

Are YOU
Spiritually
Mature?

Are You Spiritually Mature?

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THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD.

The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

*New Christians are babes-in-Christ
but are they to remain that way?
What do the Scriptures say about
the need for Christians to become
spiritually mature? What is spiritual
maturity and how does one attain it?
Are YOU spiritually mature?*

Preamble

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Php 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 **God is a Spirit**: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 **[Christ]** Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but o to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [\[God’s Son\]](#) might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [\[the glorified Christ\]](#) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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A Christian's life is to be one of continuous growth in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures through attentive and sustained study of God's holy Bible; not of what men say the Bible says but of the Bible itself. The Bible is the sure Word of God which is unchanging and on which we can rely. Christians are admonished by the Scriptures not to place their trust in men (1 Thess 5:21; Acts 17:10-11).

God commands us to grow in knowledge and with all our knowledge, to get understanding (not the same thing as knowledge e.g., the world has knowledge but no understanding).

Pro 4:5 Get wisdom, **get understanding**; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Pro 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and **with all thy getting get understanding**.

Pro 16:16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to **get understanding** rather to be chosen than silver!

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Having commanded growth, God has not left us without the means to grow. It would be nonsensical for God to command His faithful to have continuous growth in knowledge and understanding of the truth and in the grace of Christ and not have provided them with the means to do so.

But there are stages to Christian spiritual growth which build on one another and one cannot go from one stage to the next without first having completed the preceding stage. Just as a human being starts life very small and goes through successive stages of development which build on one another resulting in a mature adult, so are there similar stages to becoming a spiritually mature Christian.

The newly-begotten human being is kept alive and grows by firstly being fed by the mother and upon attaining greater maturity, by feeding itself. The life of a human being cannot be sustained without it receiving or getting for itself an adequate amount of food daily. The process is similar for the newly-begotten Christian who starts off his spiritual life as a babe-in-Christ and who requires a daily intake of spiritual food to stay alive and grow to spiritual maturity.

When we were first called by the holy spirit God the Father we were given enough knowledge of the truth to bring us to the point where we had to make a decision. Would we continue with our lives as they were before having been given this knowledge, or would we make the decision to follow God the Father's calling? Would we commit ourselves to obey Him in all things to the best of our abilities until the end of our natural lives?

When we decide to follow God's calling, we are to begin a life-long study of the Scriptures that will provide us with the spiritual nourishment needed for us to remain spiritually alive and growing. In time, with constant study of the Scriptures, we grow from babyhood to adulthood, spiritually speaking. We become spiritually mature Christians capable of feeding themselves and of rightly discerning truth from error using the Bible as our criterion of truth; not books written by men about the Bible. We become able to correctly identify and reject any and all erroneous teachings as we come upon them and we gladly accept and rejoice over the truth God gives us as we study His Word, the Holy Bible.

At first, we have but a little truth and as newcomers to the faith we are like the eunuch at the court of Candace who was reading the Bible on his own but could not understand it. God sent him a helper, the apostle Philip who explained to him the meaning of the passages of Scripture he was reading (Acts 8:26-31).

However, since the scattering of the First Century Church following intense and sustained persecutions, first from the Jews and then by great new false Christian Church that arose after the death of the apostles,

God's Church as it existed in the days of the apostles with evangelists, prophets, pastors, elders, etc. ceased. Much of the truth taught by Christ to His disciples became lost as early church members were scattered and died out. Consequently, there are no men today who can honestly claim to have absolute truth that all who hear him have to believe or who can claim to be apostles, evangelists, etc. There are numerous studies on this site explaining what is God's Church in New Testament times. God's nation anciently was physical but since the day of Pentecost, it is a spiritual nation whose members are from the nations of the world: [God's Church is Spiritual](#) [God's Church Today](#) [Who Can Feed the Flock?](#) and [God's Church after its Scattering](#).

God is able to call men to salvation without preachers and teachers and salvation does not require a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible. Called out men are responsible for the knowledge that they have been given to understand by God no matter how little or how much they have. What matters is not how much knowledge and understanding one has but their unwavering commitment to follow it to the best of their abilities. This is borne out by the parable of the talents where the one who had only received one talent could have been saved if he would have had some growth in knowledge and understanding by studying his Bible (Mat 25:30).

