

Hebrews 5:11-6:3 “Counsel for Christians Who Are Living on Milk”**

Main Idea: Christians living on milk need to face two realities, according to Hebrews 5:11-6:3.

I. We need to face the problem of spiritual immaturity (11-14).

A. Here are some indicators of immaturity (11-13).

1. They don't listen well to God's Word (11).
2. They ought to be teachers, but still need to be taught (12a).
3. They are stuck on the ABC's of God's Word (12b).
4. They can't handle solid food (12c).
5. They don't connect the Word to right living (13).

B. Here are some evidences of maturity (14).

1. They can handle solid food.
2. They use what they learn.
3. They have learned to discern what pleases God and what doesn't.

II. We need to get involved in the process of spiritual maturity (1-3).

A. We need a good doctrinal foundation.

1. It's vital to understand repentance and faith.
2. It's vital to understand about baptism and laying on of hands.
3. It's vital to understand about the coming resurrection and judgment.

B. We need more than a good foundation.

1. Do you know Christ?
2. Do you have a good grasp of the basic doctrines?
3. Are you taking steps to build on that foundation?

C. We need to be moving towards maturity.

1. Spiritual growth doesn't happen automatically.
2. Spiritual growth requires intentionality.
3. Spiritual growth occurs by God's grace and for God's glory.

The Bottom Line: God intends for His children to grow up and resemble His Son!

“I want my baba!”

My, how she loved her bottle of milk, her “baba” as she called it! I can still see our daughter Katie toddling through the house, her favorite stuffed animal “Pepper-doggie” cradled in one arm and her precious bottle of milk in the other. Milk wasn’t merely a thirst-quencher for her. It’s what she lived for!

We still joke about the time that our neighbor, Brenny, saw little Katie walking in the yard with her *baba*, and he said kiddingly to her, “I’m going to take your bottle!” She instantly ran as fast as she could towards the house, screaming all the way. She couldn’t imagine life without her bottle of milk.

That’s the way it was when Katie was a baby, even a toddler. Her bottle was seldom far from her.

It dawned on me this week that I hardly ever see Katie drink milk anymore. That, of course, is because she’s now nineteen years old. Things change in a person’s life between the age of one and nineteen. It’s called *growing up*. In fact, if things *don’t change*, we know that something’s wrong. Which is why you’d do a double take now if you saw Katie walk into church sucking on a bottle of milk, and you may even approach her mother or me with a word of concern, “Uh, I hate to be nosy, but is Katie alright?”

It’s one thing when a baby lives on milk—that’s what babies do. But an adult? No, adults don’t live on milk. They can certainly enjoy milk—there’s nothing like a cold glass of milk to wash down a warm chocolate chip cookie! But adults don’t live on milk. They’ve moved on to solid food, right? And the development of their diet is a primary indicator that they have *matured* physically.

With this illustration in mind let’s turn our attention to the end of Hebrews 5, where the writer of Hebrews makes a shocking announcement in verse 11, “We have much to say about this, but.” He’s been teaching them about the high priesthood of Jesus Christ, and has twice mentioned that Christ is a high priest forever “in the order of Melchizedek” (verses 6 & 10). He’d like to say more about this amazing subject, but he can’t. His reason? He says, “It’s hard to explain.” It’s not that he’s exhausted his knowledge of the subject, for he’ll actually return to his discussion of Melchizedek in chapter 7. Why then does he pause? Why is it hard to explain? He says it’s because “you are slow to learn.”

He’s afraid this vital, life-changing truth about Jesus is going right over their heads. And why would that be the case? It boiled down to a very basic problem, namely that his readers who were old enough spiritually to handle solid food were still *needing milk*.

How do you help Christians who are old enough in the Lord so that they *ought* to be able to handle solid food but still *can’t*? That’s not a moot question in our day when Christianity is often a mile wide and half an inch deep.

I must warn you. Before us is a painful text. Yet before us is also a life-giving text. It’s a text in which God offers us very practical, albeit pointed help. Christians living on milk need to face two realities, according to Hebrews 5:11-6:3.

I. We need to face the problem of spiritual immaturity (11-14).

Spiritual immaturity is a problem, and it must be faced. What does it look like?

A. Here are some indicators of immaturity (11-13). The writer identifies for us five indicators of spiritually immature people.

