

Basic Teachings - Introduction

LECTURE

1

*Introduction - Information needed at the start
of learning about Foundational Doctrines!*

Session Topics:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The Weaning Process | 36 |
| Mother's milk to liquids, liquids to soft solids, solids to solids, solids to self-feeding, established eating habits and parenthood. | |
| 2. Unskilled in the Word | 37 |
| A baby is unskilled, a lack of knowing how to, lack of skill produces fear and babies are not sure of the word. | |
| 3. Training through Practice | 38 |
| Every mature believer is skilled, a living sacrifice, the five physical senses are to be trained, the body can be trained to do almost anything the mind is set on, training that produces stamina and breaking the threshold of pain. | |
| 4. The Fundamental Principles | 40 |
| Begin at the beginning, principles for salvation and growth. | |

Outcomes:

After completing this session you should be able to -

Integrate the knowledge and skills required to prepare Christian Workers for a study of Foundational Doctrines.

Objectives:

- **Share the weaning process**
Teaching the analogy between physical and spiritual feeding.
- **Focus on the need to be Word-skilled**
by showing the need for developed skills to reduce fear and to generate confidence.
- **Setting performance as a goal**
Teaching that performance comes through practice: 'doers'.
- **Get the sequence right**
Insisting that Faith must be preceded by repentance.
- **Practice maturity building**
Causing growth through the teaching of the doctrines or and to generate motivation by this knowledge and understanding.

Hebrews 5:12-6:2 *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 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 onto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance of DEAD WORKS and of FAITH TOWARD GOD, of the DOCTRINES OF BAPTISMS, of LAYING ON OF HANDS, of RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, and of ETERNAL JUDGEMENT.*

The PURPOSE of this teaching is to **equip the worker** and the **disciple** to enable him to introduce the **new convert** to the basics of the Christian walk. These six teachings are the **basic elementary principles** of what Jesus Christ taught during His life on earth. They are like the teaching a child gets in their very **first grade of Junior Primary School**. If a child is taught that $2 \times 2 = 22$ and that T-H-E means 'and' then their whole educational career will be determined by **false information** and he will be limited in **society**. Similarly a believer to whom the **basics are wrongly taught** will be hindered in usefulness to the **Kingdom of God**.

Another reason for this teaching is to **remind the believer** of his own **roots** and **foundations**. The writer of Hebrews writes to the original Christians in Jerusalem who were converted on the day of Pentecost and who are mentioned in the first few chapters of **Acts**. These Christians had grown cold in their hearts through **persecution** and through pressure from Judaism to return to their legalistic traditions. They are **reminded** of the **basic foundations** and **encouraged** to go on to perfection.

I. The Weaning Process

Hebrews 5:12 *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 SOUND FOOD.*

Weaning is a process that goes through various stages from **breast-feeding to self-help**. All this needs **some-one to teach** the baby and child how to **feed** and **eat** correctly. The completion of the cycle is **parenthood** where the parent is the **Teacher**.

■ Breast Feeding

A new-born baby has a natural **sucking instinct** and lives from **feed to feed**. Babies sleep, feed, bath, -sleep, feed, sleep, feed on demand for the first few months of life. So it is with new-born Christians – **there is a great desire for the milk of the Word**. This Word must be fed to the **new believer** through intimate contact and fellowship. He will have this sucking instinct – instant for the **Word**, and **will demand-feed** on the **Word**.

You must realize that this is the stage when **everything is new** to the understanding. It is a time when the Bible is like an exciting road of discovery, a time when many things will be puzzling simply because they have never been tried out or experienced before.



■ Mother's Milk to Liquids

This is a time when the baby begins to **experience** and **do** things that he sees in the Word of God. He begins to conceive the possibility of **doing** the Word; something that was unthinkable a short time before.

■ Liquids to Soft Solids

By now the baby has grown a bit more, is learning to hold the cup himself, but is still very messy. He begins to receive small revelations and understanding of the Word himself. He starts practising those things, without being told. The food still has to be placed before him and his diet determined by a mature person, otherwise he will only eat his favourite food and have an unbalanced diet.

