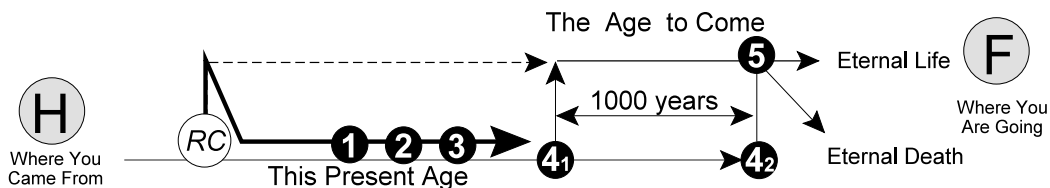


# Lesson #16

## The Milk and the Meat

The five principles that make up our Destiny Diagram are referred to as the “milk of the word” which is typically understood to be food for the immature (though everyone enjoys a good glass of milk now and then).

### Destiny Diagram



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- 1 Repentance from Dead Works & Faith Toward God
  - 2 Doctrines of Baptisms/Washings
  - 3 The Laying on of Hands
  - 4<sub>1</sub> The First Resurrection
  - 4<sub>2</sub> The Second Resurrection
  - RC The Resurrection of Christ
  - 5 Eternal Judgment

The scriptures contrast this milk to solid food (referred to in some translations as *meat*), which is for the mature. This comparison of the milk and the meat is found in Hebrews Chapter 5 and leads into the list of five principles in Hebrews Chapter 6:1-2, where the writer of Hebrews speaks of moving on from the discussion of the elementary principles.

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. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 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.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

— Hebrews 5:12- 6:2 (NKJV)

Maybe you are thinking, “Yes, yes! I get it! Let’s move on. I want some meat! Okay, so let’s take a little test. Close your eyes for a moment and see if you can verbally recite the five principles in order.

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If you were able to quote these beginning elements of the oracles of God - Congratulations! But as pointed out in the previous lesson, the ability to quote 5 points from memory does not necessarily mean they are understood or are being practiced. The main point to be taken from the passage above is the writer’s desire to see the principles being practiced, not simply discussed or learned academically. The goal was to bring people to maturity and to produce teachers, not simply students. The New King James Version uses the word *discussion* in Hebrews 6:1. We are encouraged to move on from the *discussion* of these principles, but not from the practice of them. Our aim is to move on from discussion to doing, from academics to application.

### **Milk Is The Framework**

The point was made at the beginning of this study course that the 5 principles from Hebrews 6:1-2 provide a primary framework of understanding to which we can add many topics and teachings. It is not just a good idea to know these things, they must be a continual part of our core knowledge providing direction and structure as we move forward and take action.

Comparing the church to the human body is a commonly known metaphor used in the Bible. Also commonly known is that milk provides essential nutrients such as calcium for building strong bones and teeth while meat (or solid food) provides protein which builds muscle. Our bones and skeletal structure (from milk) is the framework upon which we build muscle (from meat). With that in mind, we must ask: “Do we ever get to a point of physical maturity where our bones are no longer needed?” Of course not! Without the milk/bones, there is no need for the meat/muscle.

A body builder who is adding more and more muscle, does not ignore his bone structure. He continues to nurture his bone structure with the nutrients that keep it strong. In fact, if things are working correctly, his bones actually become stronger from load bearing exercises due to the slight flexing of the bones and their cellular regeneration.

No one thinks they can add muscle mass without a bone structure. That is absurd! Yet Christians often think they can become spiritual power lifters and accomplish God’s work without giving continual attention to the foundational framework provided by the elementary principles of the oracles of God. Thinking we don’t need ongoing foundational practice makes as much sense as a man having his bones surgically removed because he has reached adulthood and is no longer a child.

The teachings of the elementary principles of the oracles of God are not simply fast-food stops along life’s journey which we quickly forget as we move on down the road to the really important stuff. These principles, and the direction they give us, must be continually in our consciousness as we add the meaty knowledge that lies ahead. Like our bone structure, these principles provide the mechanical leverage that our muscles need to lift us off our beds and move us into action. Without the elementary principles giving us direction and purpose, we become like musclebound invalids whose purpose is simply to flex in front of the mirror.