1. *They don’t listen well to God’s Word (11).* Verse 11—“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.” Much to say, now that’s an understatement. When it comes to the subject of Jesus Christ, there’s always more to say! Thus far in Hebrews, the writer has taught us that Christ is the eternal Son of God, the creator and heir of all things, the radiance of God’s glory, and the exact representation of God’s being (1:2-3). He’s superior to the angels who actually serve Him and His people, as we learned in chapter one. In order to bring

many sons to glory, the Son of God became a man, suffered, and died in the place of sinful men, conquered death, thus providing atonement for all who trust in Him (that's chapter two). In chapter three the writer taught us that Christ is superior to Moses, and in chapter four that Christ offers Sabbath-rest to all who will enter into the satisfaction of His accomplishments. And because of what Christ *did*, here's what we now *have* (according to the end of chapter four and the first part of chapter five)—we have a *great high priest* in heaven who gives us direct access into the presence of God.

Yet there's more. We have *much more* to say about this great high priest, says the writer. But he can't say it, not yet. It's *hard to explain*, he says. The problem isn't that his subject matter is too difficult, although the truth about Christ's priesthood certainly is mind-stretching. No, the problem is that *you are slow to learn*. Slow—the Greek word *nothros* means “careless, slothful, sluggish.” We see the same word in 6:12, there translated “lazy.”

And what was lazy? The NIV uses the words, “to learn,” but it's actually the noun *akoe* which means “hearing.” The readers were guilty of “lazy hearing.”

A week ago I went to the memorial service for Dan Rase, the youth pastor at Temple Baptist Church that God took to heaven at the age of forty-three. Many testimonies were shared, but one was rather unique. A woman shared how she, as a child watched Dan as a teenager, and she shared that what remembers to this day is where Dan sat in church. “He always went front and center. Even if his teenage friends were sitting in the back, he sat down front and center.” She said she once asked him why he sat in the front, and he simply replied, “Because I get distracted and I don't want to miss a thing.”

Is that your heart attitude when it comes to God's Word? *I don't want to miss a thing!* It wasn't for the Hebrews. They were worried about what people were thinking of them, so much so that they were considering leaving Christ and going back to their old ways.

Warren Wiersbe offers this insight, “One of the first symptoms of spiritual regression, or backsliding, is a dullness toward the Bible. Sunday School class is dull, the preaching is dull, anything spiritual is dull. The problem is usually not with the Sunday School teacher or the pastor, but with the believer himself.”¹¹ There's the first indicator. The spiritually immature don't listen well to God's Word.

2. *They ought to be teachers, but still need to be taught (12a)*. Verse 12—“In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you.” Stop there and ponder that assessment carefully. *By this time*, he says. Those words indicate that as time passes a change is supposed to be occurring. We all enter God's family the same way, as spiritual babies. But as time moves on, so should the stage of infancy. God intends for His children to grow up.

By this time *you ought to be teachers*—granted, not every Christian has the gift of teaching, but every Christian, by God's design, should engage in *teaching*. God's goal is for His children to mature so that they can reproduce what He has given them into the lives of others. The question isn't, “Have I learned enough from God's Word to *satisfy me*?” The question is, “Am I learning God's Word so that I can *help others* learn it?”

May I ask you something? Which of you consider yourselves to be baby Christians? Okay, this next question *isn't* for you. It's for all who *don't* consider themselves babes in Christ. Are you teaching God's Word? Many of you are. You're teaching your children and grandchildren God's Word. You're teaching a Sunday School class, an Awana class, perhaps a youth discipleship class God's Word. You're inviting new believers to your house and teaching them God's Word, and that's a good thing. That's what maturing believers are supposed to be doing.

But this isn't. When we've learned enough of God's Word that we ought to be teachers, yet we're still just soaking up teaching, something's wrong. It's an indicator of immaturity.

3. *They are stuck on the ABCs of God's Word (12b)*. Notice the next segment of verse 12, “...you need someone to teach you the *elementary truths of God's word* all over again.” Just what are these “elementary truths of God's word”? The KJV calls them “the first principles of the oracles of God.” The Greek word *stoicheia* refers to “any first thing.” For instance, the letters of the alphabet are the *stoicheia*, the first principles, the building blocks of

speech.

What's one of the first things a child learns? A...B...C...D...E...F...G...right? What's one of the first things a child of God needs? The same thing. A...B...C...D... He needs the ABCs of God's Word.