■ Soft Solids to Solids

He still has to be fed and his diet has to be determined, but he is becoming more and more used to food which he previously rejected.

■ Solids to Self-feeding

His diet must still be regulated, but he feeds himself. He must eat a balanced diet of the **whole Counsel of God** and not just the **sweet parts**. All eating habits should be supervised or he might throw away what is too challenging.

■ Established Eating Habits

Babyhood is now long past and the believer has become totally self-motivated and knows the difference between a good healthy diet and an unhealthy one. He regulates his own Word intake at his own pace. Doing the Word is not a strain on his mind any more, but a constant practice and a way of life.

■ Parenthood

The believer is now producing his own children in the Lord and is seeing to their food, regulating and disciplining the **diet** and **eating habits** of each of his own children. He knows how to practice the Word and how to demonstrate his knowledge to babies and children.

2. Unskilled in the Word

Hebrews 5:13 For everyone who partakes ONLY OF THE MILK IS UNSKILLED IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, for he is a babe.

This is the stage in young believers' lives when what they see in the **Word of God is not clearly understood** and seems to be strange, weird and **out of reach**. Repentance is a word only used by **preachers of doom** and **fanatics**. What does it mean? Faith?! I wish I could have your faith. I have such a long way to go! Baptized by full immersion?! **No?! You're crazy!**

■ Unskilled in any area of the Word

If a believer is unskilled in any area of the Word, he is still a baby in that area. For example: Smith Wigglesworth was highly developed in the area of **healing** but under-developed in the area of **finance for big projects**.

Others are highly developed in **faith** and under-developed in **love**; or the **gifts** as opposed to the **fruit** of the Holy Spirit.

■ A baby is unskilled

A baby believer **lacks skill** in most areas in the **Kingdom of God**. The only skill there is, is in **taking** and **getting**. He has no skill in **believing** and **faith** even for the **basic** things of salvation. Every time he falls, he thinks he needs to be **born-again, again**.

■ A lack of knowing how to

- ◆ be saved
- ◆ walk in love
- ◆ forgive
- ◆ be righteous
- ◆ read the Word
- ◆ believe for healing, finance

A common phrase in many a testimony is 'I was born again but I did not know how to carry on!' This is a problem! This is why Jesus commanded the church to go and **make disciples**. The disciple-making process is **the process where a believer is trained in the Word until he acts according to the Word without thinking**.

■ Lack of skill produces fear

This is mainly fear of the **unknown, untried** and **untested** areas of the Word.

1 Samuel 17:38-39 *So Saul clothed David with his armour, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. And David fastened his sword to his armour, and he tried to walk, FOR HE HAD NOT TESTED THEM. And David said to Saul: 'I cannot walk in these for I have NOT TESTED THEM.'* So David took them off.

Because, unlike Saul, David had not fitted or tested the armour, he took it off. Many believers have not proved or fitted some parts of the **Word of God** to their lives, so they "take off", as it were. They are not yet skilful in the Word, the armour of God.

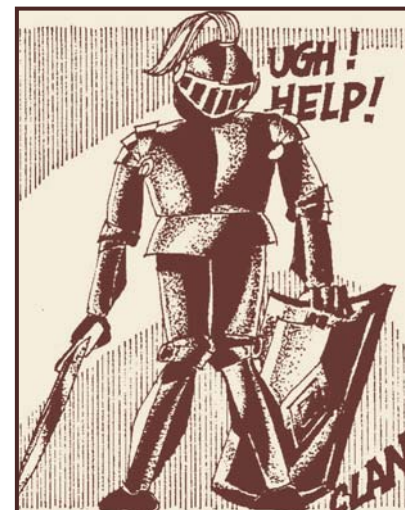
Matthew 14:28-30 *And Peter answered Him and said. Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water. So He said: Come! And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind was boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink he cried out, saying: Lord, save me!*

The '**Lord said 'come'** and Peter acted on it, but it was a '**strange and weird'** thing to do. This is something **unweaned** children do – **if it is You Lord, command me**.

