

Growing from Milk to Maturity in Christ

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to grow continually in spiritual understanding, maturity, and discernment. The journey from spiritual infancy to maturity is not optional—it is commanded and expected. The Scriptures under examination—Hebrews 5:12-14, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Philippians 3:13-14, 2 Peter 3:18, and Ephesians 4:13-14—emphasize different facets of this progression in the life of the believer. Let us explore each passage and grasp their unified call for spiritual growth.

****Hebrews 5:12-14****

This passage confronts believers who have remained spiritually immature. The writer rebukes them for still needing “milk,” the basic teachings of the faith, when by now they ought to be teachers. The metaphor of “milk” versus “solid food” indicates a difference between elementary doctrines and deeper, more mature truths that require discernment and practice. Solid food is for those who have their “senses trained to discern both good and evil,” which involves maturity in moral and doctrinal understanding.

****1 Corinthians 3:1-2****

Paul similarly addresses the Corinthian believers, saying he could not speak to them as “spiritual men,” but as “fleshly”—as to “infants in Christ.” He notes that he gave them milk because they were not ready for solid food. This highlights that carnality—jealousy, division, and pride—can hinder spiritual maturity. Just as a child cannot digest strong food, a believer steeped in fleshly behavior cannot comprehend the weightier matters of God’s truth.

****Philippians 3:13-14****

Paul shifts the focus to forward motion. Even as a mature apostle, Paul admits he has not yet reached perfection. Instead, he presses on, “straining forward to what lies ahead,” and pursues “the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” This call to persistent advancement reminds us that growth is never complete on this side of eternity. The mature mindset involves both humility—knowing we haven’t arrived—and perseverance—refusing to stagnate.

****2 Peter 3:18****

Peter’s final exhortation is simple but profound: “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Spiritual maturity is not merely intellectual growth but

includes grace, which refers to character shaped by Christ. It's an ongoing process that leads us deeper into the likeness and relationship with Jesus. The ultimate goal is not theological complexity but Christlike living through grace and truth.

****Ephesians 4:13-14****

Paul writes of God's design for the church—to equip the saints so that all may “attain to the unity of the faith, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God,” and reach “a mature man.” Immaturity makes believers vulnerable to deception and instability. However, maturity brings doctrinal stability and unity in the body of Christ, protected from “every wind of doctrine” and “craftiness in deceitful scheming.”

Together, these scriptures form a cohesive message: we must not remain spiritual infants. The goal is to become mature in Christ—capable of discernment, rooted in doctrine, and actively growing in grace and knowledge.

May we be diligent in the pursuit of spiritual maturity, relying on the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, so that we are no longer tossed about, but stand firm in Christ.

****To God be the glory****: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3, LSB)

Reference Scriptures

Hebrews 5:12–14 (LSB): For 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. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil.

1 Corinthians 3:1–2 (LSB): And I, brothers, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshly men, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.

Philippians 3:13–14 (LSB): Brothers, I do not consider myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

2 Peter 3:18 (LSB): But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Ephesians 4:13–14 (LSB): Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ, so that we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.

Ephesians 1:3 (LSB): Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.