But Hebrews 5 isn't addressed to baby Christians. These are folks who need the ABCs "*all over again*". That phrase would indicate that these readers not only failed to grow but actually lost ground. They needed the elementary truths *all over again*.

Beloved, the mere passing of time does not guarantee spiritual maturity. A person can be seventy years old and a charter church member, yet by this biblical standard classified as spiritually immature.

Furthermore, it's possible that a person once did teach others God's Word, and was maturing in the faith, but then kicked it into neutral. And since the Christian life is an uphill battle, what happens when you kick it into neutral? You guessed it. You don't stay where you are, for sure. You start coasting backwards, and consequently you're in need of the ABCs all over again.

4. *They can't handle solid food (12c)*. Verse 12 concludes, "You need milk, not solid food!" "Milk" here refers to "the elementary truths of God's word." The terms are synonymous. In 6:1 the author calls them "the elementary teachings about Christ."

What does the term "elementary" indicate? I went to Park Elementary School in Dover, Ohio. I knew from the first day I started kindergarten that I wasn't supposed to stay in Park Elementary School all my life. I knew that you were supposed to eventually leave *elementary* school and move on to *junior high* school, then to *senior high* school, then to college, and so on.

If there are *elementary* truths of God's word, that would imply there are also what? There are *junior high* truths, and *senior high* truths, and there's supposed to be a progression of spiritual learning taking place.

Warren Wiersbe suggests that the milk of the word here refers to what Christ did while on earth—His birth, life, teaching, death, and resurrection. The *solid food* or *meat* of the word refers to what Christ is doing right now in heaven (that's what the writer of Hebrews was just talking about in the previous section, Christ's present work as high priest). Wiersbe concludes, "We begin the Christian life on the basis of His finished work on earth. We grow in the Christian life on the basis of His unfinished work in heaven." [\[2\]](#)

Answer this. When was the last time you read a good book on the substitutionary atonement of Christ? Can you define the terms justification, redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation? Can you teach those precious concepts to your kids and grandkids? If you can't, what steps do you need to take so you can?

Be honest with yourself. When was the last time you learned something new about Christ? I didn't see any 35-year-olds sitting in my kindergarten class at Park Elementary School, saying their ABC's, and drinking from tiny milk cartons. The 35-year-olds I knew had moved on from the ABCs, they'd grown up. So how can it be that in church after church there are people who are spiritual 35-year-olds still living on milk?

Let me clarify once again, if you are a baby in Christ, Hebrews 5:12 isn't talking to you. If you are drinking milk, then good for you, for that's what God designed babies to do! No, this is talking about people who have already gone through the milk stage of spiritual development and ought now to be digesting solid food, but they still need milk.

By now you may be thinking that spiritual immaturity is linked only to the cognitive, but it's not. A person can have a lot of Bible knowledge and still be spiritually immature. Which brings us to the fifth indicator...

5. *They don't connect the Word to right living (13)*. Verse 13—"Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness." What happens if you try to live on spiritual milk? Two things according to this verse. One, you remain a spiritual infant. And two, you won't be acquainted with the teachings about righteousness, literally the 'word of righteousness.'

God's Word produces righteousness. By coming to know the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, a person is declared righteous by God and then begins to demonstrate righteousness in life.

But our text says that the spiritually immature are *not acquainted with the teachings about righteousness*. What does that indicate? The verb "not acquainted" is the Greek word *apeiros* which literally means "no test" or "no experience." It suggests that the immature person lacks the experience of applying biblical truth to every day life. He doesn't "integrate doctrine with duty," as Gromacki puts it.^[3]

He may be able to recite Bible truth, but he doesn't connect that truth to his life. It doesn't direct what he does as a dad, or at work, or in the privacy of his den. He may be able to win at Bible Trivia Pursuit, but he's not a more righteous person because of his Bible knowledge. Sadly, even though he would loudly object to the insinuation, he too is spiritually immature.

W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "As water never rises above its level so what we do never rises above what we are... We shall never take people one hair's breadth beyond our own spiritual attainment. We may point to higher things, but we shall only take them as far as we ourselves have gone."

So what are the evidences of spiritual immaturity? Take another look. They don't listen well to God's Word. They ought to be teachers, but still need to be taught. They are stuck on the ABC's of God's Word. They can't handle solid food. And they don't connect the Word to right living.

Now notice verse 14, "But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."