Judges 6:36-40 *Then Gideon said to God: If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said – look. I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor ...*

■ Babies are not sure of the Word

This is simply because of a **lack of trust in the Word**. The Word had said "**come**" to Peter and "**I will save Israel by your hand**" to Gideon. They were in the process of **proving the Lord to see if He was good**.



3. Training through Practice

Hebrews 5:14 *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. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves ... (NIV)*

It is only through **constant use and consistent practise** that **training and skill** are perfected.

■ Every mature believer is skilled

He knows the **Word of righteousness works** because he has proved it, he has tried it, he has **tested** it and he has **become convinced that God does not lie**.

■ A living sacrifice

Romans 12:1,2 I beseech you ... brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God ... do not be conformed to this world, but be TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind that you may PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD.

- ◆ The five physical senses are to be trained

This is everything pertaining to our **physical bodies**, which need to be brought under the **Power** of the **Word of righteousness**. This is the place where the **physical senses** derive more **pleasure from doing and practising the Word of God** than from the **pleasures of the world**. The Word of God has become stronger than what the **flesh lusts for**.

- ◆ The body can be trained to do almost anything the mind is set on

■ Training that produces stamina

Every believer must come to the place where **he will not give up under any circumstances**; where having done **all to stand he still stands**; where after having done the will of God **he still endures** even though he cannot see **any physical results**.

Every believer must reach the stage where **he will stop at nothing but the best that God has for him**: the best reward, the best crown with the best jewels. **This comes only through right handling of the Word of righteousness which only comes through constant practice**.

■ Breaking the threshold of pain

In any training program there is a **pain barrier** where you decide to carry on no matter how painful or what the cost is to you. There must be a **determination to get the prize!**

- ◆ **Abraham's threshold of pain**

This was the day when God had waited **until it was beyond all hope** for them to bring forth a child. The day Abraham became **fully persuaded** was the day the **pain barrier was broken**. He was **fully trained** and **he** and **Sarah** produced a son, Isaac. It was then possible for him to sacrifice Isaac because he was convinced that God would raise him from the dead.

- ◆ **Moses' threshold of pain**

Moses broke this threshold at the burning bush when he took up the **rod of God**. He was fully persuaded in God, he no longer needed to depend on self-effort.

- ◆ **Joshua's threshold of pain**

This was the day when Joshua had to take over from Moses. The Lord spoke to Joshua and told him that He had given them the land of Canaan. Joshua then proceeded to act on this Word.

4. The Fundamental Principles

■ Begin at the beginning

If we do not start at the right place we will arrive at the wrong place and never get to the point of maturity where we are skilled in the Word of Righteousness. We must **start** by becoming **skilful in these six basic principles**.

These basic principles can be divided into **three groups** each with its fundamental purpose.

■ Principles for Salvation

The first two elementary principles are for the salvation of man.

- ◆ Repentance from dead works
- ◆ Faith toward God

If a person does not get a full and complete understanding of what it means to **repent** and what it means to have **faith** he will probably be **stillborn** or **die spiritually within a short while**. He will always have a problem with **sin** and **victory over the world**. He will never be stable.

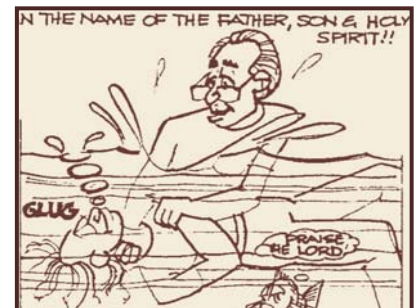
The idea is to get the **convert** to be **skilful** in **repentance** and **faith**.



■ Principles for Growth

- ◆ Doctrines of baptisms
- ◆ Laying on of hands

Lack of understanding of these two principles will **stunt growth** and produce Christian **dwarfs** who have a small portion of everything. They will grow to a certain height and stay there. They will reach a plateau far short of their **full inheritance**, and 'Why are you so slow in possessing the land' will ever be ringing in their ears.



■ Principles for Motivation

- ◆ Resurrection of the dead
- ◆ Eternal judgement

Without understanding these we can never be sure of where we are going and there will always be a **sense of futility** plaguing us. We will always be discouraged and lose the will to carry on.

