

ON TO MATURITY

(Hebrews 4:14-6:3)

DAY ONE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

¹Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

1. *What does a high priest do?*

2. *What is there about Jesus as a high priest that allows us to approach God with confidence?*

3. *Do we need our high priest to deal gently with us? Do we deal gently with others?*

DAY TWO READING AND QUESTIONS:

⁴No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.”

⁶And he says in another place,
“You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

⁸Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

1. *How did God call Jesus to be high priest?*

2. *When did Jesus offer loud cries and tears to God? How was he heard? Did God save him from death?*

3. *How was Jesus “made perfect”? Wasn’t he already perfect?*

DAY THREE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹¹We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

1. *What makes these readers slow to learn? Are they not smart enough to understand?*
2. *What is the point of the milk and meat illustration? How do these readers need to grow up?*
3. *Why would the writer of Hebrews criticize his readers this way? Isn't this negative? Wouldn't this discourage them from reading?*

DAY FOUR READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ²instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³And God permitting, we will do so.

1. *What does it mean to leave the elementary teachings of Christ? Does that mean we no longer believe these things?*

2. *What six things are listed here as elementary teachings?*

3. *If you were listing the elementary teachings of Christianity, would this be your list? What might you leave out? What would you add?*

DAY FIVE READING AND QUESTIONS:

Go back and read the entire passage.

1. *What is the relationship between Jesus as our High Priest and becoming mature?*
2. *Why are many Christians not as mature as they should be? What should be done to prevent this?*
3. *What does maturity have to do with distinguishing good from evil? What kind of maturity is spoken of here?*

MEDITATION ON HEBREWS 4:14-6:3

High Priest. The concept seems so strange. Someone to stand between God and us. Why do we need that? Can't we go to God on our own?

Yes and no. God is a loving Father who always waits for us to come to him. He is the Father of the lost boy who returns. He runs to meet us with shoes, and robe, and ring. He throws a party to celebrate our return (Luke 15).

So why do we need a High Priest? Because we are ashamed and embarrassed to come to God. Have you ever done something stupid and offended your boss. You want to go to him and make amends, but

you're not sure if you should or how you should. You need someone to smooth the way.

We are more than embarrassed before God. We do not have a leg to stand on before him. There are a million and one reasons why he should send us all to hell and only one reason why he should forgive.

But what a reason! Jesus, the Son of God, offering himself as sacrifice for us. Jesus our High Priest, called by God but sharing in our cries and tears.

Why is it we may not appreciate this great gift of a High Priest? Maybe because we are spiritually immature. We should know right from wrong by now. We should be teachers, letting others know of this marvelous gift. Instead, we are slow to learn the depth of God's love for us.

"Loving Father, open the eyes of our hearts to see Jesus our great High Priest. May we feel the depth of your love and teach others your grace."