Most of you will recall how Mr. Armstrong always said that everyone was to check out with their Bible everything he taught. You will also recall how the ministry always reminded us while we were undergoing counseling for baptism that we should prove everything they taught us from the pages of our Bible. WE WERE NOT TO RELY ON THEM AS THE SOURCE OF TRUTH.

This is true for all members of God's Church whether they be newcomers to the faith or long term members. Constant vigilance must be maintained and all this has been fully covered in a study on this site "[Are Christians Personally Responsible for Proving all Things?](#)" God makes the individual Christian responsible for his own salvation; salvation is not a group process. It is not a matter of belonging to the right group or of following the right man. The only person Mr. Armstrong could ever save was himself.

New converts are spiritual embryos who have been begotten by the holy spirit God the Father who is the one who calls men out of the world. Their life sustaining nourishment is the knowledge given them by the holy spirit, God the Word. Newcomers to the faith are to study their Bible and in doing so, they will grow in spiritual maturity going from being babes to spiritually mature adults who know the truth so well that they would be able to teach it were it required of them.

We know this from the reprimand given to the Church by Paul in the book of Hebrews. Paul was telling long term members of the Church (like many of us are) that for the time they had been in the Church and with all the teachings they had received and their own, regular personal studies which they should have been doing, they should know the truth so well that they should be able to teach it; but, that was not the case.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

As a rule, if you want to know how well you know something, try teaching or explaining it to someone else; if you can't, then your grasp of the subject is not as good as you might have thought. It is of course understood that God's truth is not something that can be explained to the world no matter how well one may master it and this is not what I am talking about here.

A Christian's development in the faith can also be likened to the building of a brick wall and shortly we will examine the applicable Scriptures that use a similar analogy.

When building a brick wall there is a specific sequence that needs to be followed and one cannot go to the next level of the sequence until the first one has been completed. The mid-level bricks cannot be laid until the lower level bricks have been correctly laid on the foundation. In the same way, the higher level bricks likewise cannot be laid until the mid-level bricks have been correctly installed on the lower level bricks which have to have been correctly laid on the foundation.

If one thinks of these building blocks as being knowledge then the message is that knowledge builds upon knowledge with some of it being the basic blocks upon which other knowledge can be laid. God expects Christians to grow spiritually all through their human lives.

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Spiritual growth results from constant feeding on God's truth as contained in His Holy Bible. Feeding on God's truth is what keeps God's spiritually begotten children growing and if growing, spiritually alive and developing toward becoming an adult, spiritually speaking.

Weaned from the Milk Drawn from the Breast

Let's now examine a few Scriptures that allows us to understand the functioning of the spiritual growth process that God expects from Christians and what is the responsibility of Christians in that process.

Also, let's review what is the reward of those who engage in continuous, attentive, detailed study of the fundamental truths God placed in His Church through the apostles and which were restored, in part, by HWA.

God in the book of Isaiah tells us who are those to whom He can teach knowledge and who are those to whom He cannot and, why He can't.

Isa 28:9 Whom shall he [God] teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

To whom shall God be able to teach knowledge; it is to those who have been called, chosen and who have embarked on a lifelong process of conversion and are no longer babes-in-Christ because of their continuing and attentive study of the Scriptures. They have grown in spiritual maturity; they are drawn from the breast and weaned from the milk; they have mastered truth which God calls the milk of the word. This milk is a body of truth — the foundational truths of God's Church (1 Cor 3:10) — which new converts have to first master to have the perspective and tools required for them to go into the Bible on their own and learn truth which God calls the "meat" of the Word. ([Do Christians Have to Grow in Knowledge?](#))

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Why is it necessary to weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast to learn those other things which God wants to teach us? Because this knowledge, the meat of the word, is to be found a little here and a little there all over the Bible and [it is essential that all these bits and pieces be correctly put together](#) for us to get the meaning God wants to convey to us.

Isa 28:10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; [here a little, and there a little:](#)

Isa 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

God through Paul makes it clear in the book of Hebrews that new converts or babes-in-Christ need to become spiritual adults.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye [[members of God's Church](#)] ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is [unskilful](#) in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

The truth of the Bible is gradually given God's called out ones. Christians believe what they believe because God has called them and they have followed their calling; it is through the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman working in them that they can know and grow in God's spiritual truth which is only knowable by revelation. It is not the doing of any man. Christians believe what they believe because the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman has shown it to them and they have chosen to believe it. The ministry is not the author nor the finisher of the faith of those coming to conversion (Heb 12:2).

