

# Hebrews 5:11-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/heb/heb-5/hebrews-511-14/>

*The Pauline Author has much to say about Christ's priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, but since the recipients of this letter have not gone on to maturity it will be difficult for them to understand.*

The Pauline Author would like to say more about the priesthood of Jesus after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:10), but it is hard to explain to his audience because they have not been pursuing their spiritual growth in Christ. *Concerning him [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing* (v 11). It is now difficult for them to understand concepts of maturity because they have stalled out and even reverted in their faith.

The Pauline Author says that *though at this time you [believers] 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* (v 12). These believers ought to be mature in Christ but instead, they are like babies who are not able to eat *solid food* but still need *milk*.

They still need to hear about *the elementary principles of the oracles of God* and their faith; they are not ready to move on to more mature concepts. The more mature concepts, or *solid food*, are only for mature believers: *For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant* (v 13).

The Pauline Author defines maturity in Christ: *but solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil* (v 14). Children are not good at discerning between good and evil. They think that whatever they want is good and whatever they don't want is bad. As adults, we know this is not a good way to discern between good and evil because we've had practice and experience. In the same way, mature Christians are skilled at discerning correctly between good and evil, being more *accustomed to the word of righteousness*.

When the Bible speaks of *righteousness* or "justice," it is speaking of God's perfect moral standards. For us to live in alignment with God's standards is to be righteous. Jesus explained God's perfect moral standard as being fulfilled by the two great commandments from the Old Testament: to love God with all our being, and to act out that love by loving our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40).

This is the idea of *righteousness*—when all the different pieces work together with a harmony of purpose. The Greek terms translated "righteous" or "just" might be better understood if translated as "harmony." After we trust in Jesus Christ to deliver us from our moral infirmity of sin (John 3:14-16), we are made right in God's sight.

So, once we have believed, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and help us, to empower us to live with other people according to God's moral standards. That is why walking in the Spirit

produces the fruit of the Spirit, which manifests in behavior that expresses love and harmony toward others (Galatians 5:16-26).

For more, read our article, "[What is Righteousness?](#)"

Throughout Hebrews, the Pauline Author tells his audience to press on toward growth, strive for maturity, and learn to be obedient to the Father. Mature believers are skilled at discerning between good obedient choices and bad sinful choices. Making these correct determinations is the key to growing in Christ and obtaining the inheritance which the book of Hebrews speaks of so often. It is the theme of Hebrews that believers have an incredible opportunity to gain the greatest of rewards for enduring faithfully to the end, and we don't want to miss that opportunity (Hebrews 2:9-10).

In Hebrews 10:24, the Pauline Author will exhort his audience to "stimulate one another to love and good deeds." This is where maturity rests, in loving actions toward others and in obedience to God. This is joining Jesus in putting to death the deeds of the flesh, and living to imitate and honor Him.

Since the Pauline Author proceeds to fully explain Melchizedek in Chapter 7, it seems reasonable to conclude that he believes his audience is fully capable of understanding (*ought to be teachers*) but has grown lethargic or intellectually lazy. It appears that the Pauline Author is chastising his readers to "wake up" and will now proceed to explain a concept they need to understand: that Jesus is a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, and consequently is available to intercede for us when we need help to faithfully endure all God asks us to do. This is the path to complete fulfillment, and Hebrews provides an exhortation to be alert and not miss the opportunity.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>11</sup> Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.**