

Hebrews 5.12

Growth is Expected

The reality of all life is this, you are either growing or declining. You are either living or dying; either in your ascendancy or in your decay. It is true of nations, and it is true of individuals. While none can successfully argue that this nation is not in a state of free-fall morally, ethically and in general worthiness; there are many issues that contribute to this overall decline, and much debate could be given as to which is the core issue. I am convinced out of scripture that the way of a nation is determined by the way of the church. The church is not an institution of man's devising, it is the house of God, the manifest display of the pillar and the ground of truth, and when the church becomes lax, becomes complacent, becomes more concerned with her comforts than her calling she has fallen from her position of watchman. She has declined, become less, become of no value in her God-given task of being salt and light in the midst of a dying world. And when the church is in decay because of her all-consuming desire to be like the world, then she can expect her Master to call her to account. But here is the real problem for us

- the church is made up of people, of Christians who are themselves called to growth, to a life of service for the Kingdom of God. And when the church is in decay, it is because the people who ARE the church are in decay. We are either growing in grace or decaying in sin. So ask yourself, are you more like Christ than you were 5 years ago? Are you maturing? Are you thinking more like Christ, speaking more like Christ, acting more like Christ? Or are you still the same baby you always were? Or worse, have you reverted to something that you had previously grown out of? Because the scripture is clear, God expects us to grow!

In this passage the writer of Hebrews is complaining against the church in Jerusalem that they should be much more mature than they are, that they are really children, infants honestly when they should be mature servants of the living God. He rebukes them for this and in this rebuke there are some expectations that might help us avoid the same fate... or at least, turn from it and return to being useful.

I. EXPECTATION OF GROWTH OVER TIME

a. By this time

b. They have been at this a while -

1 Corinthians 3.1-17

c. They have been in decline -

d. Should have a need other than what they actually DO need.

e. Should instead have grown into new stages of understanding and application

1 Corinthians 13.11-12

i. Walking around the tower instead of climbing the stairs

1. Same exact issues,
2. same exact perspective
3. Same exact response

ii. Climbing the tower

1. may give same general issues, cardinal points of the compass

2. Every window offers new perspective on old things
3. Every level up builds our ability to respond and adapt to the need with truth

II. EXPECTATION OF RETENTION

a. Teach you again

b. Teach you the basic principles

1 Peter 2.1-3

c. Teach you the important things

Philippians 1.9-11

III. EXPECTATION OF FRUIT

Isaiah 5.1-7

Matthew 21.18-19

IV. EXPECTATION OF "OTHER" FOCUS

a. Should be thinking about what those who are around them need to know and apply

Ephesians 4.11-16

b. Requires that you be steady and solid

c. Requires Unity

Philippians 3.15-16

d. A large part of the reason that we are called to grow is so that we can serve.

e. It requires not being selfish to be a teacher of others, for they will need at unhandy times and they will need more than you may want to give.

Ephesians 1.4-6

V. EXPECTATION OF MASTERY

a. Should be able to know what you know so well that it no longer requires rote application

1 Corinthians 2.6-7

- b. Three stages of education
 - i. Elemental (Grammar) - "just the facts, ma'am"
 - ii. Logical - Dialectic - argument of why, reasoning, informal and formal logic, how to argue with wisdom and eloquence
 - iii. Rhetorical - independent thinking, communication of complex ideas, original thinking and persuasive speaking and writing, that both please and sway the listener.
 - iv.

VI. EXPECTATION OF SUBMISSION

a. It is not enough to know truth, Remember Jesus IS the truth. –

John 14.6

- i. We must obey it

Luke 6.46-49

ii. We must honor it

John 5.22-23

iii. We must desire it

1. Not wickedness –

James 1.14-15

2. Not the praise of men –

Mark 12.38-40

3. Not Riches –

1 Timothy 6.6-10

iv. We must love it

Isaiah 26.7-9

b. Opinion is NOT truth,

- i. We can have opinions that are true
- ii. We can have opinions that are false
- iii. We can have opinions that change
- iv. We can have opinions that remain constant
- v. But TRUTH is eternal

c. Truth must be the master

d. God ALONE defines truth, HE ALONE sets the standards and determines the requirements.

e. We are to be shaped to conform to the truth of God's word

VII. EXPECTATION OF REPENTANCE

Acts 17.29-31

Hosea 6.1-3