

- Then ask each group to list on its large sheet of paper, "Ten Steps Toward Spiritual Maturity." Allow five minutes for groups to decide on their ten steps and list them.

Wrapping It Up

- Encourage each person to choose from the lists at least one action they will take during the coming week to move toward spiritual maturity.
- Call on someone to lead the class in prayer.

- Then let each group, in turn, come to the front of the room to display and report on its list of steps.

Teacher's Toolbox

*Getting your class into God's Word
and God's Word into your class*

ExcitingBibleStudy.com

Bible Series

Hebrews 5:11–6:12

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HOW TO USE TEACHER'S TOOLBOX: Make a four-page folded teacher's leaflet from the first two sheets by printing two-sided (or by putting the blank sides together). The other two sheets are for duplicating, displaying, distributing, or otherwise using as called for in the lesson plan.



Faith at Home – A specific application of today's Bible passage to family life, to be used for individual reflection, family discussion, or class activity.



Faith at Home

Have an open discussion with family members about Christian maturity and what responsibility individual believers have for their own maturity. Stress that maturity does not come just from doing the "right things" in a legalistic way trying to earn God's favor, but from a deep desire and commitment to become more like Jesus. End by suggesting each person choose some action toward maturity.



Getting Started

Thinking about age

- Write the following on the chalkboard:

Why don't you act your age?

A person's _____ age is not necessarily an indication of their _____. Some people seem to have _____ beyond their years, while others seem to never _____. This is true of all types of maturity: emotional, intellectual, social, and _____.

- Ask members to suggest appropriate words to fill in the blanks. When you finish, the statement should read like this (although it is possible that your class may have chosen some different words for some or all of the blanks):

A person's chronological age is not necessarily an indication of their maturity. Some people seem to have wisdom beyond their years, while others seem to never grow up. This is true of all types of maturity: emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual.

- Have members suggest indications of emotional immaturity; intellectual immaturity; social immaturity; and spiritual immaturity.
- Lead members to discuss briefly (4-5 minutes) spiritual maturity: what it is, how we recognize it, how we attain it.
- **Spiritual maturity develops from a steady application of spiritual truth. Maturity does not come from periodic bursts of spiritual insight or from inconsistent obedience. Spiritual maturity lives in those who discipline themselves in Christian doctrine and practice.**

Exploring God's Word

Group assignments

- Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one of the following assignments (cut apart Item 1).

Group 1

- Study Hebrews 5:11-14.
- What caused the writer to think his readers were spiritually immature?
- Based on these verses, what would be some indications of spiritual maturity?

Group 2

- Study Hebrews 6:1-3.
- What six elementary doctrines did the writer urge his readers to move past?
- Write a one-page essay beginning with this sentence: "Spiritual growth demands that we start by learning the basic Christian doctrines and add to

that knowledge a deepening intimacy with Christ and increasingly consistent lifestyle."

Group 3

- Study Hebrews 6:4-8.
- Since the Bible elsewhere clearly teaches the security of the believer, what do you think this passage means? (You may want to consult some reference sources, such as notes in a study Bible or a commentary.)

Group 4

- Study Hebrews 6:9-12.
- What are some "things that accompany salvation" that you expect to see in a Christian's life?
- Think about these four words from verse 12: faith, patience, inherit, promised. How do the four relate to one another in a Christian's life?
- Allow groups 10-15 minutes to study and complete their assign-

ments. Then have each group report in turn, beginning each report with a reading of the appropriate Scripture passage.

Understanding a difficult passage

- **Many consider Hebrews 6:4-6 to be the most difficult passage in the Book of Hebrews. Bible students have differed greatly in their interpretation of those verses.**
- Display Item 2, which has the following four possible interpretations of the passage:

1. Not all who get a taste of the gospel fully receive it. The passage is about unbelievers who have heard the gospel and been moved to repentance, but stopped short of trusting Jesus as Savior and committing to Him as Lord.

2. If you could ever lose your salvation, you couldn't regain it. The passage is an argument from absurdity, presenting an impossible scenario in which a Christian loses salvation. If such a thing could happen (and it can't), then that person could never be saved a second time.

3. You can slide back so far you'll never get back to where you were. The passage is about Christians who were falling down in their commitment to Christ and were in danger of becoming hardened in their backslidden con-

dition.

4. Not everyone who claims to know Christ really does. The passage is about persons professing to be Christians whose disobedience made their relationship to Christ suspect.

- After explaining the four interpretations, ask members to discuss with those around them and decide which interpretation they favor. After a minute or two, call for volunteers to tell which interpretation they chose and why.

Making It Personal

Listing steps toward maturity

- Divide the class into groups of four to seven persons. Give each group markers and a large sheet of paper (or poster board). Also appoint a note-taker for each group and give that person pencil and paper.
- Ask each group to discuss for five minutes:

What steps must a Christian take to grow spiritually?

Tell the note-takers to write down as much of the discussion as they can.

- After five minutes, ask the note-takers to review the discussion for their groups. Other members should add or correct the note-takers' comments.

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Group 2

- Study Hebrews 6:1-3.
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Group 4

- Study Hebrews 6:9-12.
- What are some "things that accompany salvation" that you expect to see in a Christian's life?
- Think about these four words from verse 12: faith, patience, inherit, promised. How do the four relate to one another in a Christian's life?

What does Hebrews 6:4-6 mean?

Four possible interpretations

- 1. Not all who get a taste of the gospel fully receive it.** The passage is about unbelievers who have heard the gospel and been moved to repentance, but stopped short of trusting Jesus as Savior and committing to Him as Lord.
- 2. If you could ever lose your salvation, you couldn't regain it.** The passage is an argument from absurdity, presenting an impossible scenario in which a Christian loses salvation. If such a thing could happen (and it can't), then that person could never be saved a second time.
- 3. You can slide back so far you'll never get back to where you were.** The passage is about Christians who were falling down in their commitment to Christ and were in danger of becoming hardened in their backslidden condition.
- 4. Not everyone who claims to know Christ really does.** The passage is about persons professing to be Christians whose disobedience made their relationship to Christ suspect.