

Arrested Development

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. **—Hebrews 5:12, KJV**

There comes a time when you must begin to help others. I know some Christians who after years are still needing the same old kind of help. It has not entered their minds to help anybody else. They figure if they once get sorted out, then they will be on their way to help somebody else. Yet years later they are still in much the same condition! Often the best way to solve your problem is to get your eyes completely off yourself and start helping somebody else.

What a pity, then, that these Hebrew Christians were right back to square one, needing milk, not solid food. It is a blatant rebuke. If milk is the only diet suited to a certain physical condition, it shows that one is in a serious state, but spiritually the writer means that one is in an immature but potentially dangerous state. It suggests an arrested development.

So if a person has an arrested development spiritually, then no matter how many more years he lives, he does not automatically get any better. Here is the person who has been converted and is going fine for six months, five years, or ten years, but then something happens. Maybe disappointment in their life. Maybe the loss of a job. And so the person is tried. But if he or she does not dignify the trial, if they do not learn to forgive, if they do not grow in grace and walk in the light, something backfires internally; they might continue going to church, but there is an arrested development, and they never move on.

I have thought about this in connection with myself, because I

am absolutely sure that I have been like them, yet God is patient with me.

There was hope for these Hebrew Christians, and there is hope for each of us who hear God speaking in these lines.

Excerpted from *Are You Stone Deaf to the Spirit or Rediscovering God?* (Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1999).