

Beyond the Basics

Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And we will do this if God permits. (Hebrews 6:1-3 CSB)

Sometimes when I look at a portion of scripture like this one, I don't just look at what it is saying, but also paramount is *what it is not saying*. It is not saying that basic teachings are not important or necessary, but rather that they should be leading us somewhere. Disciplines such as reading and studying the word, praying, fasting, and worshiping should continue to bring us closer to God and make us more caring about

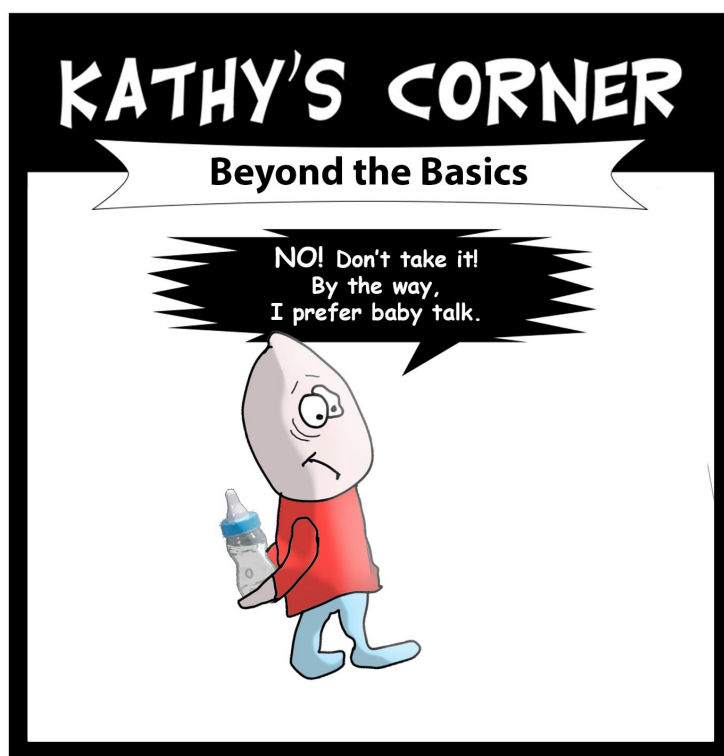
people. Disciplines should lead us to connect with our God, align with His will and purpose and love. They are never the *end* in themselves. Through the disciplines we hear His voice more clearly and give the Holy Spirit a structure from which He can work those things He is so good at.

So, what is the above portion saying? It is saying the elementary teachings are foundational, but not the purpose. They are the foundation for us to go on to maturity. A definition of maturity by AI is *the state of being fully developed, which can refer to the physical completion of growth or the quality of being mentally and emotionally developed and responsible*. I think AI did a pretty good job with this definition. We can take the definition a step further and look at it spiritually. Are we mature enough to bear spiritual children for the Lord and bring them up responsibly—so that they, too, can become spiritually mature?

Again, I have to praise God for NUMA who continues to build on the foundation it (He) has laid for all of us. The leading of the Spirit through this assembly to mature us after laying a foundation of truth—I thank God for it! We are being taught discipleship so that we can effectively disciple others; we are being taught deliverance and exorcism so that we can effectively free others; and of late, we have sermons to teach us how to engage with people caught in cults like Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses, to break down the error and present a true gospel to them—the Gospel Jesus Christ brought to the world.

Dangers of Disciplines

Disciplines can have some dangers. As with any danger, if we proceed, it must be done with caution. Obvious dangers are those which Jesus pointed out—the pride and hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. Some get to thinking they are better than others with a haughty or arrogant spirit. Some become unteachable because they think they know so much more than others. Some get obsessed with their own spiritual progress and experiences, or lack of them—comparing themselves with others. This



can cause frustration or jealousy, or focus on methods—the shortcut—the how to, rather than focusing on the One who has created us as His own, *uniquely!* He works out the “to will and to do” if we let Him—TRUST!

There is a time when *disciplines* for me are painful. Those times when I am just being “religious.” This is not the case when I realize that I am spending time with the Holy Spirit within me. Together we dive into the Word, enjoy its refreshment. Together we worship and praise Jesus and the Father. We enjoy each other! We pray together. We sing together. He speaks. His life fills me. In His presence is fullness of joy—**for all of us!**

He is with us even when we are not mindfully engaged in the disciplines. He is with us always. Think about how enormous this is! A god with us. Pagans thought their gods to be powerful. A god with us is powerful, and not just **a god**, but the one **True God**. So, let us go on to maturity! Let us disciple others, not leaving them at the place of spiritual elementary school, but leading them to a place of purpose. We teach them to trust and obey all things that Jesus commanded. We baptize and immerse them into His nature and authority, His character and love— this is His name.

Being as old as I am, it is to the churches shame that I cannot recall a single instance of anyone coming to knock on my door to share the gospel with me, or invite me to their church; whereas, Jehovah Witnesses repeatedly and Mormons have come in an effort to share their false gospels and issue invitations to join them. Let us go on to maturity!

I know you are all familiar with this portion, the Great Commission, but I think it interesting how the Complete Jewish Bible translates it:

Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20) talmidim=disciples; Ruach HaKodesh=Holy Spirit

Let us go on to maturity. **“For the ground that drinks the rain that often falls on it and that produces vegetation useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a blessing from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and at the end will be burned.”** (Hebrews 6:7-8 CSB)