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith [[the truths of God that we believe](#)]; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

All Christians, whether newcomers to the faith or long term Church members, are individually responsible for their own salvation (Php2:12) and for proving all things from the pages of their Bible (Acts 17:11); NOT BY READING WHAT OTHER MEN SAY THE BIBLE SAYS.

Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now [much more in my absence](#), work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Act 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Those that have mastered the fundamental truths of the Bible or the first principles of the oracles of God as Paul says it, are those that have become skillful in the use of God's Word. They would be able to teach the fundamental truth or first principles of the oracles of God were it necessary for them to do so.

Paul would no longer come among the congregations he had founded (Php2:12 we have just read); he would die, and true believers would be left on their own. Please note that Paul doesn't say that it is only when he would no longer be able to be there that Church members were to work out their own salvation. They were to have been doing so while he was with them; but now that he would no longer be there, there were to do so [even more](#).

The message is clear, Christians are responsible for working out their own salvation. It is not and never has been the responsibility of men who are to be but helpers whose role is not to impose their teachings on the brethren or rule (have dominion) over their faith as the Bible states it. Converts are to believe only what can be proven from the pages of their Bible. Men are not the means by which understanding of God's spiritual truth is made to increase in true Christians and Paul says it very well in 1 Cor's 3.

1Co 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

1Co 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; [but God gave the increase](#).

The Corinthians were associating themselves with different teachers whom they taught to be more capable than others. In this instance, some were saying they were of Paul and others that they were of Apollos.

Paul emphasizes to them that he and Apollos are only ministers used by God to teach them. The understanding that they can have of God's spiritual truth is not the result of one teacher being a better teacher than another but rather it comes from the holy spirit God the Word

and Spokesman who dwells in their minds and who gives them understanding. Paul planted, Apollos watered but it is God that gave them the increase in understanding. Even as babes-in-Christ, we are responsible for checking out all things with our Bible.

1Th5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

All throughout our Christians lives we are held individually responsible for proving all things from the pages of our Bible to protect ourselves from false teachings and the many false teachers who were to arise in the world and have arisen right from within the one true Church (Acts 20:30) when God's Church had a ministry of men at its foundation on the day of Pentecost.

Act 20:30 Also of your own selves [the elders of the Church] shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Summary

So what have we learned so far? Christians are to grow in knowledge and understanding their whole life long. They start off their Christian lives as babes-in-Christ and are to become spiritually mature Christians by continuing study of their Bible.

We have also seen that knowledge builds upon knowledge, here a little and there a little and for us to be able to know and understand the knowledge hidden here and there in the Bible, we have to be weaned from the milk and to have grown to the point where we have become spiritually mature Christians being able to read our Bible with understanding. It is no longer a strange book we are still trying to understand. Through continuing and attentive study of the Bible, it has become familiar to us.

The Foundation

As we have seen God tells us that the ones to whom He can teach knowledge are those that are drawn from the breast and weaned from the milk. But, what is the milk of the Word which once mastered will allow God to teach us knowledge?

The truth given by Christ to Paul and the apostles and, that they (the apostles) gave to the first century congregations of the Church of God is what Paul calls "the first principles of the oracles of God" or "milk of the Word."

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be [the first principles of the oracles of God](#); and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

In Hebrews 5:13, he makes it clear that those whose level of knowledge and understanding remains at the “milk” level are unskillful in the use of their Bible, the word of righteousness; consequently they cannot build on this foundation of truth so as to learn other truth which Paul calls “strong meat” in Heb 5:12.

Paul gave to the congregations he raised up the truth he and the apostles had received directly from Christ and this body of truth constitutes the foundation that Paul laid and upon which others are to build “....and another buildeth thereon.”

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and [another buildeth thereon](#). But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Who are “the others” that are to build on the foundation? It can be no others than the true Christians who have mastered the milk of the Word teachings of God’s Bible, who have become spiritually mature and capable of understanding the strong meat of God’s Word.

Paul was responsible for laying the foundation but the members are responsible for building on it and this involves discovering and adding truth onto the foundation which perfectly fits onto it. It is the strong meat that only spiritually mature Christians can know like a baby who has sufficiently developed to be weaned from its mother’s breast can start eating solid food.

Until one has mastered the body of truth making up God’s Church foundation, it is impossible, and it stands to reason that this is so, for members to build on it; one cannot build on a non-existent or incomplete foundation. For us modern-day Christians, our foundational truths are those revealed to us at the time of our calling by God the Father and the truth taught by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA).

