith AND to enter into deeper, more complex dialogue about Christ and faith.

We cannot be a church that is okay with keeping cuckoo birds fed. We all must press forward in maturity in Christ.

If you are willing to grow in faith beyond your current routines, what are you doing about it?

How are you taking in God's Word in depth? With whom are you in dialogue about the gospel in its grandeur? With whom are you discussing application of its truths to your life?

You should first and always talk to God. But who else? Who else is challenging you to grow? Who are you helping to grow in theological and ethical discernment? Who are you trying to reach with the gospel for the first time?

Notice how the author ends v. 3 of chapter 6, "...if God permits." First, do not use God's sovereignty as an excuse for laziness. The author is desiring to be used by God to grow the church. Second, his complex and mature faith leads him to speak of the future loosely. He cannot ultimately determine the future. Only God does that. And so he demonstrates for the church mature faith in practice in even this simple way. Third, any growth that occurs in the Christian's life is a result of God working in his or her life, even if God uses other people, especially the church.

I know growing up in our faith may not sound like the best sales pitch for drawing big numbers, but we are not social media or Hollywood. We are the people of Christ walking the narrow road of faith in Christ. Knowing God is worth the effort of putting in the spiritual sweat equity.

I know it is not always pleasant to take our medicine, like today's passage calls for. But, to change J. M. Barrie's words around, to grow up in Christ would be an awfully great adventure.

