



Failure To Launch!  
Hebrews 5:12-14

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12 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. 13 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.

NKJV

According to Hebrews 5:12-14, there were those in the early church that were immature babes in Christ even though they had been in the church for a significant time. One of the signs of their immaturity was that they were not instructing others. They were not teaching others. They had not begun to lead others in discipleship.

He did not mean to say that every member of the church was called by God to preach to a crowd of people. This calling is only reserved for a few.

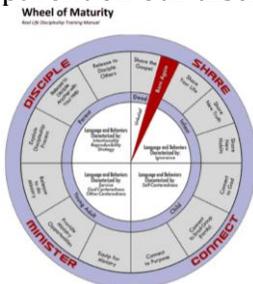
Ephesians 4:11

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers....

NKJV

He is implying that every believer should mature in their understanding of the truths of the Christian religion and one of the signs of maturity is you will start personally helping others understand the truths of the Christian religion.

We call this becoming a disciple that makes disciples. We call this becoming a spiritual parent on our discipleship wheel of maturity.



This is God's goal for every believer.

Maturing in our understanding of the truths of our Christian faith and assuming responsibility for teaching others is critical to the expansion of the Christian religion. The early church exploded numerically because every believer understood this was one of their responsibilities as a Christian and the vast majority fulfilled their responsibility.

The church began to plunge into the dark ages of Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD when the Roman government and the leaders of the church began to dictate who could teach and they made men the final authority on what could be taught. This led to the rise of the Roman Catholic Church and numerous heresies.

The precursor to the protestant reformation began in the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD when the bible was translated into the common vernacular and men like John Hus, John Wycliffe, and Peter Waldo began to challenge the false beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. The creation of the printing press by the German Johannes Gutenberg around **1440 accelerated the movement and ultimately led** to the official start of the Protestant reformation in 1517. This reformation came at a steep price. Thousands were martyred by the church for assuming the responsibility of sharing the truth with others. For example, John Hus was burned at the stake. John Wycliffe's bones were dug up by the church and then burned.

But in spite of the great price paid by the martyrs so that we can all have the scriptures, read the scriptures, understand the scriptures, and share the scriptures with others, we are still experiencing the same problem that is addressed in Hebrews. I believe we experienced a reformation in theology but not a reformation of methodology. We still view the professional pastors as the ones who are responsible for sharing the gospel.

Believers are remaining immature in their understanding of the scriptures and they are not assuming responsibility for teaching others.

This has been my greatest frustration as a Pastor and teacher and as a disciple who has spent countless hours discipling men in small groups and one to one only to see them never disciple anyone other than their own family.

Why aren't more believers growing up and assuming the responsibility to disciple others the way Jesus did?

For the last seven weeks we have studied seven spiritual problems that can cause us to remain immature babes in Christ and cause us not to launch into discipleship.

1. [Coveting the things of this world](#)
2. [Self-doubt](#)
3. [Being self-centered](#)
4. [Being uneducated\(ignorant\)](#)
5. [Being unaware of personal faults](#)
6. [Remaining in bondage to sin](#)

## 7. Not knowing who we are in Christ

This morning I want to finish this series with one last characteristic of immaturity that keeps many people from launching into teaching others.

When I was a child there were times when I would avoid my Dad because I knew if he saw me, there would be something he wanted me to do. As a child, I did not want the responsibility, so I would hide from my Dad.

Fortunately, I grew up and developed a different heart toward him and others I was called to serve. But I have observed by my time as an employee that some people never grow up. Some people treat their employers the same way that I treated my Dad. They hide from their supervisor to avoid being given responsibility. Some men hide from their wife to avoid being given any more responsibility.

I personally enjoy a break from responsibility as much as anyone. God understood our need for a break and that is one reason he instituted the Sabbath and the feasts of Israel for the Jews.

But there is a vast difference between wanting an appropriate break from responsibility and hiding to avoid responsibility that God and others want us to assume.

When I was a child I would avoid responsibility that God and others wanted me to assume by lying. I became very skilled at it. I found the best way to lie to myself and to others was by just claiming I had to attend to another responsibility. If I was called upon to do something I did not want to do I could just say I had homework or I had something else that I had to do. This not only relieved me of the responsibility but it also helped relieve my conscience and made me feel better about not doing what God and others wanted me to do.

I have seen this same problem with putting in the work it takes to understand the truth of scripture and then teaching others. I have heard I am too busy serving my wife, my children, my grandchildren, my work, my school, etc. to participate in discipling others. I have heard I am too old and I am too young. I have heard it is not my job.

There are some jobs in the church that are not for everyone. According to Hebrews 5:12-14, Matthew 4:19, and Matthew 28:19-20, discipling others is not one of them. We can hide from men by making excuses but we cannot hide from God if we are in Christ.

(Tell the story of Saul from I Samuel 9 and 10).

As disciples of Jesus, we are all called and anointed by God to learn and understand the truths of God's Word and disciple others.

We can choose to avoid the responsibility of leading others in discipleship by hiding behind baggage full of excuses

God knows where you are hiding and the excuses you are hiding behind.

He has sent me to find you and bring you out from behind the baggage you are hiding behind so that you will fulfill what He is His calling you to do.

You are not called like Saul to be King but there is a King in you calling you to make disciples for Him! What an honor and a privilege that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords has chosen you to represent Him and help Him expand His Kingdom. Today stop making excuses and answer the call!

Come out from behind the baggage you have been hiding behind?

[Two ways you can answer the call and start understand the scripture and leading others in discipleship at Western Hills.](#)

1. [Join a group](#)

Every member of our groups is given the opportunity every week to lead others in discipleship. As you honestly and transparently answer the questions that are asked, not only does your understanding grow, but God uses what you share to disciple others.

Every member of our groups is given the opportunity every week to personally connect with other members of the group to ask questions, answer questions, and give counsel.

Every member of our groups is given the opportunity to form one to one discipleship relationships with another member of the group or with those outside the group.

Every member of our groups is given the opportunity to share the bible story they learn in group with someone outside the group.

Every member of our groups is given the opportunity to invite new people to group.

2. [Lead a group](#)

Our groups do not require anyone who leads a group to be a public speaker, public teacher, or preacher. They require you to intentionally lead the group to hear the Word of God and consider what God is saying to them. The Holy Spirit does the rest.

Will you come out from behind the baggage you have been hiding behind and fulfill what God is calling you to do? Or will you keep hiding behind your baggage full of excuses?