



THE HIDDEN PERILS OF SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY

MILK DRINKERS BEWARE

READ THE WARNING LABEL

**HAPPY COW
MILK COMPANY**



WARNING: A milk only diet will cause dullness of hearing, dimwittedness, lost sense of direction, inability to eat solid, healthy food, memory loss, inability to discern good from evil.



DRINK MORE MILK



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What/who is a milk drinker? Milk drinkers are the spiritually immature identified by the writer of Hebrews as infants in the faith who live on milk and who have come to need milk because they cannot eat solid food.

- (Hebrews 5:13 LSB) For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

1. Hidden Peril #1: Milk drinkers become severely limited in their ability to comprehend information that is vital to their spiritual growth, 5:11a.

! Peril: A serious and immediate danger; a state of danger involving risk; exposure to danger; threats.

! Hidden: Being or kept out of sight or not readily apparent; concealed, secret, disguised, covert.

- (Hebrews 5:11 LSB) **Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.**
- A. Milk drinkers are incapable of comprehending this instrumental teaching concerning the high priestly position and work of Jesus Son of God.
- B. They **had become** dull of hearing.
- C. They apparently had not heeded the previous warning to pay much closer attention to what they had heard.
- (Hebrews 2:1, 3a LSB) **For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,** lest we drift away.

2. Hidden Peril #2: By not giving due respect and attention to what God has said milk drinkers become dull of hearing, 5:11b.

- (Hebrews 5:11 LSB) Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, **since you have become dull of hearing.**
- A. They are rebuked for their sinful behavior, not mere ignorance, because they had become dull of hearing and could not meaningfully hear this teaching on the high priesthood of Christ.
- B. Dull of hearing is a sinful state of ignorance occurring when a person drifts away from solid doctrine because of their sluggish approach to hearing God's word with the intent of obedience and transformation.

- (2 Timothy 4:3–4 LSB) **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled,** they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 **and will turn away their ears from the truth** and will turn aside to myths.

C. The person becomes dull of hearing as they enter this sinful state from a previous state of proper attention to hearing what he had heard.

- i. **Become ...*** to become as a condition; to enter or assume a certain state or condition.
- ii. **Dull ...*** sluggish; slow to learn, understand, or react; lacking intellectual acuity; slothful, lazy.
- iii. **Hearing ...*** the ability to hear with understanding (and to act accordingly).

3. Hidden Peril #3: Milk drinkers become dependent on milk for spiritual nourishment because they cannot digest solid food, 5:12.

- (Hebrews 5:12 LSB) **For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you** the elementary principles of the oracles of God, **and you have come to need milk and not solid food.**
- A. At this point in their lives they should be able to teach the A, B, C's of basic Christian doctrine but instead they need to be retaught these things.
- B. There is a difference between being able to teach these things and being a teacher of God's word.
- i.* A mature believer should be able to teach the basic doctrines of the faith in an unofficial manner in the context of everyday life and the church.
 - ii.* An immature believer who needs to be retaught becomes useless and unfruitful in what they have previously learned and know.

- (2 Peter 1:8–9 LSB) **For if these things are yours and are increasing**, they render you neither **useless nor unfruitful in the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. **9 For in whom these things are not present**, that one is **blind**, being **nearsighted**, having **forgotten** the purification from his former sins.

iii. Some people confidently teach the wrong things for the wrong reasons.

- (1 Timothy 1:7 LSB) **Wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions**.

iv. Being a teacher of the word of God is not something to be taken on apart from the calling and gifting of God.

- (James 3:1 LSB) **Do not, many of you, become teachers**, my brothers, **knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment**.
- (Ephesians 4:11–12 LSB) **And He Himself gave some** as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, **and some as pastors and teachers**, **12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ**.

C. Those who need to be retaught the spiritual A, B, C's have developed a serious digestive problem forcing them to a dependence on milk alone for nourishment.

D. Milk drinkers are spiritual infants and need to be treated as such.

4. **Hidden Peril #4:** Spiritually immature milk drinkers are no longer unaccustomed to the teaching of righteousness, 5:13.