B. Here are some evidences of maturity (14). Three evidences...

1. *They can handle solid food.* "Solid food is for the mature," says the text. What happens if you give a steak to a two-year-old? He can't handle it. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age," says the KJV.

2. *They use what they learn.* Notice the words "constant use" in verse 14. By *constant use* they have trained themselves. They don't just *hear* God's Word. They *use* it, and they use it *constantly*.

3. *They have learned to discern what pleases God and what doesn't.* The text says they "have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."

A toddler can't do that. That's why he takes a screwdriver and sticks it in the electric outlet, to see "the pretty blue light," as he puts it. It's why when he sees the pretty red glow on the stove top, he reaches to touch it. It's also why a spiritual toddler watches television programs he ought not watch, and may wear provocative clothing, and engage in testimony-harming forms of entertainment. He hasn't been trained yet to know what's good and what's not good. He hasn't learned yet to *distinguish good from evil*.^[4]

Here's what makes preaching in church so challenging and so vital. The fact is, in every church there ought to be spiritual babies as well as those who are spiritually mature. So what should we teach? The babies can't handle solid food, and the mature need more than milk. That's a problem, but not a new one.

The options? One option is to put the babies in one room and the mature in another and feed them different meals at different times. A better option is the *family* approach.

I remember when our girls were little. We didn't stick them in the other room. We put them right next to us at the dining room table. Sure, they started in a high chair, but right next to the big table, so they learned from the start where they were heading. At first they couldn't even feed themselves. We had to hold the bottle for them. Later, we had to cut the food into smaller pieces and spoon feed them. Even when they were old enough to feed themselves, they didn't select the menu. Their mother did, to insure they ate not just what they *wanted*, but what they needed, a healthy, well balanced diet. The point is, *families help each other eat and grow*.

Beloved, we too are a family. So let me speak to the mature members of the church family for a moment. When we're eating our spiritual food together on Sundays, look around and see who's having trouble chewing. Sit next to them. Help them find Hebrews 5—they don't know where it is. Invite them to your house Sunday afternoon and ask them what they didn't understand. Explain who Melchizedek was, what a priest is, and why it matters. Then help them apply the truth they've learned to their lives.

And a word to you who are spiritual babes. Be humble and teachable and never be afraid to ask for help. Everyone in our church family was once where you are, and it's our privilege to help you grow. That's what families do! And here's a practice piece of advice. Don't remain a "Sunday morning Christian." That's where we usually begin, by coming to the morning worship service, but if that's the only piece of church life we experience our growth will be stunted. We need opportunities to digest God's Word—that's what our Sunday evening church family service is all about. And we need opportunities to get spiritual exercise—that's what our Wednesday evening ministry night is all about. And we need small group interaction—which is what our Sunday School affords, an opportunity not only to learn God's Word but to chew on it through discussion that leads to application.

So there's the first reality that our text says that Christians living on milk must face. We must face *the problem of spiritual immaturity*. Here's the second.

II. We need to get involved in the process of spiritual maturity (1-3).

Verses 1-3 "Therefore 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, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so."

The writer actually surprises us by what he says next. He just told his readers they couldn't handle solid food and still needed milk. So we would expect him to say, "So here's some *milk* for you." That's what Paul did with the Corinthians, telling them in 1 Corinthians 3:2, "I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready."

But not so the writer of Hebrews. His readers needed milk, but notice what he tells them in verse 1, "Let us *leave* the elementary teachings about Christ and *go on* to maturity." In other words, you're not ready for solid food yet and what you need is milk, but I'm not going to give you milk. I'm calling for you to leave the milk and grow up!^[5]

Let me reemphasize what I said earlier. If you are a new Christian, this counsel isn't for you. You need milk for you are a baby in Christ, and you ought not feel bad for wanting milk. But if you've named the name of Christ for some time and you're still living on milk, this charge is for you. It's time to grow and go on to maturity!

Yet know this about maturity. It is a *process*, and we learn three insights about this process in verses 1-3.

A. We need a good doctrinal foundation. Notice the command in verse 1, "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity." The writer urges his readers to *leave the elementary teachings*. But in order to leave them, that assumes something, right? If I told you to *leave your Bible here and go into the next room*, that command assumes something, doesn't it? It assumes that you have a Bible. You can't *leave* what you don't *have*.

Here the writer tells his readers to *leave* the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity. That assumes they had been taught and grasped *the elementary teachings about Christ*. And as Hebrews makes clear, we can't make that assumption about every person.