A well intended word of caution I think is in order here by which I do not want in any way to diminish the many wonderful truths many of us have

come to know through God using HWA is that not everything taught by Hlm should be considered to be absolute truths that can never be examined but only unquestioningly believed. HWA ALWAYS said that we were to prove all things and if ever we found he had made a mistake, we were not to follow him but follow our Bible. In doing so we are being obedient to God and are being respectful of HWA's own admonition to us to do so.

Now, let's continue with this study.

1Co 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Christ laid the foundation i.e., the truth He gave the apostles and men are **not to change any of it; no other foundations can be laid by any man**. And, this foundation was laid for a reason; others are to build on it.

1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

This verse makes it clear that true Christians will not all build on the foundation with the same quality of material; the quality of material used will range from gold to stubble. The quality of the material used is an indication of its spiritual value with gold being the highest. This means that not everything that will be built upon the foundation by true Christians will be able to withstand being tested by the fire of God's truth at the time of the resurrection of the saints.

1Co 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

1Co 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built there-upon, he shall receive a reward.

If one has been building with gold **and** silver i.e., the truth discovered by this Christian as a result of his continuing study of the Bible and which was not part of the foundation were of such quality that they can withstand being tested by fire i.e., when compared to the whole truth of God that we will know in the resurrection, the truth he had discovered by his studies are found to be accurate; they will then be like gold and silver. Since this Christian was careful on how he built on the foundation, he will be given a reward. Recall that we are rewarded according to our works and in this case, according to the quality of our work.

1Co 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Here is a very important point which needs to be highlighted. Many members of God's Church are wary of studying the Bible on their own for fear of going off track. However, if it should happen that some of the truth discovered were wood, hay or stubble in quality spiritually speaking, then these truths will be destroyed when in the resurrection they get to know the full truth of God and come to realize, they really didn't fit on the foundation; they were wood and stubble.

BUT, A VERY IMPORTANT POINT TO NOTICE HERE. Those individuals of which some of their findings were wood, hay or stubble, though losing them in the resurrection i.e., they will then realize they were not true though they seemed to fit on the foundation, DO NOT THEMSELVES LOSE THEIR SALVATION.

WHY?

Because what had been found though not true was not a deliberate effort to undo any of the foundational truth which no man can change as Paul says: **"....other foundation can no man lay."**

It will occur that some of mature Christians' discoveries will be truth that seemed to fit on the foundation but really didn't. This he will find out in the resurrection.

God wants true Christians to build on the foundation of truth given us in the Bible, many of which were restored by HWA, so as to have continued spiritual growth throughout their natural lives. As long as one is not trying to undo the foundation and does not accept anything that he knows undoes any of the truth of the foundation, then though some findings seem to fit but don't really fit (the wood, the hay, the stubble), no loss of salvation will occur. This Christian will be like a man going through fire and though personally suffering loss like being burnt here and there and having some hair singed, he will escape with his life; in this case, his eternal life.

God commands us to grow in knowledge and understanding throughout our lives and this requires as a minimum becoming spiritually mature Christians who have mastered the foundational truths of the Bible which is what will allow us to go on to build on that foundation; a process that will end when our lives end. This can only occur through sustained and attentive study of your Bible not of what men says the Bible teaches.

Salvation not a Group Process

Paul instructed the congregations of his days on what they were to do after his death (he was going to Rome and he knew that there he would die) and today we find ourselves in the same situation as the Christians of Paul's time.

Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed,
not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

The church leaders directly taught by Christ (the apostles which includes Paul) have died and the members of God's true Church as instructed by Paul, including us today, are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. They also must build on the foundation of truths God gave the Church through the apostles and Paul and which were restored, in part, by Mr Herbert W. Armstrong while he lead the organization he called the Worldwide Church of God.

God through Paul makes it very clear that **individual** Christians are responsible for working out their own salvation; **Paul could not do it for them**. God places the responsibility on the individual Christian; the only man Mr. Armstrong could ever save was himself.

If this is the case, and it is, then the criterion or standard of truth for true Christians cannot be men; it can only be God's Word. You will recall how Mr. Armstrong repeatedly warned those who attended the organization called the Worldwide Church of God, that no one should ever just believe him but that everyone should prove what he taught with their Bible. The same message was repeatedly given to those undergoing counseling for baptism. At no time were converts to believe what was being taught them by Mr. Armstrong (HWA) or men appointed by him as ministers without proving it from their Bible. Mr. Armstrong never taught that the members were to rely on the men he appointed as ministers or himself as the ultimate criterion in determining the truth of a matter.