## Balanced Nutrition

Again, the Hebrews who were being addressed at the end of Hebrews, Chapter 5, were classified as immature and in need of milk because they were not teaching others. Looking at the five foundational principles as “five food groups” from which we get a balanced diet provides yet another analogy.

Everyone knows that we need a balanced diet from all the food groups to be healthy - everyone of course, except for the immature or undisciplined. That is why milk is for babies, they are not mature enough to manage a healthy diet plan from the wide variety of items on the doctrinal menu. But they can get all they need from milk because milk is the product of a healthy diet that has been combined into one menu item. Milk contains the same nutrition as meat/solid food, but it is processed, filtered and administered to babies by one who is mature.

Therefore, I submit that the meat of the word is not moving on to different topics (or telling or hearing something new). It is simply learning to feed one’s self in a balanced way from the five foundational principles, and teaching others how to do the same. This is the definition of maturity.

Paul essentially made this point to the Corinthians when he referred to them as “babes needing milk” and to himself and Apollos as ministers, God’s fellow workers (see 1 Cor 3:1-9). Paul and Apollos were mature builders, but the Corinthians were immature and what they were building was not strong and healthy. It would not stand the test of fire (see 1 Cor 3:10-15). This is why we must not overlook the concept of “balanced” nutrition. Some foods taste good and others don’t, but we need them all. The same is true of the foundational principles. It is common for us to fill up on things like faith, grace, and accessing resurrection power, but forget to partake of repentance, holiness, and judgement.

## Classic Academics

Those being addressed in Hebrews, Chapter 5, were classic academics. For them it was all about head knowledge, instead of action. They were interested in knowledge, but not obedience to God. Jesus was speaking to this type of person when He said, “*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.*” (John 5:39-40). Paul warned Timothy regarding such people, describing them as always learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 3:7).

I am reminded of the people Paul encountered in Athens who “...spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear something new” (Acts 17:21). Then Paul touched on at least three of the 5 principles as he spoke to them. He addressed their dead religion and challenged them to repent (see verses 22 and 30). This is the essence of principle 1: Repentance from Dead Works and faith Toward God. Then he framed this challenge to repent in principles 4 & 5, speaking of coming judgment and resurrection (see verse 31).

Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

— Acts 17:22, 30, 31 (NKJV)

## The Ministry of Righteousness

We also see in Hebrews another description of the meat of the word when it says “... *everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe*” (Heb 5:13). The flip side of this statement would mean that he who *IS* skilled in the word of righteousness is not a babe but *IS* mature. Therefore, the word of righteousness, is the food of the mature, or the meat.

The Apostle Paul spoke about being a minister of the New Covenant, not just a academic or a teacher of the letter of the law (Old Covenant) describing his ministry as a “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor 2:4). He described this as “ministry of righteousness,” and spoke of the greater glory that comes with it.

For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

— 2 Corinthians 3:9 (NKJV)

The definition of righteousness (from the Strong’s Greek Dictionary) is *equity (of character and act)*. This reminds us of what Jesus said, “... *he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father*” (John 14:12 NKJV). This goes with the point we have been making - The meat is putting the principles into action.

Paul also wrote to Timothy about being equipped for every good work, or in other words, moving from discussion to doing and from academics to application.

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

– 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

It is here that we should mention that there is a difference between the *Ministry of Righteousness* and *Training in Righteousness*. Our goal is to become mature and move from Training in Righteousness to the Ministry of Righteousness (see chart below). However, the text book remains the same, The Holy Scriptures.

<b>Training In Righteousness</b>	Milk	Immature	Pupil	Academic Letter of the Law	Hearer of the Word
<b>Ministry of Righteousness</b>	Meat	Mature	Teacher	Application Action	Doer of the Word