

Ephesians 4:14 Obedience Keeps us On Course

The last time that we were in Ephesians, we were talking about our mission as ministers in the Church as Eph 4:12 **equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. Until we all attain (or arrive at) the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.**

This phrase, "Until we all arrive" means that there's a process of growth that occurs in a Christian. It only takes a single moment to be saved. It happens when we put our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ our Savior. But from that moment onwards, we begin the lifelong process of sanctification, being set apart from the rest, for the work of God, fulfilling His Will in our lives, becoming more and more like Jesus as we grow in Him. We grow in the **knowledge of the Son of God**, which is only made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit. He wants us to turn to Him, not our own understanding. And means that we must seek out His wisdom and knowledge in His Word. Make it a priority in your life, and you will find that you get closer to God! And this can't help but be reflected in who you are as a person.

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children,-The result of this process of sanctification, of spiritual maturity, is that we are no longer children, spiritually, but mature. We see individualism as one mark of this immaturity in 1 Cor 3:1-3 **And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?** So, one indication of spiritual immaturity is still catering to the whims of the flesh. If you're dedicated to God's will being done in your life, then you're going to understand His Wisdom and guidance. But, if you're dedicated to doing what you want to do with your life, your going to be blinded to His direction and will. It is the spiritually mature who understand. 1 Cor 2:6-7 **6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;** We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit, so that we may grow spiritually, and not go off in the wrong direction, or be deceived spiritually.

tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine

As the Church, we cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in growing believers out of spiritual childhood, with its susceptibility to various false teachings. We must be willing to grow up in Christ 1 Cor. 13:11 **11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.** Acting out of love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and for unbelievers, and not just merely serving ourselves (also 1 Cor 14:20).

In Hebrews 5:11-12, Paul describes how spiritual immaturity limits our understanding of what God is doing, and the lessons he wants to teach us, saying **11 Concerning him we have much to say, and it is difficult to explain, since you have become poor listeners. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the actual words of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.** The Jewish believers who had converted to Christianity were having difficulty discerning the truth of the Gospel as a fulfillment of the Old Testament Law, and their lack of discernment concerning the truth of the gospel was evidence that they had some growing in spiritual maturity to allow the Holy Spirit to accomplish in their hearts. Paul warns against remaining spiritually immature, comparing those who do so with a ship that is continually buffeted by waves and wind in a storm, unable to maintain a direct course. Just as Jesus calmed the storm so that the disciples would not perish in Luke 8:24 **24 They came up to Jesus and woke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging [m]waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. 25 And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" But they were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"** If we will put our whole faith in Jesus,

following Him, living as He lived spiritually, in Christian maturity, then we will find that Jesus illuminates the truth, calming the winds of false doctrine, and the waves of trouble that try to beset us, allowing us to pass through on the proper course toward Himself. We won't be blown around by every wind of false-teaching, but instead stay the course toward Jesus. False teachings lack any clear direction toward Jesus, paying lip-service to Him, while leading people off-course. God wants to guide you, but you must surrender the helm, the wheel of the ship to His control James 1:5-7 **5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.** There's a reason why ships don't have two wheels, or two independent rudders—it just doesn't work, because one person will choose to go one way, and another person another. And listening to the false teachers is dangerous. Jude 12 says **2 These are the ones who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, like shepherds caring only for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, [b]doubly dead, uprooted;** Listen to them, and your sails just luff, and you can crash into the reef, the ship of your life can founder and be lost. Jesus calms the storm, and wants to guide you, but you must let Him. There's no need to be wave-tossed, and wind-blown. Be careful that you're following Jesus, and not the teachings of man.

by the trickery of people, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

This word for the trickery of people literally means playing dice, but cheating when you do, or using loaded dice! It means trickiness, and craftiness, trying to cheat and deceive someone. That's what those who are teaching false-doctrines are up to. Jesus said of those false-teachers who were in it for themselves: Mark 12:38 **38 And in His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like personal greetings in the marketplaces, 39 and seats of honor in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets, 40 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive all the more condemnation."** In 2 Peter 2:1-3 **But false prophets also appeared among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their indecent behavior, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.** The spiritually immature are gullible, carried away by the teaching of fakes who are playing dishonest games with serious religious consequences (see also 2 Peter 2:10-16). We are warned that many will listen to those false teachers 1 Tim 4:1 **But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,** They have made a mathematical calculation, so to speak, of putting just enough Bible, just enough Christianity in some of their doctrines in order to fool the immature Christians. Don't follow them. And you'll be able to know the difference by getting closer to Jesus, and more mature spiritually. And you'll do this by obeying His Word. You weren't called to salvation to remain a baby Christian. In the great commission, Jesus said **18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to [h]follow all that I commanded you;** Notice that Jesus' emphasis is first His authority, then sending us out to make disciples, then telling us how disciples are made—by obedience to His Word. Jesus said in John 14:15 **If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.**