

**Access Denied**  
**“To Spiritual Immaturity”**

**Introduction:**

Today we move to part four of the “Access Denied” series

So far...denying access to:

- ✓ Old Man/Nature
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Next Week—SELF
- ✓ Today—Spiritual Immaturity

Scripture has much to say about this subject

- ✓ Prophet Jeremiah relays God’s heart on the issue:

***"For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge."***  
**Jeremiah 4:22 NKJV**

- ✓ Paul discusses it often:

— A stage that is normal (as a developmental stage)

***My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, Galatians 4:19 NKJV***

— A stage that is expected to be abandoned at some point

***When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 1 Corinthians 13:11 NKJV***

— When it is not, it creates conflict and a lack of stability

***And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NKJV***

*That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting. Ephesians 4:14 NKJV*

- ✓ The text in Hebrews may be the most instructive of all regarding scriptural maturity

#### Few Observations

- Adequate time had passed after these believers had been converted for them to become spiritually mature
- Failure on their part to mature clearly left the church at a disadvantage when it came to false doctrine, further growth and evangelism, and the protection of believers from falling away. (NOTE: Hebrew believers were being persecuted and tempted to apostatize)
- Spiritual immaturity was a serious enough subject to address, that the writer of Hebrews attached to this subject a very stern warning

*Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. Hebrews 6:1-6 NKJV*

(Initial experience without maturity can lead to eternally damning consequence).

- If spiritual maturity was expected from a 1<sup>st</sup> century church faced with severe persecution and raised in Judaism, how much more is it expected from American believers, living in luxury and comfort, and bloated by the excessive availability of biblical teaching?

Three identifying characteristics of spiritual immaturity

#### **I. Spiritual immaturity does not emerge from deficient intellect, but rather cooled spiritual passions.**

v. 11—since you have become dull of hearing...”

- A. The problem with Hebrew Christians was not insufficient education or mental power.

B. Hearing had become dull (nō-thros)

- Slow, sluggish, idle, tardy
- Had become this way-process

C. How that progress occurred

1. Began with a complacency, a cozying up to the world and drifting with ways, rather than a pursuit of holiness

*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, Hebrews 2:1-3 NKJV*

2. Further developed when temporal focus overcame eternal focus

(Daily conversation was about stock market, Pacers, politics)

3. Passionate intensity about the things of God gave way to a sloppy arrogance

- a. Things of God were no longer interesting
- b. Bored, dull of hearing

4. Began to think spiritual growth was automatic and required no effort

5. Had allowed spiritual ease to create spiritual sloth

D. How are your spiritual passions today?

NOTE: When they cool-hearing is dull-spiritually immature

## **II. Spiritual immaturity does not produce other Christ followers but becomes spiritually dependent on others.**

*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. Hebrews 5:12 NKJV*

A. The Hebrew believers had been Christians long enough to be producing disciples, but instead were still dependent on others

1. Not a call that everyone should be a teacher
2. But every believer should be able to share their faith-if not-immature

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B. All should be able to share their faith

***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 1 Peter 3:15 NKJV***

1. A defense (apologia)-careful, logical, delivery of our faith

***Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV***

2. A reason (logos)-we get logical-we have logical, factual reasons to believe
3. May be asked or challenged

NOTE: Not “Friendship evangelism”—this is Gospel defense in an antagonistic culture

- ✓ Dispersed Christians!
  - ✓ Being persecuted-suffering
  - ✓ Sanctify the Lord in your hearts
  - ✓ Stay true to Him and defend your faith
4. In our culture we need to be able to do that
- a. Studying/Learning
  - b. Worship, priority Church has become immature-touchy/feely, but incapable of defending or teaching the faith
- C. Be able to “teach others” without total dependence on others
1. “Personal savior” mentally has crippled the church
  2. Consumer mentality church—full service church (pens, coffee, ministries, comfort, chairs, communion juice, dress code)
  3. Immaturity at its best

### **III. Spiritual immaturity does not yield to the discipline of spiritual training.**

***For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Hebrews 5:13-14 NKJV***

- A. A sense here that the mature believer has learned obedience through training
- B. See the example of Jesus

***Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, Hebrews 5:8-9 NKJV***

1. When we use the spiritual faculties God gives us, we grow.
  2. This is exercise, use-builds us spiritually
  3. A holy sensitivity to the little sins, to the still, small voice
  4. I grow in grace, I become more mature
- C. The immature wants elementary doctrine
1. Just give me grace
  2. Assured I'm going to heaven
  3. Not the meat of the word, the ongoing work of Jesus for me now that I can enter into
  4. Just the warm-fuzzies-no depth
  5. No maturity
- D. Results are catastrophic—don't impact a world, we lack holiness, never experience God's fullness

**Conclusion:** Let us go on to maturity (telos) perfection

How?

A. Show God the same diligence He shows you

***But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Hebrews 6:9-12 NKJV***

B. Lay hold of God's promise and don't let go

***Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 6:17-19 NKJV***