All were responsible for proving the teachings of HWA and of the ministers he appointed out of their Bible; **THEY WERE NOT TO RELY ON MEN**. But, as we have been the eyewitnesses, most did not; they relied on the ministry; a ministry of men which has largely fallen away and which the many have followed.

Christians are individually responsible for their own salvation and spiritual growth which requires constant effort and continuing, attentive study of God's truth as recorded in the Bible. God expects all Christians

to become weaned from the milk and to be drawn from the breast as all Christians must eventually become spiritually mature Christians able to feed themselves.

As spiritually mature Christians they are not looking to men to feed them; they have learned to tie their own shoes, dress themselves and feed themselves spiritually speaking and don't need to rely on anyone else to do it for them; they have become spiritual adults. What men say is not their criterion of truth; what the Bible says is their one and only criterion as it should always have been since the beginning of their calling and conversion if they have taken to heart what HWA always taught and that is "Don't believe me, believe your Bible."

Why is it important for Christians to grow from being babes-in-Christ to spiritual maturity? Christians are spiritual embryos and if not growing are dead embryos. There is no time in the development of an embryo where it can cease growing for any extended period of time and remain alive. Spiritual embryos are fed by the spiritual food they get from constant growth in knowledge and understanding of God's truth which can only occur through their constant and attentive study of God's Holy Bible.

Spiritual growth is also the way we can know that God is with us. Christ, God the Father's Spokesman to His called and chosen ones who are remaining faithful, said that He would manifest Himself to true Christians.

Joh 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

How would that occur?

How Does God Manifest Himself to His Elect?

How would He manifest Himself to the disciples and their spiritual descendants through the ages and us today? Would He take on non-scary physical appearances and meet with them personally to teach them, encourage them, comfort them in their moments of need, strengthen and sustain them?

Let's see what Christ Himself said.

In the book of John we read how Christ would manifest Himself to God's Church which collectively is the elect which are found all over the world by themselves or in small groups of believers.

Joh 14:20 At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Joh 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and **will manifest myself to him.**

Joh 14:22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Joh 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Joh 14:24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Joh 14:25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, **[it should say "spirit"]** whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

God the Father would send the holy spirit, God the Word to the disciples and to all true Christians throughout the centuries and WHAT would He do? How would Christ's presence be manifested to them? The holy spirit, God the Word (the resurrected Christ) would bring all things to their remembrance and teach them ALL things.

As a side note, at this point I would hasten to briefly explain how it is that God and the Word are holy spirits. Both God and the Word are God beings (John 1:1); their nature is to be "spirit" (John 4:24) and eternal. Both are holy (John 17:11; Luke 1:35). Both are holy and spirit which makes each one of them, a holy spirit.

Now, back to the topic of this section.

So as we can see, Christ said He would manifest Himself to true Christians by appearing to them in a non-scary fashion and teaching them as He had done with the apostles; right? Hmmm! That doesn't sound right does it?

Christ said that the Father and Him would dwell in true believers and that the Father would send the Comforter or the holy spirit, God the Word to

teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance which He had taught them (the disciples). Christ said He had to go so the Comforter which the Father would send could come to them.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost [spirit] was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

JESUS HAD TO DIE, BE RESSURRECTED AND GLORIFIED BEFORE THE HOLY SPIRIT COULD BE GIVEN BECAUSE CHRIST, IS THE HOLY SPIRIT GOD THE WORD AND SPOKESMAN TO GOD THE FATHER'S CALLED AND CHOSEN ONES WHO WILL TEACH THEM ALL THINGS.(See John 16:7 quoted below)

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy , [it should read "Spirit"] whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Joh 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

So, how do Christians know if God is with them and if they are pleasing God? God through the holy spirit, the Word will teach them [THE RESURRECTED CHRIST IS THE HOLY SPIRIT BEING IN THE GODHEAD WHO AS THE WORD OF GOD AND GOD'S SPOKESMAN TO GOD'S CHOSEN ONES TEACHES THEM ALL THINGS (John 14:17-18)].

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

This Comforter which is the holy spirit, the Word would teach them and us today, all things. The Comforter, Christ returned to His former glory after His resurrection as the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman, would bring all things that Christ as a human being had taught His disciples to

their remembrance and they, the apostles and Paul, would teach it to the Church as the foundational truth of the Church.