Just what are these "elementary teachings about Christ"? The writer actually lists six foundational doctrines, three categories with a pair of doctrines in each. The first two pertain to salvation, the next two to initial church experience, and the final two to future things.^[6] Here's the doctrinal foundation he says we need.

1. *It's vital to understand repentance and faith.* Specifically, he refers to “the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.” That’s the message, for instance, that Paul preached wherever he went, according to Acts 20:21: “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.”^[7] It doesn’t get any more basic. To be saved a person must *repent* and place their *faith* in Christ.

By the way, in some churches that’s *all* a person ever hears, salvation messages week after week. The result? If unbelievers are present, they may be saved, but what about the believers? On that diet, they’ll remain spiritual toddlers and begin to do what toddlers do, fight over toys, get sassy, and more!

2. *It's vital to understand about baptism and laying on of hands.* Verse 2 mentions “instruction about baptisms.” The Greek is plural, *baptismon*, hence, “baptisms.” The same word appears in 9:10, there translated “ceremonial washings.” There were many “washings” prescribed by the Mosaic Law (see Mark 7:4). But of course, Christ fulfilled the Law, and the readers of this epistle no doubt learned about that early on in their Christian life. They learned that they didn’t need to keep those “washings” any longer. They’d been “washed” by the blood of Christ, and had made that public by the “washing” of baptism.

They also had learned about “the laying on of hands.” Under the Mosaic law, the Jews were instructed to place their hands on the head of the burnt offering (Lev. 1:4). Likewise, the high priest put his hands on the animal he sacrificed (Lev. 16:21). Laying on of hands signified commitment and devotion. Yes, they learned all about that, too.

3. *It's vital to understand about the coming resurrection and judgment.* The Hebrews had learned about “the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.” They were taught that there’s more to life than this life. It’s appointed unto man once to die, and then the judgment (as they’ll hear again in 9:27).

So the process of spiritual maturity begins by laying a good doctrinal foundation. But it doesn’t end there. Insight #2...

B. We need more than a good foundation. Notice verse 1 again, “Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on...” The writer tells his readers to *go on*. We’ll talk specifically about the destination of this journey in a moment, but for now please notice it’s necessity. The text says to *go on*. Is a foundation good? Absolutely, but every contractor knows it’s not the end but just the beginning.

So three questions are in order...

1. *Do you know Christ?* That’s the bedrock foundational issue, to know Him.

2. *Do you have a good grasp of the basic doctrines?* We’ve just taken a quick survey of six basic doctrinal truths. Could you defend them using your Bible? Perhaps you need to read a good basic theology book. “What will people think?” you ask.

C. S. Lewis had this to say: “When I was ten, I read fairy tales in secret and would have been ashamed if I had been found doing so. Now that I am 50, I read them openly. When I became a man, I put away childish things -- including the fear of childishness and the desire to be grown-up.”^[8]

3. *Are you taking steps to build on that foundation?* Notice I said *build on*, not *abandon*. Philip Hughes explains, “To leave the elementary doctrines does not mean to despise or abandon them any more than a pupil who has learned the ABCs can then dispense with the alphabet... The first principles of Christian truth are basic to every stage of development and are no less essential at the end than they are at the beginning. The point is that the beginning is not a stopping-place; it is the door to progress and the springboard to achievement.”^[9]

C. We need to be moving towards maturity. “Let us *go on to maturity*,” is the charge in verse 1. How do we do that? First, we must grasp that...

1. *Spiritual growth doesn't happen automatically.* Barclay offers this sobering charge, “There are Christians in

whose faith there has been no development for thirty or forty or fifty or sixty years...They are grown men and women and yet insist on remaining content with the religious development of a child.”[\[10\]](#)

Jesus said that to enter the kingdom one must be *childlike* (Matt. 18:1ff.). But there’s a difference between being *childlike* and *childish*. As Barclay wisely put it, “Peter Pan makes a charming play on the stage; but the man who will not grow up make a tragedy in real life.”[\[11\]](#)

2. *Spiritual growth requires intentionality*. In other words, we need to get *intentional*. About what? David Breese offers this insight, “Strong sons of God are not perfected by childish pursuits.”[\[12\]](#)

What are childish pursuits? A familiar Mother Goose rhyme goes:

PUSSY CAT, PUSSY CAT, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

I’VE BEEN TO LONDON TO VISIT THE QUEEN.