- (Hebrews 5:13 LSB) \ For everyone who partakes only of milk **is not accustomed to the word of righteousness**, for he is an infant.
- A. You could not find a more profound example of “use it or lose it” than the older Christian who has become spiritually immature and has lost his experience and skill in the word of righteousness.
- (Luke 8:18 LSB) **So beware how you listen**, for **whoever has**, to him more shall be given; and **whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him**.

B. **The logic:** A person is no longer accustomed to what he no longer uses—i.e. he is not experiencing the word of God if he is not living by the word of God. (Cf. Deuteronomy 8:3.)

C. The spiritual infant who lives on milk is unskilled in the ability to know what is right—an ability that comes with a mature faith in Christ.

5. **Hidden Peril #5:** Milk drinkers often rule the day in a church fellowship—setting the standard and making more milk drinkers.

A. The spiritually immature set the standard in many/most churches and unfortunately those coming into leadership follow their example.

- (Matthew 23:15 LSB) **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites**, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; **and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves**.

B. Often the spiritual standards in the church body are set by older Christians who are spiritually immature and no longer experience true righteousness—thus they do not know true righteousness.

C. These older Christians present themselves as mature and appear to be mature but are in fact spiritual infants who rationalize and cultivate the sinful behavior we so often find in the church.

D. Some examples in the local church that the standard of spiritual maturity has been skewed is the justification for things such as outbursts of anger and other deeds of our sinful nature.

- (2 Corinthians 12:20 LSB) For I am afraid **that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish**; that perhaps there will be **strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances**.

- (Galatians 5:19–20 LSB) **Now the deeds of the flesh are evident**, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, **strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions**.

E. One noteworthy reason that jealousy, strife and anger exist in our churches is that the men in leadership are spiritual infants and lead as mere men.

- (1 Corinthians 3:1–3 LSB) And I, brothers, **was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshly men, as to infants in Christ.** 2 **I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it.** Indeed, even now you are still not able, 3 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?**

6. Hidden Peril #6: Milk drinkers cannot digest solid food—i.e. sound doctrine, 5:14a.

- (Hebrews 5:14 LSB) **But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil.**
- A. The spiritually immature have not been trained by practicing (doing) the word of righteousness and so are neither skilled nor experienced in discerning good from evil.
- Good...** καλός [kalos] speaking of what is morally good; beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, praiseworthy; noble.
 - Evil...** κακός [kakos] ... morally bad or wrong; of a bad nature; base, wicked.
 - Milk drinkers** practice righteousness to be noticed by people and so consequently they cannot discern good from evil and have no reward in the eyes of our Father in heaven.
 - (Matthew 6:1 LSB) **Beware of doing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.**
 - (1 John 3:10a ESV) By this it is evident **who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God.**
- B. The spiritually mature intentionally discipline and train themselves to practice righteousness to develop their skill in discerning good from evil.
- (1 John 2:29 LSB) If you know that He is righteous, **you know that everyone also who does righteousness has been born of Him.**
 - (1 John 3:7 LSB) Little children, let no one deceive you. **The one who does**

righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

- (1 Timothy 4:6–7 LSB) In pointing out these things to the brothers, **you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.** 7 But refuse godless myths fit only for old women. On the other hand, **train yourself for the purpose of godliness.**

- C. Milk drinkers often assume (or are placed in) places of leadership **based on** their experience in the church **but not on** experience and skill in true righteousness.

7. Hidden Peril #7: Milk drinkers have become incapable of discerning good from evil, 5:14b.

- (Hebrews 5:14 ESV) **But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**
- A. Mature believers are able to discern good from evil because they hone (*smooth and sharpen*) their powers of discernment by constantly practicing/doing the truth.
- (John 3:21 ESV) **But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.**
- B. Immature believers are not able to discern good from evil because they cannot digest solid food.
- C. Unfortunately this does not stop the spiritually immature from insisting on their standards of right and wrong, good and evil.
- D. Not being able to discern good from evil does not stop the spiritually immature from having and vehemently holding to their own standard of good and evil—righteousness.
- (Philippians 3:9 LSB) **And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own** which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, **the righteousness which is from God upon faith.**