The holy spirit God the Word (the holy Bible is Christ in writing, and He is also in our minds), not men, is the means used by God the Father to teach true Christians all things since the beginning of the first era of the holy spirit God the Father's begotten Church; a process which continues to this day. Growth in knowledge and understanding of God's spiritual truth is only possible through the in-dwelling presence of the Comforter (the glorified Christ) in true Christians. Words by themselves are not enough; the whole world has full access to the Holy Bible and is unable to correctly understand it. Knowledge and understanding of God's truth is by revelation only.

1Co 14:30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; [\[the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman \(John 14:18\)\]](#)

The Bible to the unconverted world is just so many words which for the most part are incomprehensible gobbledygook.

Isa 28:13 But the word of the LORD was unto them [\[that do not obey God; the world that cannot know God\]](#) precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

We who have been in God's church for a rather long time have to be different than those of the Churches that Paul and God through him, speak of in the book of Hebrews.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye [\[members of God's Church\]](#) ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God [\[the foundational truths\]](#); and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat

Paul says he had to teach them the basics (the milk of the Word; the foundational truths) all over again because as explained in verse 14 below; they had not taken it to heart and had not been applying it in their lives.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full

age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Though long term members of God's Church they were still babes-in-Christ; they were not drawn from the breast and weaned from the milk. They had not grown and matured spiritually, and consequently, they were unable to build on the foundation and to learn new knowledge which Paul, continuing the physical comparison of Is 28:9 of a Christian's growth with that of a human baby, likens to strong meat. A baby still at its mother's breast cannot eat solid food like meat.

They were, spiritually speaking, unable to progress past the foundational truths given them as they had forgotten them. God was not manifesting Himself to them. They had not progressed as newcomers to the faith from being babes-in-Christ as would have occurred had they been studying and proving the truth given them and applying it in their lives. It is necessary for them and all true Christians to first know and practice the milk of the word basic teachings given to the apostles and Paul by Christ and through them, to the Church. But, the congregations Paul was writing to in the book of Hebrews had forgotten them and needed to be taught them all over again after having been part of the Church long enough that as Paul tells them, they should by that time know the basics so well that they should be able to teach them.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Conclusion

If as Christians we are still not drawn from the breast and weaned from the milk then God through Paul tells us that we are unskillful in the word of righteousness; in other words, we still have our training wheels on our Bible; we are not yet spiritually mature and are unable to study and correctly understand other truths of the Bible which are not part of the foundational truths God gave His Church. We are unable to go beyond the milk of the Word. The holy spirit, God the Word is the means whereby we can know (the Word teaches us all things and is the way God manifests Himself to true Christians) and understand the spiritual truth of God and; it is only given and only remains with those who are actively obeying Him.

Act 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, [\["spirit" it should read\]](#) whom God hath [given to them that obey him](#).

Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that [obey him](#);

The ability to understand truth which is not part of the foundational truths given the Church (the strong meat of which Paul speaks of) is only possible for those who have become mature Christians having spent quality time and making a sustained effort to understand the difference between good and evil as explained by God in His Holy Bible and trying to the best of their abilities to apply this understanding in their everyday lives.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by [reason of use](#) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Spiritually mature Christians know how to read the Bible, can feed themselves and can come to know the strong meat truth of the Bible as they diligently and attentively study their Bible. God manifests Himself to them, not by appearing to them and teaching them personally, but by opening their minds to more and more of the truth contained in the Bible as they pray, study, and become more spiritually mature and able to know and understand the strong meat of the Word.

We are to grow spiritually as God commands us to do and God provides the means for us to do so but it takes time, determination, sustained effort, and attentive study of God's Word but for those who love the Word of God and enjoy through study conversing with God, this is not such a difficult thing to do. I would daresay, it is even quite a pleasant experience.

12Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly [\[correctly\]](#) dividing [\[understanding\]](#) the word of truth.

God commands true Christians to grow in knowledge and understanding of His truth and in the grace of Christ so as to REMAIN LIVE SPIRITUAL EMBRYOS who can be born as glorified spirit beings at Christ's 2nd Coming.

It's never too late to get started on a methodical and continuing study of the foundational truth given God's Church by Christ through the apostles and restored, in part, to those truly converted Christians who were once part of the organization founded by HWA which he called the Worldwide Church of God.