PUSSY CAT, PUSSY CAT, WHAT DID YOU THERE?

I FRIGHTENED A LITTLE MOUSE UNDER THE CHAIR.

Like that cat, Christians sometimes settle for petty involvements, trivial pursuits—chasing mice—when we have the opportunity to spend time with royalty, with the King! Instead of remaining content with minimum daily requirements, we can deepen our relationship with God and grow into maturity.[\[13\]](#)

Take inventory of your life and ask yourself, “What activities am I engaging in for the purpose of maturing in Christ?”

Amy Carmichael once penned these thoughts: “Sometimes when we read the words of those who have been more than conquerors, we feel almost despondent. I feel that I shall never be like that. But they won through step by step by little bits of wills, little denials of self, little inward victories by faithfulness in very little things. They became what they are. No one sees these little hidden steps. They only see the accomplishment, but even so, those small steps were taken. There is no sudden triumph no spiritual maturity. That is the work of the moment.”[\[14\]](#)

If you know Christ, you can mature, but it takes *intentionality*. We mustn’t be passive. We must roll up our sleeves and take steps to *go on to maturity*.

Philip Yancey writes, “Human beings grow by striving, working, stretching; and in a sense, human nature needs problems more than solutions. Why are not all prayers answered magically and instantly? Why must every convert travel the same tedious path of spiritual discipline? Because persistent prayer, and fasting, and study, and meditation are designed primarily for our sakes, not for God’s. Kierkegaard said that Christians reminded him of schoolboys who want to look up the answers to their math problems in the back of the book rather than work them through...We yearn for shortcuts. But shortcuts usually lead away from growth, not toward it. Apply the principle directly to Job: what was the final result of the testing he went through? As Rabbi Abraham Heschel observed, “Faith like Job’s cannot be shaken because it is the result of having been shaken.””[\[15\]](#)

“Then it’s all up to us?” you say. No. Notice verse 3—“And God permitting, we will do so.” What does that tell us? This...

3. *Spiritual growth occurs by God’s grace and for God’s glory*. Ponder those words, “And God permitting.” If today you are no longer an infant but are a growing, maturing Christian, then please don’t respond, “Yea, I’m really proud of myself. I moved from infancy to spiritual adulthood,” for when growth occurs it’s always by God’s grace and thus for God’s glory!

The Bottom Line: God intends for His children to grow up and resemble His Son!

That's why He chose us and saved us according to Romans 8:29, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

Though many of us have seen pictures of a huge eagle's nest high in the branches of a tree or in the crag of a cliff, few of us have gotten a glimpse inside. When a mother eagle builds her nest she starts with thorns, broken branches, sharp rocks, and a number of other items that seem entirely unsuitable for the project. But then she lines the nest with a thick padding of wool, feathers, and fur from animals she has killed, making it soft and comfortable for the eggs. By the time the growing birds reach flying age, the comfort of the nest and the luxury of free meals make them quite reluctant to leave. That's when the mother eagle begins "stirring up the nest." With her strong talons she begins pulling up the thick carpet of fur and feathers, bringing the sharp rocks and branches to the surface. As more of the bedding gets plucked up, the nest becomes more uncomfortable for the young eagles. Eventually, this and other urgings prompt the growing eagles to leave their once-comfortable abode and move on to more mature behavior.^[16]

****Note:** This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

^[1] Warren Wiersbe, p. 294.

^[2] Wiersbe, p. 295.

^[3] Robert Gromacki, p. 99.

^[4] A baby will put anything into its mouth. A baby Christian is no different. He or she will listen to any television preacher that calls himself 'Christian,' not realizing there are many counterfeits.

^[5] I'm indebted to F. F. Bruce for this observation; p. 111.

^[6] Observation by Robert Gromacki, p. 104.

^[7] See also Acts 26:20

^[8] *Of Other World*, Edited by Walter Hooper.

^[9] Philip Hughes, p. 195.

^[10] William Barclay, p. 50.

^[11] William Barclay, p. 51.

^[12] David Breese, *Living For Eternity*, Moody Press, 1988, p. 78.

^[13] Source Unknown, found on sermonillustrations.com

^[14] Quoted in *Holy Sweat*, Tim Hansel, 1987, Word Books Publisher, p. 130.

^[15] Philip Yancey, *Disappointment With God*, Zondervan, pp. 207-8.

^[16] *Today in the Word*, June 11, 1989.

