

Hebrews 5.14

Exercised For Discernment

The writer of Hebrews makes the case that maturity, and hence, solid food belongs to those who have exercised (trained) their senses to discern both good and evil... this raises the issue of what is gained from this? There is a philosophy that has become prevalent in our culture that says that we don't really need to grow up, that we can remain children forever feeding off those who are willing to sustain us and living for our own pleasure and entertainment... this is so prevalent in today's America that when someone is forced to step outside of that paradigm they call it "adulthood" and acknowledge it as a temporary, aberrance from the norm, something to be avoided if at all possible, and certainly something that should be kept as short as can be when avoidance is simply not possible. So what about spiritually? Are we permitted as Christians to view temporary bouts of maturity as the norm? OR does God call us to something more? Last week we began this conversation in order to allow us to think about maturity with a biblical

mindset. So by way of review I'd like to remind us of why we should seek maturity.

- Why Seek Maturity?
 - Maturity
 - IS Pleasing to God
 - Honoring to Christ
 - Helpful to the body
 - With maturity comes Stability
 - Confidence -
 - Patience -
 - Hope
 - Steadfastness -
 - And then through that maturity and stability comes Protection
 - From Satan -
 - From the world -
 - From the difficulties that we all face -
 - And we are then Rooted in Grace
 - Sweetness of God manifested in the mundane reality of life -
 - Hope bearing fruit in character -
 - Christ being formed in us
 - God being vindicated in our lives -

- What is the practical goal of Training our Senses?
 - To discern good
 - To discern evil
 - This is crucial if we are to make a difference in our culture and stand for truth. Those who are not well grounded and mature will always find themselves adrift and following after every false idea... the world chases after bad ideas like moths to a flame. - FB rant about not making law according to religion... because we are supposed to be a "melting pot" - therefore we cannot make law from one religion.
 - Safety from the wrath of God. Ultimately, those who swallow the deception of the world will find that they will be judged with the world. God does not allow His children to be finally deceived.

How then do we train our senses, and thus ourselves for this work of righteousness, this great calling to live a life that honors our Savior and King?

I. ATTENTION

- a. To have your senses exercised means that you have used them! You cannot just drift through life, must have your eyes open and your ears open and your mind awake to what is going on.

Philippians 4.8-9

II. PRACTICE

Exercise = gumnadzo "to exercise naked"

- a. Reference to the games
- b. Idea of stripping away encumbrances
- c. Focus and purpose
- d. Total commitment to a single thing
- e. Principles of Practice
 - i. Practice on the near, simple and plain –

1Timothy 5.3-8

ii. Practice, practice, practice

Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect... which means:

“Don’t practice until you get it right;
Practice until you don’t get it wrong “

iii. God will show what applies next from that –

III. NUTRITION

a. Steady Diet of the Word - continuing therein -

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Deuteronomy 31.12-13

2 Timothy 3.14-17

b. Instruction –

Proverbs 9.8-12;
Ephesians 6.4,
1 Corinthians 14.29-33

c. Attentive Consideration –

Matthew 9.10-13

d. Experience within this active consideration

e. application of what is shown.

f. Christ empowering us -

Philippians 4.11-13

IV. MYSTERY OF GRACE –

Remember we just read –

Philippians 4:13(NKJV) 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

a. External Guidance

Proverbs 22.6

b. Divine Preparation

John 6.44-45

Psalm 144.1-2

Psalm 119.73

James 1.5-6

c. Walking with Christ submitting to His rule

Matthew 11.25-30